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OCTOBER

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P. Adams Sitney — *Kinematography and the Analytic Text: A Reading of* Persona

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Cover photograph: Krzysztof Wodiczko. Central section of proposed projection, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Fine Arts Center. 1986.

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Krzysztof Wodiczko/ Public Projections

The Grand Army Plaza Projection. *Brooklyn, New Year's Eve, 1984.*

Memorial Projection

Demonstrations! Clashes! Rallies! Voluntary and involuntary assemblies! Battles! Events pregnant with far-reaching consequences!

Surprisingly seized by these social and political outbreaks, the old memorial has no choice but to accept its new role and meaning as a revolutionary site. To legitimize its historical indispensability during crowded, dramatic, and risky moments, the crafty monument must welcome and accommodate the optimistic and full-blooded events cankering into its skeptical, pale, and wrinkled facade.

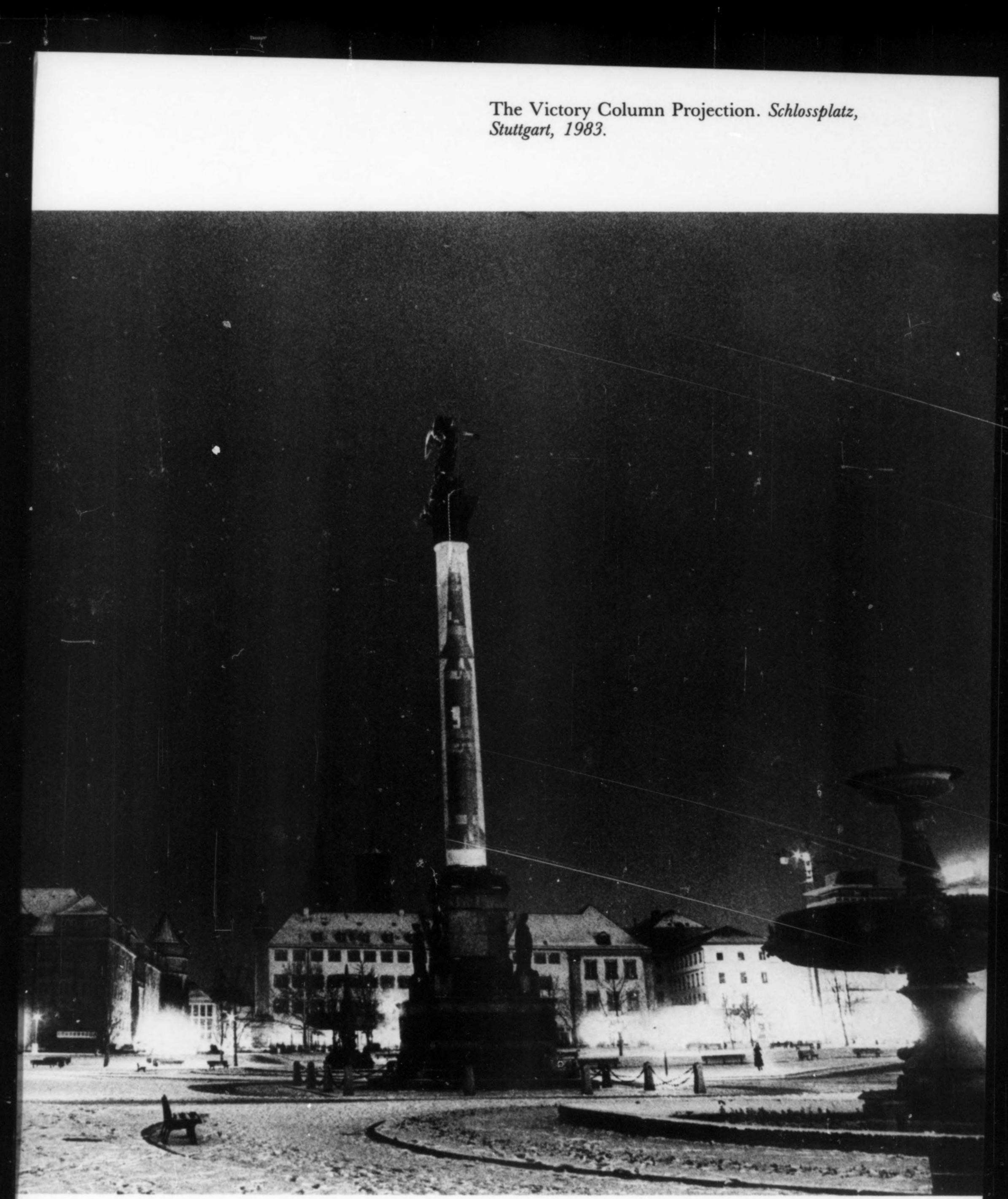
If the memorial were to allow itself any resentment or disrespect toward these events, they would forcefully and mercilessly impose themselves upon it. Such meaning-forcing acts would be carried out either by physical destruction of the memorial or, in a worse and more pathetic case, by cultural abandonment, exposing the now-absurd-in-remaining-there poor structure to its shameful and prolonged death from de-signification.

State celebrations . . . Tourism . . . Free entertainment . . . Health and recreation.

The newly erected memorial was an ideological creation of the posteventful state, which did not camouflage, but, quite the reverse, exhibited outright throughout its entire site its joyless, deadly, and heavy duty: the duty of the emotional consolidation of the myth of the event as embodying official public value. The previously respectful distance ("historical perspective") of the memorial from everyday life is now being broken. Cold, tombstone benches, regimenting, mountainous stairways, brainwashing fountains, architortured bushes, and windswept floors were intended to banish unofficial life from the memorial's territory.

Today, the authorities want to add life and "social function" to the memorial site, to turn it into a "humanized" place for cultural relaxation, a zone of free festivity, tourism, permanent recreation, and so-called art in public places. Mis-attracted by refurbishing and by trivial cultural "events," the confused public must now learn how to live closer to the obscene necro-ideology of memorial icons,

The Victory Column Projection. *Schlossplatz, Stuttgart, 1983.*



The Duke of York Column Projection. *Waterloo Place, London, 1985.*

the naked, cold bodies of the monumentally frozen goddesses, gods, and heroes of our glorious massacres of humanity.

In extreme cases of life-with-memorial, the public will enter into very close, intimate, psycho-political relations with memorial architecture, which can then lead to disastrous neuro-patriotic reactions.

Thus administered by the department of "parks" and "recreation," submerged in newly planted vegetation and tranquilized by bureaucratically guaranteed positive social reception, the relaxed memorial continues more effectively than ever its unchallenged ideological life.

Father

The son's unsuccessful rebellion was not aimed against the legal rules and moral, republican guidelines. The rebellion was against the father's absolute sexual, political, and social control. David's fathers, Brutus and the Horatii, serve as the monumental lesson on the system of the patrio-patriarchate as well as the ultimate social definition of the form of the father's body: the imperturbable, unshaken, inflexible, sober-minded, sexless and lifeless, silent, cold, odorous with death, ghastly pale (all blood transfused to the state's disposal), tired but powerful and self-disciplined, disciplining structure. The body of an unmoving father, barricading vast social territory, creates heavy traffic, the traffic which the father will then regulate himself. His lifelessness will regulate life; his sexlessness wants to castrate.

The spirit of David's model body continues to live its imaginary existence in the bodies of fathers and in all structures built by them. At the cost of their own aliveness, their repressed particular bodies must continuously supply life-power to their monumental bodies as memorials to themselves-as-patriarchs. Thus the body of the memorial, erected in the name of a particular father and a particular war, carries out the eternal ideological mission to secure symbolically and legitimize "historically" the *perpetuation* of the ghastly double myth, the myth of a patriarch as a great, heroic father and that of the war as a sacred, noble *sacrifice*.

South African War Memorial Projection. *Toronto, 1983.*

Picture

Where else can one take one's own camera and one's own son for a walk?

Only in the atmosphere of "nature" and the environment of "history" can the enjoyment of a walk be sanctioned: a meaningful family pastime, the amusement instructive, the chat memorable, the picture-taking purposeful. While I mimic the memorial's grand gestures, the loud click of my father's camera freezes my body. This sound serves as a signal of formal encouragement of, if not applause for, bravado.

His busy movements are similar to the merciless procedures of land triangulation. Following photographic strategy for a full-scale survey, he repeatedly runs across the memorial grounds, moves from one shooting position to another, changes the vast battery of camera lenses suspended from his body, compensates for the difference of their focal lengths by short runs back and forth. Following his sniper desperation for perfecting a shooting position (as if it were a real combat operation), he will suddenly fall flat on the flagstone or gravel, go down on his knees, squat, hop or jump over branches, flowerbeds, and fountains. But the real reward is yet to come: the shiny color pictures and bright slides. It is, of course, too early to imagine which particular pose of my body, juxtaposed with which parts of the memorial body, will please my father the most. Only the picture itself will tell. If Mother approves it, the family-memorial-picture will be selected and find its place on a prominent page of the official family album.

Memorial

Frolicking, making faces and excessive gestures, running, and climbing, every height is somehow less restricted here than bodily conduct there, on the street, at school, at home, in church, shopping center, cemetery, zoo, post office.

To straddle its knees, to ride its imperial lions bareback, to slide down along their bronze, monstrously long, thick hair, to climb the shining tangles of their tense muscles. Suddenly, and again, a familiar click of Father's camera interrupts my journey . . . yet I

continue traversing the edge of the bases of all four grand bas-reliefs as if nothing at all has happened. With my stomach and chest adhering to the sharp shapes of their belts, holsters, buttons, and insignias, I continue clothing myself in their uniforms, arming and equipping myself with their rifles, bayonets, grenades, and packs. I learn through my fingers and cheek, letter by letter, sign by sign, emblem by emblem, all the lessons there are to learn. I sculpt myself through the recesses, nooks, and corners of the halfway liberated form, halfway rooted into its flesh, its permanently thrown-out chests, heroic bodies, and corpses.

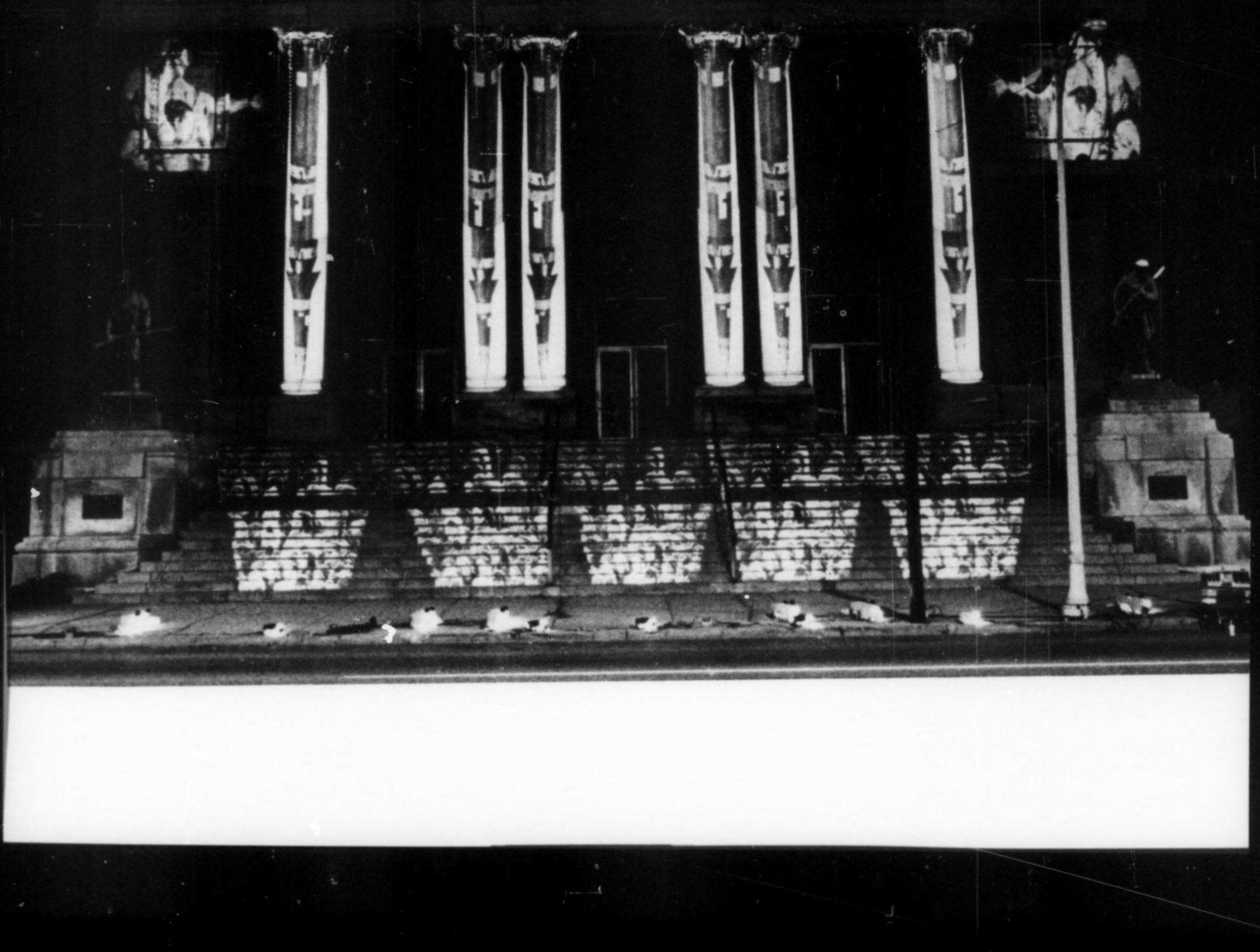
Assuming their poses and gestures, my body grasps their heroic style. Synchronizing the focus and direction of my gaze with the position of their blank stare, I see . . .

Projection

The aim of the memorial projection is not to "bring life to" or "enliven" the memorial nor to support the happy, uncritical, bureaucratic "socialization" of its site, but to reveal and expose to the public the contemporary deadly life of the memorial. The strategy of the memorial projection is to attack the memorial by surprise, using slide warfare, or to take part in and infiltrate the official cultural programs taking place on its site.

In the latter instance, the memorial projection will become a double intervention: against the imaginary life of the memorial itself, and against the idea of social-life-with-memorial as uncritical relaxation. In this case, where the monumental character of the projection is bureaucratically desired, the aim of the memorial projection is to *pervert this desire* monumentally.

The Memorial Hall Projection. *Dayton, Ohio, 1983.*



The Homeless Projection
A Proposal for the City of New York

"Architecture"

What has been called architecture is no longer merely a collection of buildings with "stable forms" and "permanent structures." Architecture must be recognized today as a social system: a new economic condition and a psycho-political experience. The new meanings ascribed to architecture through their interplay with changing circumstances and events are *not* new meanings but exist only as concepts in semiotic texts (Umberto Eco) and slogans in real-estate advertisements for the gentry (Zeckendorf Towers). If architecture does on occasion preserve its traditional and sentimental appearance in an attempt to "interplay" with new events, this serves only to create, impose, and ultimately reject or appropriate these new social circumstances. In this way, "architecture" demolishes, relocates, rebuilds, renovates, rezones, gentrifies, and develops itself continuously. Mimicking and embodying a corporate moral detachment, today's "architecture" reveals its inherent cynicism through its ruthless expansionism. What has been defined as architecture is really, then, a merciless real estate system, embodied in a continuous and frightening mass-scale EVENT, the most disturbingly public and central operations of which are economic terror, physical eviction, and the exodus of the poorest groups of city inhabitants from the buildings' interiors to the outdoors.

The New Monument

Such forced exteriorization of their estranged bodies transforms the homeless into permanently displayed outdoor "structures," symbolic architectural forms, new types of city monuments: THE HOMELESS.

The surfaces of THE HOMELESS—over- or underdressed, unwashed, cracked from permanent outdoor exposure, and posing in their frozen, "classic" gestures—weather and resemble the official monuments of the city. THE HOMELESS appear more dramatic than even the most colossal and expressive urban sculptures, memorials, or public buildings, however, for there is nothing more disruptive and astonishing in a monument than a sign of life. To the observer the slightest sign of life in THE HOMELESS is a living sign of the possibility of the death of the homeless from homelessness.

Proposed Projection, Abraham Lincoln Monument.
Union Square Park.

Proposed Projection, Layfayette Monument. *Union Square Park.*

Proposed Projection. Mother and Child Fountain.
Union Square Park.

The homeless must display themselves in symbolically strategic and popular city "accents." To secure their starvation wages (donations), the homeless must appear as the "real homeless" (their "performance" must conform to the popular MYTH OF THE HOMELESS): the homeless must become THE HOMELESS.

Adorned with the "refuse" of city "architecture" and with the physical fragments of the cycles of change, the homeless *become* the nomadic "buildings," the mobile "monuments" of the city. However, fixed in the absolute lowest economic and social positions and bound to their physical environment, THE HOMELESS achieve a *symbolic stability*, while the official city buildings and monuments lose their stable character as they continuously undergo their *real estate change.*

Unable to live without the dramatic presence of THE HOMELESS (since their contrast helps produce "value"—social, economic, cultural) and denying the homeless as its own social consequence, "architecture" must continuously repress the monumental condition of the homeless deeper into its (political) unconscious.

Projection

If the homeless must "wear" the building (become a new, mobile building) and are forced to live through the monumental problem of Architecture, the aim of THE HOMELESS PROJECTION is to impose this condition back upon the Architecture and to force its surfaces to reveal what they deny.

—To magnify the scale of the homeless to the scale of the building!

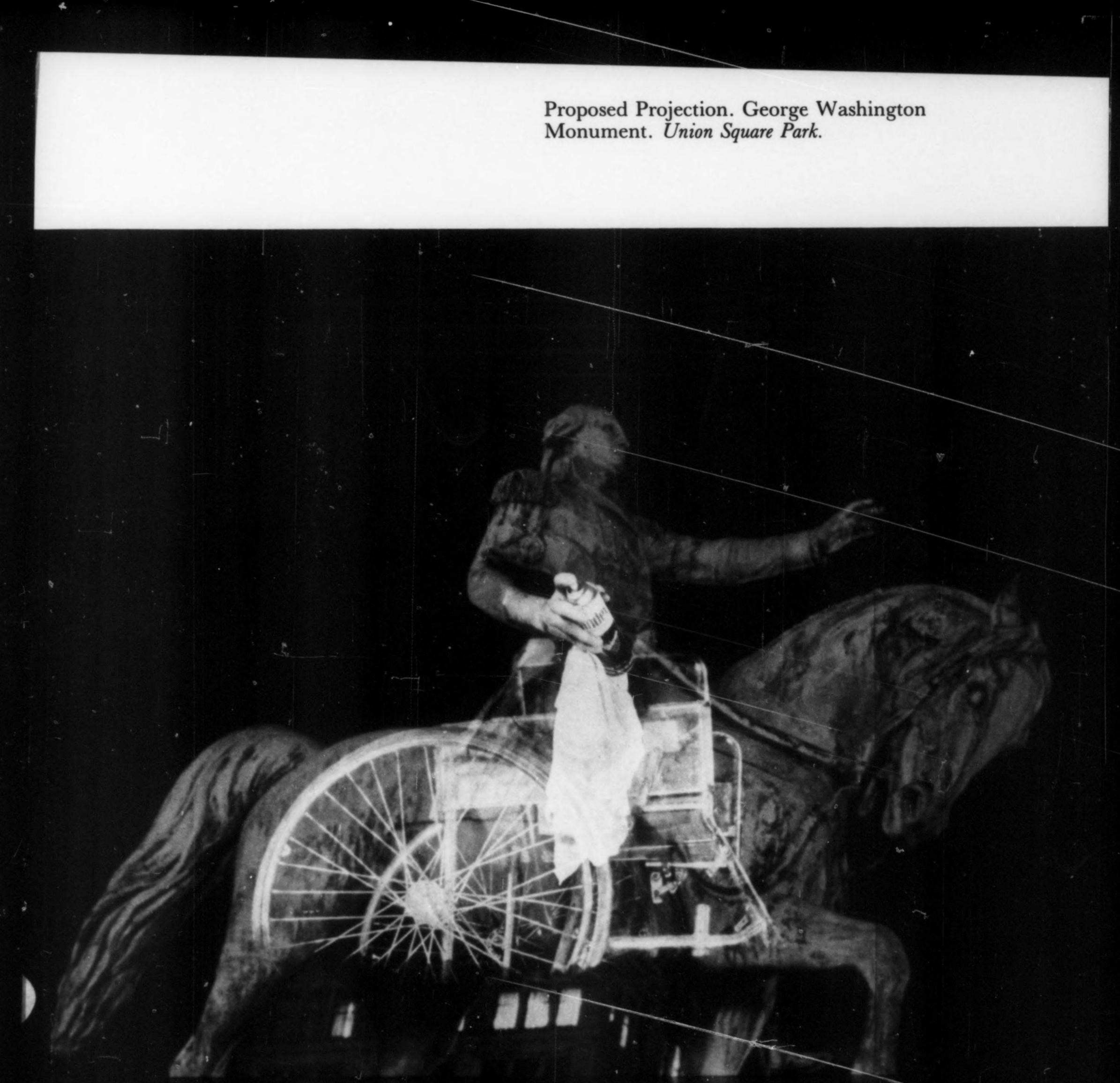
—To astonish the street public with the familiarity of the image and to make the homeless laugh!

—To employ the slide psychodrama method to teach the BUILDING to play the role of THE HOMELESS!

—To liberate the problem of the homeless from the unconscious of the "architecture"!

—To juxtapose the fake architectural real estate theater with the real survival theater of the homeless!

Proposed Projection. George Washington Monument. *Union Square Park.*



The Venice Projections

The new world empire of tourism (travel, entertainment, art, and leisure) has turned the ruins of the old world financial-military empire of Venice into an art-Disneyland and shopping-for-the-past plaza. In alliance with the international "Save Venice" movement, this new empire has converted (renovated) the once lavish and decadent capital of capital, that glorious, floating pioneer of the multinational corporate World Trade Center, into a tourist playground, an imaginary "refuge" from the politically and economically troubled world of today. Such a refuge cannot, however, really succeed in Venice. The escape it offers must function as a semiconscious return to the golden roots of today's global reality.

The gilded architecture of Venice, thin as its own image, has been copied, perfected, magnified, and mass-produced throughout the cities, suburbs, and entertainment centers of Europe and North America. Thus the imaginary escapes and semiconscious returns of Venice are easily furnished by the "gondolas" of the Chicago World's Fair, the "Piazza San Marco" of Disneyworld in Florida, the "Grand Canal palaces" of apartment towers, the "campanili" of city halls, factories, churches, banks, fire and train stations, and by the "Condottieri Colleoni" of all colonial and postcolonial urban monuments.

The tourist, familiar with contemporary commercial, religious, and militaristic slogans, draws upon this "knowledge" in order to discover Venice. Armed with the popular literature of art history, travel guides, and Italian dictionaries, the tourist begins a consumer love affair with the Venetian past, shopping for its difference, its richness, and its seductive historical atmosphere.

Today, mercenary pirates of political terrorism are threatening to cut off the commercial routes of tourism's global empire, of which Venice is the strategic center. To secure this empire's operations, in particular its overseas summer crusades, the imperial jumbo-jet fleet demands military protection. Thus the contemporary fear of terrorism joins with the fear of the entire empire of tourism, finding its center today in Venice, whose embattled history and architectural memory are haunted by it already.

Campanile San Marco. *Piazza San Marco, Venice, 1986.*

—To recognize the imaginary Venice as the true Venice of today! As the site of the merciless cultural and economic "terrorism" of the world empire of tourism, and the site of fear of the merciless "tourism" of world terrorism, ancient and contemporary!

—To infiltrate the Venetian tourist entertainments with counterfeit spectacles aimed at the uncritical consumption of historical Venice and her present-day myth!

—To interrupt this Venetian tourist romance, this shopping for the imaginary past and present!

—To call off this consumer marriage to the sea!

—To take Venetian architecture as a historical "screen" for the critical projections of the present!

—To turn the projectors upon Venice as a historical fetish of a contemporary reality!

—To project the symbols of the present onto those of the past!

—To confront publicly their illusive difference and embarrassing similarity!

Equestrian Statute of Condottiere Colleoni. *Campo San Giovanni e Paolo, Venice, 1986.*

A Conversation with Krzysztof Wodiczko

DOUGLAS CRIMP, ROSALYN DEUTSCHE, and
EWA LAJER-BURCHARTH

Deutsche: Last winter you showed *The Homeless Projection* as a proposal in a New York gallery. What procedures would be required to execute the work in its proposed site of Union Square?

Wodiczko: I can only recall for you the procedures required for a work proposed for Washington Square in 1984. It was explained to 49th Parallel, the gallery that helped organize the project, that permission was needed from the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and from the community board of the area. In that case, the Parks Department had no objections, but the community board, which was asked for approval on short notice, said no. A single individual, the head of the community board, was responsible for the refusal, because the decision had to be made in an interval between board meetings. He explained that the board had refused many other proposals, apparently because they are not interested in organized public events, which they feel would disturb the normal activities of the park. As you know, Washington Square has a very rich life, students, people exercising, drug traffic. I haven't attempted yet to realize *The Homeless Projection*, but I assume the procedures would be the same for Union Square.

Prospect Park, which administers Grand Army Plaza, where I did a projection in 1985, also has an agreement with the local community board. I was told that the agreement states that any cultural or artistic event that would bring politics to the park should be excluded. I was given the impression that my *Grand Army Plaza Projection* should not be politically explicit.

Deutsche: What do you suppose they think public art is?

Wodiczko: I think they want public art to consist of undisturbing but spectacular events or objects that will satisfy the community in an easy and immediate way, which I do not wish to oppose initially. It is essential to be able to take advantage of any administrative desire for art in public places, to "collaborate" in

Campanile and Church of Santa Maria Formosa.
Campo Santa Maria Formosa, Venice, 1986.

such events and infiltrate them with an unexpected critical element. In this case the main event was the annual Brooklyn New Year's Eve gala with a fireworks display by the Grucci family, music, and hot cider. My projection was intended as an integral part of the event.

Lajer-Burcharth: What was the reaction of the authorities who contracted you to do the event?

Wodiczko: I was invited to participate by Mariella Bisson, a special officer in the Prospect Park administration for organizing an art-in-the-park program. She is an artist herself and is very knowledgeable about the park's history, a committed "patriot" of the park, devoted to the notion of the park as a space of both historical and contemporary aesthetic experience. She has created a sculpture gallery in the interior—monstrous in its scale—of the Soldiers and Sailors Memorial Arch, and another art gallery in the boathouse in the park. She thought that one of my projections, regardless of its subject, would create an added attraction for the gala, differentiating this year's event from previous ones. But her supervisor was not informed about what I intended to project, even though it was known some two weeks in advance, since we had to do trial runs. Instead, the supervisor learned of the projection from the *New York Times*, whose section on what to do on New Year's Eve mentioned that U.S. and Soviet missiles would be projected on the arch. That must have smelled of politics to the supervisor. Not knowing how my projections function, how they illuminate the relation between image and architecture, the park administration evidently feared they had condoned a work of political propaganda. But once the projection was in place, it didn't have the shock of propaganda; the missiles looked very natural there. The projection lasted for only one hour, from 11:30 to 12:30 the next year, and when the supervisor arrived it was all over. But she still wanted to see it, so even though I was packing up my equipment, I set it up again for her. She was amazed by her own positive reaction to it, seduced by the brightness and glamour of the image, "pleasantly surprised," she said, by the integration of image and architecture. "The customer must be satisfied. Misunderstandings are out of the question!" as Witkiewicz wrote in the epigraph for his Rules of the Portrait Firm in the 1930s.[1] I heard that the threatened reputation of the art officer was restored immediately.

Crimp: What about the people who came to see the fireworks?

1. S. I. Witkiewicz (1885–1939), painter, photographer, playwright, theoretician, created The Portrait Firm in 1925 as an ironic response to bourgeois conditions of art in Poland. "The Rules of the Portrait Firm" were first published in 1928. A translation into French appears in *Présences Polonaises*, Paris, Centre Georges Pompidou, 1983, p. 73.

Wodiczko: That's a different story. Part of the public was disappointed that the slides didn't change. Slide projections mean, for most people, a "slide show," a multi-image spectacle. Because the public had to look for other aspects of the image than those of relationships between different images, they had to try to see the relation between the image and the architectural form. At first, people don't see architectural structures as images in themselves; they see them as physical surfaces, as screens for the projection. But keeping the image static helps to integrate it with the architecture.

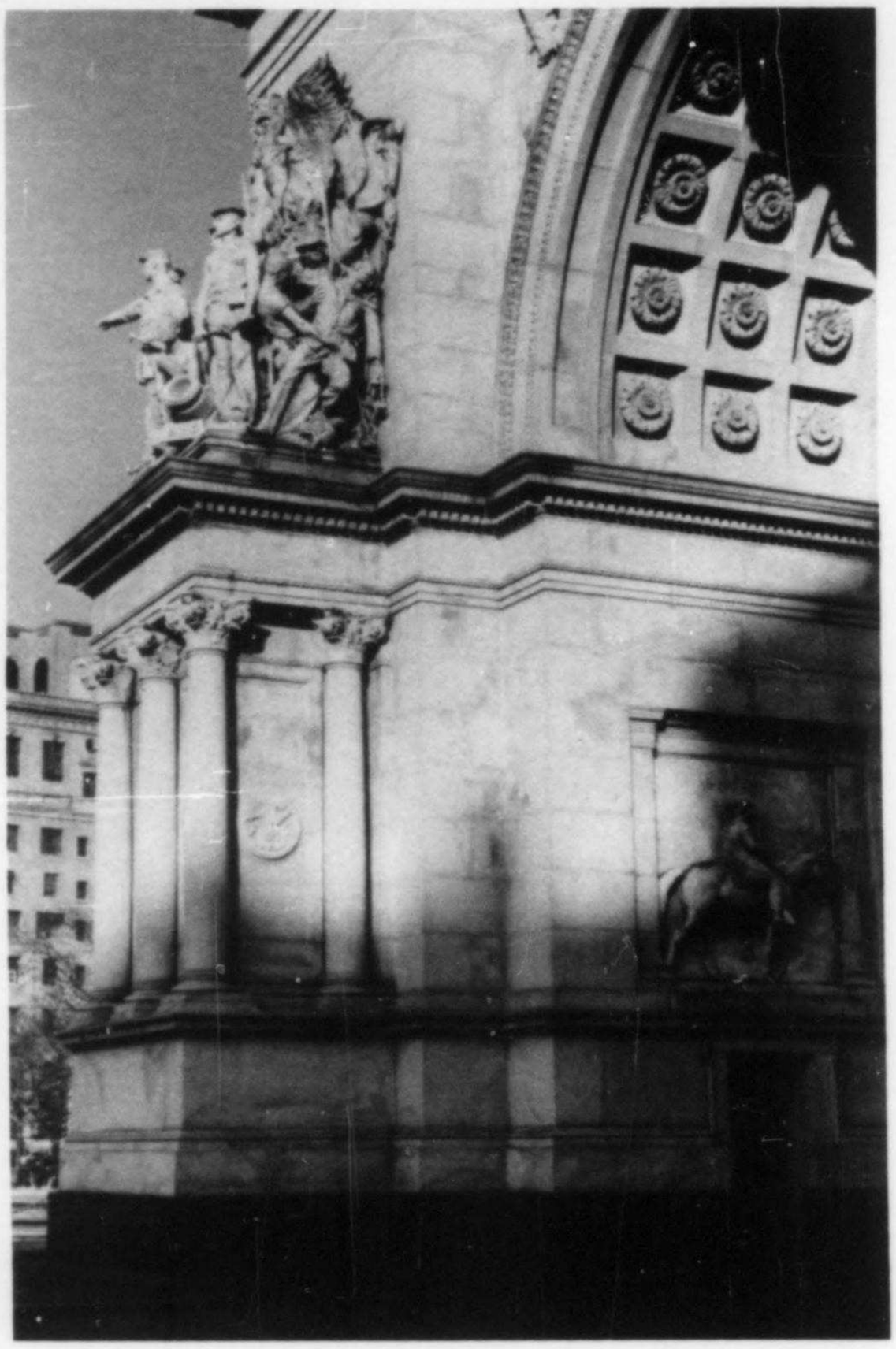
Deutsche: How many people saw the projection?

Wodiczko: I was told that 1400 people attended the event, but since the Grand Army Plaza is Brooklyn's major vehicular traffic circle and the red lights forced cars to stop exactly in front of the projection, many more hundreds of people must have seen it. Many cars stopped or slowed down despite the green light, and some circled around for a second look. Most of the people who came to the event were from the black and Hispanic community in Brooklyn, many of whom were school children. They were people who had no place else to go to celebrate New Year's Eve. Some members of the cultural intelligentsia, as well as some junior-high-school students who had seen photographs of my projections shown at the New Museum at that time, made an effort to be there. The projection was on the north side of the arch and therefore could be seen, not from Prospect Park, but from the small adjacent park in front of which the arch stands. Cars drive all around that park, making it a very circumscribed and intimate viewing area. There are no sculptures or reliefs on the north side of the arch. This is a monument to the northern army, so the south side of the arch is very busy with representations of the army marching south to liberate the South from "wrongdoing." The monument has absolutely nothing to say about the North, because if it did, it would have to reflect on itself. So despite the fact that the arch is symmetrically designed to carry sculptures on both sides, there is no sculpture on the north side.

Lajer-Burcharth: So you were interested in completing the monument symmetrically with images that ironically echoed the structure and the elements on the southern side. For example, you projected a padlock, a sign of constraint and limitation, on the keystone of the arch as a dissonant equivalent of the figure of liberation, the winged victory.

Crimp: It also reinscribes the North/South conflict with an East/West orientation.

Wodiczko: After growing up in the "East" it certainly helps to arrive in the "West" from the north, by which I mean Canada, in order better to see all sides of the



Bas-relief by Thomas Eakins and William R. O'Donovan on the Soldiers and Sailors Arch, *Grand Army Plaza, Brooklyn.*

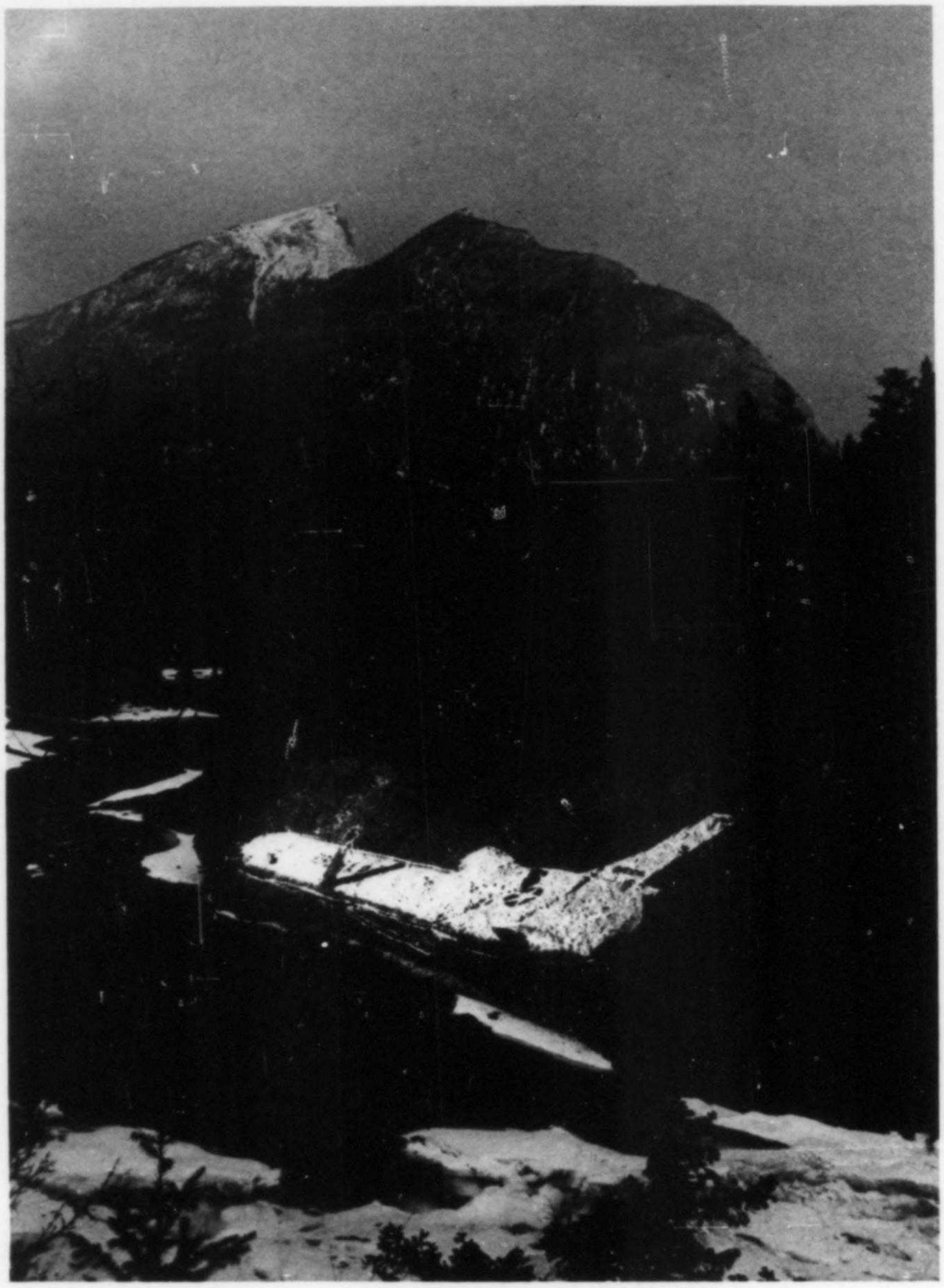
arch, especially the repressed, northern side. Ironically, this arch, which is conceived as receiving the victorious Northern army and which uses a classicizing beaux-arts style, is challenged by two small realist bas-relief sculptures by Eakins placed inside the arch. They are the only two figures actually walking north, coming back from the war, extremely tired. One of the horses is limping. As far as I know, this is the only monument in the world that contains such an internal debate, aesthetically and historically. The fact that a realist was allowed to enter the beaux-arts domain in reverse direction is extraordinary.

Anyway, my reorientation of the arch to an East/West conflict converts the reading of the arch from its commentary on the South to one of left and right, to the weight of the arch's two bases. The people viewing the projection offered their own interpretations. What I liked was that everyone was trying to impose his or her reading upon others. It turned into a political debate based on reading the symbols and referring to the contemporary political situation. It was a time when the public was being prepared for impending peace talks between the U.S. and Soviet governments. There were great expectations about

Krzysztof Wodiczko. The Grand Army Plaza Projection *during New Year's Eve fireworks*.

coming back to the conference table and perhaps for a reduction of the arms race. I wanted to respond to this, but, of course, it's impossible today to be optimistic and intelligent at the same time. So I wanted the people to see various possibilities. But since everyone was interested in convincing others of his or her own reading, only a few seemed to realize that the various readings were all simultaneously possible. One reading was that the missiles were two phallic symbols. Another was that the projection was about disarmament, the nuclear freeze, the liberal position. And a third group spoke of the interdependence of the superpowers, the fact that they are locked together, that they cannot exist without each other, and that there is a frightening similarity between them. Because the debate was open and easily heard, all the readings were most likely received by everyone, and hopefully this social and auditory interaction helped the visual projection survive in the public's memory as a complex experience. For a moment at least, this "necro-ideological" monument became alive.

Halfway through the projection, behind and above the arch, there was another audiovisual experience for eight minutes that gave the projection a new, enhanced context. The fireworks—detonations, explosions, aerial illuminations—this display would have had a double meaning for anyone who had experienced bombings of cities or who, growing up in the ruins of cities, had



Krzysztof Wodiczko. The Bow Falls Projection. *Banff, Alberta, 1983.*

seen films of those bombings. This was certainly the case for the Polish intellectuals among the spectators, among them the critic Szymon Bojko.

Bojko, who lives in Poland, wrote a popular book on Soviet constructivist graphic design.[2] He is able to address, both popularly and historically, the relation between art and propaganda. Through his connections in the Soviet Union, he knows a lot about Vkhutemas,[3] the Soviet predecessor of the Bauhaus.

2. Szymon Bojko, *New Graphic Design in Revolutionary Russia*, New York, Praeger, 1972.
3. Vkhutemas, an acronym for the Russian for Higher Art and Technical Workshops, was founded in the Soviet Union in 1920. In 1927 it was re-formed and renamed Vkhutein (State

Working in the '60s in the cultural department of the central committee of the Polish United Workers Party,[4] Bojko managed to influence the committee with very clear ideas on the organization of industrial design education, research, and practice. He came to see my *Grand Army Plaza Projection* with a group of Polish and American friends from New York, so I was very interested to see how they would respond. They were relieved to see that there were both Soviet and U.S. missiles, because they had heard that one of my projections in Stuttgart consisted of only a Pershing II missile and that one in Canada was of only a U.S.-built Cruise missile. So there was probably some talk of my not acknowledging both sides of the problem, which is a very sensitive issue in Poland. They also suggested the reading of the interdependence between the superpowers, and some of them mentioned the ironic relationship between the heroic monumentality of the arch and the new "heroism" and "monumentality" of intercontinental ballistic missiles. Poles are very well educated about public monuments. As the Polish playwright Sławomir Mrożek put it, "Somewhere between the monuments and the memorials lies Poland."

Lajer-Burcharth: Your projections also remind me of an important aspect of Polish May Day parades. The focal point of the parades, the pompous facades of the socialist-realist buildings on the main street in Warsaw, used to be adorned with huge, four-story-high portraits of contemporary Polish heads of state hung side by side with those of Marx and Lenin. This display was obviously a kind of wish fulfillment of the Polish rulers anxious to secure symbolic continuity between themselves and the unquestioned heroes of the communist past. The socialist-realist architecture was made to reinforce this continuity with the authority of its classicizing forms. And the portraits reciprocated as an endorsement by the current leadership of the excessive grandeur of this postwar architecture. Obviously, the effect of your projections is very different. Far from this reciprocal completion, the clashing of image and architecture calls into question the authority of both. But wouldn't you say that the Polish context is relevant to your attitude toward images of authority?

Wodiczko: Yes, to the extent that the architecture of the '60s, and even more so that of the '70s, the Gierek era, embodied a new style, a fetishism of progress, a Westernized, technocratic version of progress (echoing Lenin's New Economic Policy), a "state productivism," if I may put it that way. In this period the ac-

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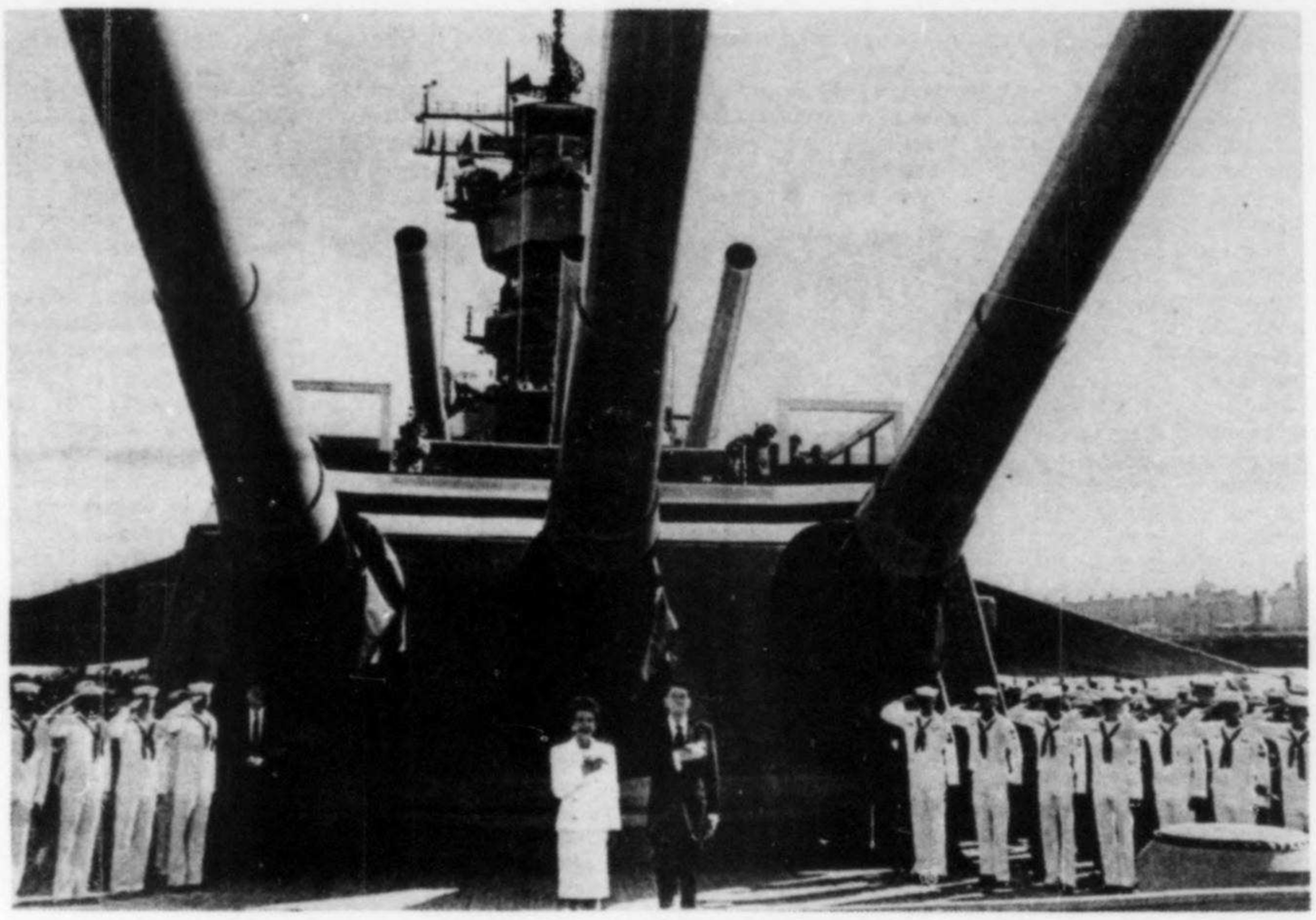
Higher Art and Technical Workshops); it was dissolved in 1930. For a brief history, see Szymon Bojko, "Vkhutemas," in *The 1920s in Eastern Europe*, Cologne, Galerie Gmurzynska, 1975, pp. 19–26.

4. Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza, the official name of the Communist Party in Poland, which was created during World War II from a merger of the Polish Socialist Party and the Polish Workers Party.

quired capitalist, "scientifically exploitative" organization of production was wedded to the state socialist, centrally planned, bureaucratic exploitation of workers' labor, all in the name of achieving a higher, which is to say, closer to Western, standard of living. The environmental evidence of Gierek's new "New Economic Policy" was painfully visible in the form of the rapid development of office towers, gigantic hotels, shopping centers, automobiles, super highways, and urban vehicular arterials. In this context, the grand official manifestations of the '70s provided an opportunity to see very clearly the propaganda effects of both the earlier, Stalinist architecture, which now looked "romantic," and the new, Western-style, abstract, technocratic architecture.

Lajer-Burcharth: With the advent of Gierek an important change was introduced into the official symbolic practices in order to take account of the new economic order. In the May Day parades, portraits of contemporary Polish leaders were no longer used. Gierek's leadership was represented instead by such signs of technocratic progress as the new Forum hotel, built by a Swedish contractor, at the site where the parade ends. This building and others built in the '70s be-

Intersection of Marszałkowska and Aleje Jerozolimskie showing Gierek-era buildings.



News photo of the "Liberty Celebration," 1986.

came the backdrops for portraits of Marx and Lenin. The architecture itself was intended to testify to the successful continuation of their ideals.

Crimp: Are you saying, then, that this kind of political manifestation was central to your own understanding of the relationship between image and architecture?

Wodiczko: It did help to be able to see the impact of a grand but temporary political decoration on the public's perception of buildings, of the cityscape as a whole. It also helped me to understand the effect of the absence of such decorations after they were taken down, to remember the architectural "afterimage" of a political slogan or icon, its lasting but illusive integration with the building. Such an experience suggests, of course, the possibility of a temporary, *unofficial*, *critical* "decoration," difficult to imagine in Poland, where censorship of the public domain is total, but a little easier to imagine here, where censorship is also strong but less centralized. Generally, Poland was a great laboratory of environmental ideology. But the imagery of official Polish propaganda is so architectural itself, perfect to the point of its own death. The obvious, sloganistic character, the lifeless appearance makes Polish imagery less subversive, less seductive, appearing to be less "natural" than American propaganda imagery, such as advertising or even an official event like the "Liberty Celebration." But Polish propaganda does have a powerful architectural quality which integrates well with the ideological/architectural environment. So I did learn much in Poland, but my education needed to be completed in the context of capitalist consumer culture. It was an advantage that I went first to Canada, where cultural studies of media and communications are very strong. My teaching affiliation with the Cultural Studies Program in Peterborough, Ontario, was important in

this regard. Only after several years outside Poland was I able fully to comprehend the degree to which artists and designers in Poland were ideologically trapped by the Westernized, "liberal" state socialism of the '70s. Artists earned their freedom to work with what were called "various means of expression," that is, to exclude official politics from their art, by including those very politics in the work they did on commission for the state propaganda apparatus. So one was political as a collaborator-artist in the morning and apolitical as a "pure" artist in the evening in the confines of one's studio. Only a few artists and designers realized that in such a situation they were really acting as collaborators with the system not in the morning but in the evening.

Crimp: Was this your experience?

Wodiczko: Not really. I was an industrial designer working full time in the design office of the Polish Optical Works in Warsaw, so I was not working freelance, not vulnerable to the changing desires of the ideological design market, and not needing to work for the propaganda apparatus as most painters, sculptors, and graphic designers did. I worked in a factory designing professional instruments such as microscopes, measuring devices, electronic systems for quality control, scientific research, laboratory, and medical purposes. At one point I was on a design team that was asked to design a geological compass . . .

Lajer-Burcharth: An ideological compass?!

Wodiczko: You almost spoiled my story, because you understand too quickly. There were all sorts of demands coming from the industrial brass to come up with a less professional, more popular tool in response to Gierek's program for an increase in the production of consumer goods. That was, of course, an idiotic demand for a professional instruments company. So I said publicly, in the design office, that we would design this compass only if there were no member of the Communist Party on the design team, because north is north, not east or west. A compass can only show magnetic north. Somehow, nothing happened to me, perhaps because as an industrial designer, a member of a still-young profession, I was treated as an eccentric in the industrial world. As a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts, I was also treated as an "artist," even though I did everything I could to counteract that view. This experience taught me how thoroughly design is submerged in politics. I learned a lot about politics even regarding the most innocent measuring instrument, something that can be done only in the most technical manner. Imagine what my designer friends were going through when designing refrigerators!

Deutsche: What was your background before you worked as an industrial designer? Can you tell us something about your education?

Wodiczko: In the Soviet Union in the '20s the educational path lead from fine art to design, from analytical constructivism to productivism. For me, in the '60s and '70s, the situation was, of course, different. The period of Gomułka's de-Stalinization in Poland provided an opening for contact with Western design circles, such as the school in Ulm,[5] and with those of prewar avant-garde design, such as BLOK, Praesens, a.r.,[6] and the Koluszki school.[7] I studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw in the '60s. The graduate program in industrial design, in which I was a student, was directed by Jerzy Sołtan, a former assistant of Le Corbusier. At that time Sołtan was directing a similar program at Harvard, teaching the fall term in Warsaw and the spring term in Cambridge. I'm sure that Szymon Bojko's support was crucial to Sołtan's success in Poland. Sołtan, his assistant Andrzej Wróblewski, now president of the academy, and Bojko had devised a post-avant-garde strategy for post-Stalinist Poland. The special education of designers was a key point of their strategy. The program emphasized the developments of the students' individual and collective skills for infiltrating the institutional structure while working as common industrial designers, organizers of design offices in all branches of industry, teachers, researchers, and so on. It was a neoproductivist model. This was the period of the creation of the Industrial Design Council, whose head is vice-premier of the government and whose members are vice-ministers. So industrial design was very highly bureaucratized, much better organized than in the West or in Lenin's Soviet Union. I was trained to be a member of the elite unit of designers, skillful infiltrators who were supposed to transform existing state socialism into an intelligent, complex, and human design project. This positive social program for industrial design, indebted historically to the program of Vkhutemas, unfortunately shifted in the Gierek era to a technocratic, consumerist phase and thus adopted the international constructivist tradition in place of constructivism proper, the latter being the constructivism that developed in the Soviet Union as a means of building a society rather than decorating bourgeois society with objects. The de-politicization of constructivism's history was a very unfortunate part of our experience as artists. There is a famous museum of constructivism

5. The Hochschule für Gestaltung was founded in Ulm, West Germany, in 1955. Walter Gropius delivered the inaugural address, saying, "The work once begun in the Bauhaus and the principles formulated there have found a new German home and an opportunity for wider organic development here in Ulm." The school was closed in 1968.
6. BLOK (founded 1924), Praesens (founded 1926), and a.r. (Revolutionary Artists, founded 1929) were the major Polish constructivist groups as well as the names of their publications.
7. Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński taught at the industrial school in Koluszki in 1930–31 using a curriculum based on the educational principles of Vkhutemas and the Bauhaus.

in Łódź.[8] In the '70s it was already quite clear that the effect, and perhaps even the mission of this museum was to de-politicize the entire constructivist tradition, intellectual and artistic, affiliating it more and more with international, Western constructivism, the de Stijl movement, and neoconstructivism such as op and kinetic art.

Lajer-Burcharth: This tendency to de-politicize Polish constructivism by playing down its links with the Soviet experiment should be situated historically within the liberalization associated with Gierek. The reinterpretation of Polish artistic traditions as independent from Soviet art paralleled the reorientation of the Polish economy toward the West. This view of constructivism was also part of the defensive reaction to the postwar imposition of Soviet art policies in Poland, that is, to socialist realism. The imposition of Zhdanovist orthodoxy stalled any discussion of the alternative forms of culture for the new socialist society until the late '50s.

Wodiczko: Quite openly so. As part of the six-year plan of 1949, the guidelines of the council of architects specifically declared socialist realism a critique of constructivism. This "critique" collapsed the complex history of constructivism into one international bourgeois movement, excoriated as "cosmopolitanism, constructivism, and formalism," whose "abstract forms" were said to be "always foreign to the people." But the Stalinist position, for all its regressive effect, was at least conducted in the name of social responsibility, socialist content, the national cultural heritage, a human form for the environment, and so on. The Stalinist era represented a total politicization of art and design, including a politicization of the war against constructivism. The Gierek era, by contrast, represented a total de-politicization of art and design, including a war on constructivism carried out through its de-politicization. This most recent perversion of constructivism, then, resulted in what I call socialist technocratism.

Deutsche: So there was a de-politicization of constructivism in the East that is directly parallel to that in the West.

Lajer-Burcharth: Except that in Poland this process took place in a more overtly political context. In the West the de-politicization of constructivism was effected by the art-historical discourse, while in Poland it was an element of national cultural policy. The attempt to restore to constructivism its real history that is now taking place in the West has also begun in Poland, especially in the work of Andrzej Turowski. His *Polish Constructivism* appeared as late as 1981,[9] but

8. At the instigation of Strzemiński and the a.r. group, an international collection of modern art was formed in 1931 at the museum of Łódź, now the Museum Sztuki.
9. Andrzej Turowski, *Konstruktywizm polski*, Warsaw, Polish Academy of Science, Institute of Art, 1981.

Turowski wrote an earlier, popular analysis of constructivism in a book series devoted to twentieth-century avant-garde movements.

Wodiczko: His title for the earlier book was *The Constructivist Revolution*, which suggests the interplay between aesthetic and political revolution. The editors changed it to *In the Circle of Constructivism.*[10] It is against editorial policy to acknowledge openly anything as political, including constructivism. Turowski's repoliticization and rehistoricization of constructivism was a crucial experience for me. The Foksal Gallery, of which Turowski and Wiesław Borowski were the codirectors, had established itself as a center of criticism of artistic culture. It is a type of alternative gallery not really known here in that it was run collectively by critics, and not by artists. Through the presentation of works of art, critical texts, and debates, the gallery wished to affect the larger context. They applied the avant-garde style of manifestos and interventions, but "post-avant-garde" to the extent that they accepted the limitation of utopia, dealing as they were with a reality that was already organized in the name of utopia.

When Turowski entered the gallery as a young scholar of constructivism, he contributed a Marxist methodology to the gallery's tactics and strategies, which was a very significant change, because at that time the gallery critics and artists were operating with surrealist ideas. Turowski's presence resulted in a fusion of a moral critique of established artistic culture with a social critique, and self-critique, of that culture's institutions. Turowski wrote a very important short text entitled "Gallery against Gallery." It was the beginning of the concept of the gallery as a self-critical institution, an institution questioning its own place in society in relation to other institutions, and doing so to the extent of putting into question the entire institutional system of culture. Foksal also published texts called "What We Don't Like about Foksal Gallery" and "Documentation," which called for the destruction of all the art documents. The "Living Archive" created the exaggerated idea of an archive that would protect documents by preventing their further circulation and cultural manipulation.

Lajer-Burcharth: This occurred in response to censorship. In Poland, unlike other Soviet bloc countries, a certain independence is granted within the domain of culture so long as culture is willing to contain itself and refrain from interaction with other social activity. Foksal Gallery was one such island of cultural criticism that was allowed to exist. But even this self-imposed marginalization did not guarantee complete freedom of operation. When I was involved with another alternative gallery, founded after Foksal, we managed to publish several issues of a journal about critical aesthetic practices without asking for party approval for our editorial staff. We did this by using the paper allotted us for the publica-

10. Andrzej Turowski, *W kręgu konstruktywizmu*, Warsaw, Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1979.

tion of exhibition catalogues. Soon, though, we were forced to discontinue publication, not because of any specific contents, but because it is prohibited to put out a serial publication, something that can be distributed and read regularly, without the consent of the centralized apparatus of the state. Seriality itself threatened to spill culture outside its prescribed limits.

Wodiczko: The experience with censorship, with official culture, and with the entire institutional system, the changing meaning of each form of cultural activity in changing political circumstances, was a central part of my experience in Poland, especially because of my affiliation with Foksal Gallery but also because of my father. Throughout the period of Stalinism and the Gomułka and Gierek eras, my father was involved with serious cultural politics as a conductor and artistic director of city and state orchestras and opera companies. He was famous for introducing the Polish public to the contemporary, artistically ambitious repertoire.[11] People such as my father and those associated with Foksal Gallery, just as the people like Sołtan and Bojko, whom we have already discussed, learned to cope with the system of restrictions and liberties in order consciously to infiltrate and manipulate the system while also recognizing the extent to which they were being manipulated by the system. So, having close contacts with the mechanisms of censorship and self-censorship and with the politics of official artistic culture and of industry and education (I was teaching at Warsaw's Polytechnique), and having my father's example, I learned very quickly that we must adopt some kind of post-avant-garde strategy in Poland.

Lajer-Burcharth: Since you are speaking of the strategy of manipulating the system from within, of interfering with the codes, so to speak, were you familiar with the writings of Roland Barthes?

Wodiczko: Barthes was not unknown to me and my generation. Most of the French theoreticians, especially those working in the field of culture, were translated into Polish, possibly earlier than into English. Writings, films, plays, and art critical of contemporary bourgeois culture were always welcomed by the Polish censorship apparatus. It was, however, difficult to learn from writers like Barthes how to operate critically within the Polish situation. Once one realized the best strategies for one's own place, though, it was easier to understand what Barthes was suggesting for the West. But we should not forget that the situation during the late '60s and early '70s was in some respects similar in

11. Bohdan Wodiczko (1911–1985) was conductor and artistic director of the Baltic Symphony, Łódź Symphony, Cracow Symphony, Polish National Orchestra, Polish Radio Orchestra, Łódź Opera, and Polish National Opera. He was responsible for introducing postwar Polish audiences to Stravinsky, Berg, Nono, and other modern composers, as well as for engaging such avant-garde figues as Tadeusz Kantor as directors of opera productions.

France and Poland. We lost our student battles in 1968, too. We lost faith in our utopian revolutionary approach, and we needed new strategies. Polish students' demands differed from those of the French students, but there were many similarities. Poland and Czechoslovakia were part of the overall movement in the '60s. So after the failure of all of our revolutions, we found ourselves in similar situations, whether we happened to be reading Barthes or not. I wonder, by the way, whether Barthes would have understood the strategies of Foksal Gallery in the context of French cultural politics of the same period. But you know very well that Poland and France have been very closely connected. Many Polish students witnessed what happened in France in 1968. Turowski was one of them. The work of Daniel Buren and the Support-Surface group would not have been clear to me without the conversations with Turowski and some of his friends from Poznań . . .

Lajer-Burcharth: In Poznań there is a dynamic Marxist intellectual milieu, a rarity in Polish academic life.

Wodiczko: I realized that what the Polish constructivists Katarzyna Kobro and Władysław Strzemiński were dreaming about, "the organization of the rhythms of life" as the ultimate aesthetic project, was already organized all around us. So, learning from the constructivists the relationship between society and form, among politics, art, and everyday life, by combining this with the knowledge of futurist, dada, and surrealist interventions, we could begin to understand that our aim was not to contribute to the further organization of the "rhythms of life," but to interrupt, interfere, and intervene in the already highly organized "rhythms of life."

Crimp: So this strategy of interruption or interference, which might be said to characterize your work now, is something that you had already developed in the Polish context.

Wodiczko: Yes, seeds of my critical activity here in the public sphere can be found in my early works in Warsaw, especially in the two "de-constructivist" technical "inventions." The first of these was *Instrument*, presented to the public in Warsaw in 1971. I designed it with the help of technicians from the Experimental Music Studio. It was an electro-acoustic instrument/costume that transformed, through my hand gestures, the accidental noise of city traffic into modulated sounds that only I could hear. The second was *Vehicle*, constructed with the help of Foksal Gallery, and shown publicly in Warsaw in 1972. Through a system of gears and cables, the vehicle was propelled forward by perpetually walking back and forth on its tilting top surface. It thus transformed the conventional back-and-forth pacing associated with intellectual reflection or with being stymied into the forward movement associated with the official

Krzysztof Wodiczko. Vehicle.
Warsaw, 1972–73.

notion of progress. You can see that my metaphoric vehicle was an ironic reconsideration of such an optimistic, techno-socialist project as Tatlin's *Letatlin.*[12]

Deutsche: If, to some degree, your work still involves the interruption of the official organization of society, how does such a strategy function here, in a different context? In Poland, as you've explained, you had to work within a social organization that includes official and overt censorship, while here censorship functions very differently; the entire organization of the social is much less apparent, much less obvious. How do you transfer the ideas which had formed your strategies in Poland to a different context?

Wodiczko: By trying to intervene in the public sphere as close as possible to the legal and technical limits that are imposed. Acting in the public sphere in the West, I have confronted not only a different category of censorship, but a different level. There is a greater general possibility for working in public, but this creates a need for more complicated strategies to deal with a complex set of institutional, corporate, state, and community restrictions. But the "transfer of ideas" to the West must be discussed in relation not only to forms and categories of censorship, to different kinds of artistic unfreedom, but also to the ap-

12. Vladimir Tatlin worked on his flying machine *Letatlin* between 1929 and 1932, at which time he attempted to launch it. He called his glider "an everyday object for the Soviet masses, an ordinary object of use."

plicability of the ideas to the new situation. It is safe to say, however, that, despite all the differences, there are great similarities in our everyday lives in relation to our physical environment, whether in Poland, Canada, the U.S., or the Soviet Union. There are similarities in the ways that architecture functions as an ideological medium, a psychological partner, in the way it educates, orders, participates in the process of socialization, in the way it integrates its "body" with our bodies, in the ways it rapidly changes or even destroys our lives. My public projections developed first in Canada, because in Poland I could not even consider such an art form simply because of technical limitations, and obviously because of the censorship of the public sphere. Even to use images from the press for my gallery projections, which I had done in an exhibition called *References*, I needed to have permission, because individuals don't own images; the state does. The result is that it is impossible to change the context of images, because the state is perfectly aware of the semiotics of the image. In order to use images, one must resort to metaphor rather than direct statement.

Crimp: Do people learn to read metaphors better in such a situation than they do here, to perform a hermeneutic operation on every image?

Lajer-Burcharth: This is, in fact, how culture survives. Filmmakers, writers, and artists who want to comment on social reality usually employ metaphor. Otherwise their possibilities of affecting public opinion are very restricted.

Deutsche: But can't the censors also read those metaphors?

Lajer-Burcharth: Yes, they can, but they are also embarrassed to admit that they can recognize them, because that would imply that they are aware of the shortcomings or problems that the metaphors address. They are afraid to admit to the pertinence of the criticism. This is why the books of the journalist Ryszard Kapuściński, which expose the corruption of such regimes as those in Ethiopia and Iran,[13] are permitted to be published. Otherwise, the censors would implicitly acknowledge their recognition of the analogies of those regimes with the regimes of Eastern bloc countries, of Poland itself.

Wodiczko: One must read Dostoevski's *Crime and Punishment* to understand the relationship between censor and censored. You learn the language of the censor in order to communicate, and, to some degree the censor must also learn your language. There is a final episode to the narrative of *The Grand Army Plaza Pro-*

13. Ryszard Kapuściński, *The Emperor: Downfall of an Autocrat*, trans. William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, San Diego, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983; and *Shah of Shahs*, trans. William R. Brand and Katarzyna Mroczkowska-Brand, San Diego, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1985.

jection that is relevant here. Several months ago I went to Poland and presented Foksal Gallery with a proposal to show a reconstruction of the project in the gallery. The idea was submitted to the censorship board and the woman in charge explained that it would be impossible to present the work because it would violate article number eight hundred and something or other of the censorship code, which says that under no circumstances are weapons of the U.S. and Soviet Union to be visually depicted as of equal weight, volume, or quantity. An exhibition of documents of my public projections is opening at Foksal Gallery in September this year with *The Grand Army Plaza Projection* and a few others excluded. A catalogue with reproductions of the projections and my theoretical texts is being published. The texts, both in English and in Polish translation, are of course censored. "Public Projection," originally published in the *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory* in 1983, attempts to situate my work in the relations among body, architecture, power, and ideology. This was accepted for publication with only one "criticism"; the words *power* and *ideology* must be omitted entirely.

Deutsche: But presumably you knew what would not pass the censorship when you submitted your proposals.

Wodiczko: No, because the laws of censorship have changed. But also the very essence of authoritarian existence is that you never really know what is allowed and what is not. There used to be a "black book" of censorship, a general list of rules and regulations. That has now been replaced by a code of specific regulations, which is changed regularly in response to changing circumstances, so the situation is much worse now. It is much more difficult to fool the system when there are very highly qualified censors immediately interpreting changing conditions and implementing regulations. Some of these people have PhDs; they are "intellectuals." It is a perfect illustration of Marx's definition of censorship, which is that it is centralized criticism. So in Poland there is a kind of centralized art criticism. No one in Poland can complain of the lack of "critical response" to his or her work. Art criticism is democratically guaranteed!

Crimp: Apart from the contents of the images, what is the response in Poland, not only of the censors, but of the intellectuals, to the production mode of your work? Is there any problem of their reading this as aesthetic activity? Are they sufficiently aware of recent developments, albeit marginalized, in the West to understand your mode of working?

Wodiczko: I don't think there is a general problem with understanding my working methods in Poland, nor is there a problem of information about art developments in the West. Information about the West is temporarily limited

today, but in the '70s it was quite accessible, and is beginning to improve again. Hans Haacke's and Daniel Buren's work, for example, is well known to Foksal Gallery, Akumulatory 2, Studio, and many other galleries. Foksal showed Lawrence Weiner, Art and Language, Victor Burgin, European and American Fluxus, and so on. Poland is marginalized less by lack of information about art in the West than by the lack of information about art in Poland available in the West.

Lajer-Burcharth: I don't think the political nature of Krzysztof's work would prevent people in Poland from accepting it as aesthetic practice. After all, they are used to looking for political messages coded in art rather than in the political discourse itself, which is considered totally corrupt.

Wodiczko: My work receives an informed response in Poland. If there is any problem, it is related to different perspectives on global politics, between my perspective, which developed just across the border from the U.S., and theirs, which develops across the border from the monstrous presence of the Soviet Union. Polish censorship and Polish intellectuals have similar but opposite doubts about my position with regard, for example, to the question of the equivalence of Soviet and U.S. weapons.

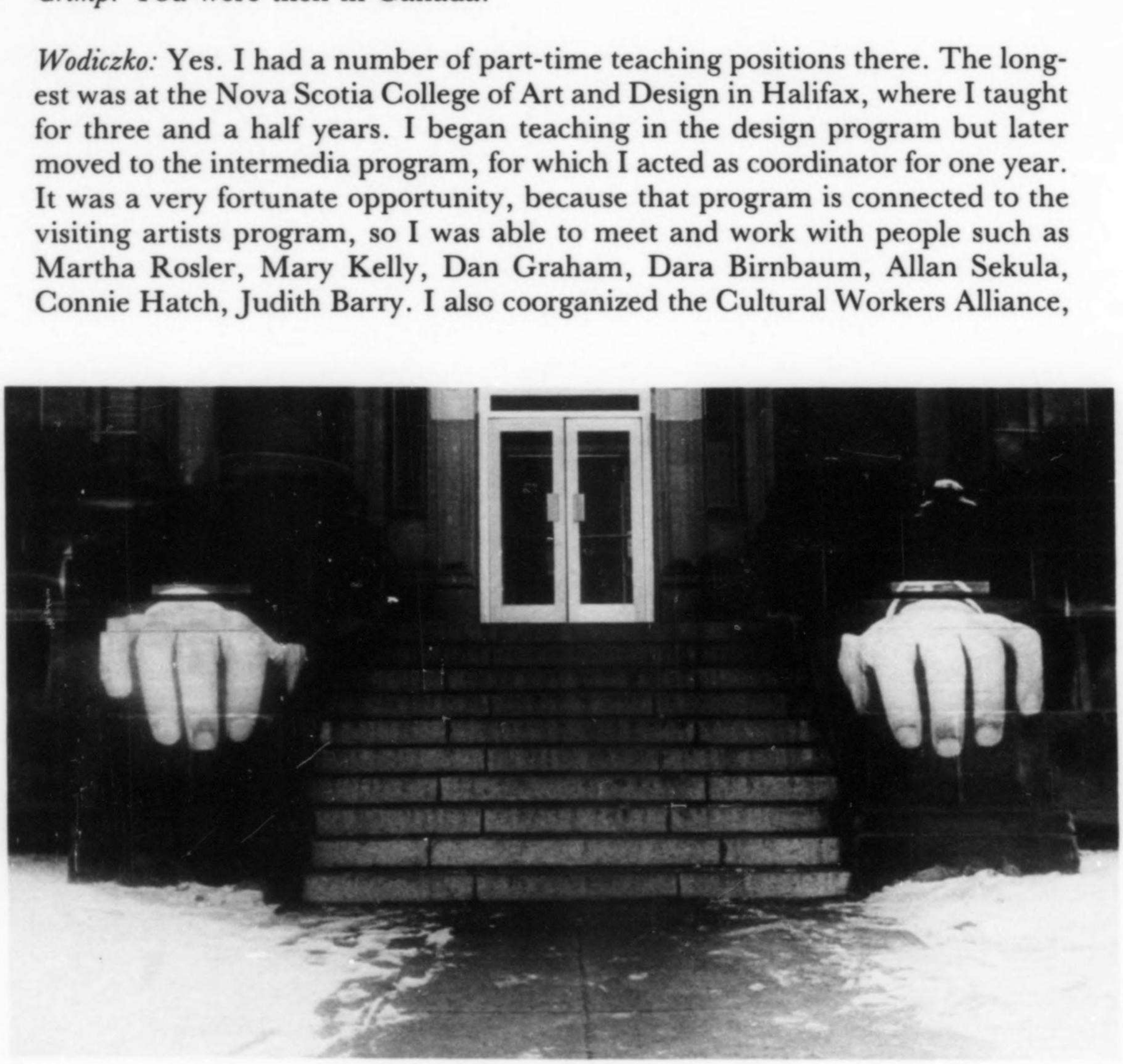
Crimp: What were the circumstances of your leaving Poland?

Wodiczko: I did not really leave Poland in 1977, in the sense that I had the idea of not returning. It's only that I didn't want to lose contact with the outside world. It was extremely crucial for me to see Poland from the outside. Each time I returned to Poland I was more aware of the extent to which social questions were neglected, how thoroughly we were locked into the prison of an Eastern European perspective. My position was never met with much understanding, even within Foksal Gallery. As long as questions were limited to the politics of culture, things were fine, but when I went beyond that domain, my views were treated as irrelevant. So I wanted to continue to travel back and forth. How naive I was! Obviously there is no such possibility. You might not get your exit visa; then again you might also not get your entry visa to a country in the West. I had to face the typical dilemma. It was set up for me by the Polish police, who began to blackmail my friends, reading all of our correspondence and sometimes quoting telephone conversations verbatim in order to terrorize friends, who also needed to get exit visas. This particularly involved a woman whom the authorities discovered had previously been secretly traveling with me. In the eyes of both the Polish police and the immigration authorities of the Western states, this should never be done, because two people, especially couples, might not return. When one person leaves and the other stays, it's less

suspicious to the bureaucracies in both East and West. The result was that my friend was psychologically assaulted by the police, and after a year was warned that she could leave only if I came back. The only answer to this was not to go back, because one should under no circumstances make a deal with the police. Such a deal often means to them that one is weak and frightened enough to accept other deals. I didn't want to lose my critical perspective about both socioeconomic systems, I wanted to learn more from being here, but I never planned consciously to stay. But finally a decision was, in effect, made for me, because one cannot stay anywhere indefinitely without papers. This is the sort of story that later gets collapsed into the "decision to emigrate."

Crimp: You were then in Canada?

Wodiczko: Yes. I had a number of part-time teaching positions there. The longest was at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design in Halifax, where I taught for three and a half years. I began teaching in the design program but later moved to the intermedia program, for which I acted as coordinator for one year. It was a very fortunate opportunity, because that program is connected to the visiting artists program, so I was able to meet and work with people such as Martha Rosler, Mary Kelly, Dan Graham, Dara Birnbaum, Allan Sekula, Connie Hatch, Judith Barry. I also coorganized the Cultural Workers Alliance,



Krzysztof Wodiczko. The School of Architecture Projection. *Halifax, Nova Scotia, 1981.*

a short-lived project, first in Toronto, then in Halifax. It was an unaffiliated, umbrella organization of the Left for members of the cultural intelligentsia, a forum for political and artistic discussion, particularly focused on the labor situation in the cultural sector. I managed to involve a number of the more radical students from the college, which provided them with an opportunity to discuss the relationship between the college and the community, the politics of the province, and of Canada generally, something which could not easily be discussed within the college. Certain people at the college considered it a conflict of interest to give any such support to the radical students, but I thought it my obligation to involve them, to help them to see critically their place not only within the college but within the entire cultural system. It was during this period that I began working with public projections.

Deutsche: Were you invited to do a projection on the New Museum of Contemporary Art in New York, or did you apply for the opportunity? And what was your projection's relationship to the exhibition *Difference: On Representation and Sexuality*?

Wodiczko: I was asked to participate in the "On View" series, smaller exhibitions held in conjunction with major shows, such as the *Difference* exhibition. It was not my primary focus to relate my projection to that exhibition. If there was a relation to the *Difference* show, it was mediated through the relation of my projection to the architecture and to the politics of the entire building. The situation at that time was very dramatic. It was winter and I was living very close to the main shelter for homeless men and quite close to a shelter for women. I saw many people living on the street, trying to survive the bitter-cold temperatures by burning tires. It was therefore shocking to me to see one of the largest buildings in the entire neighborhood empty. It was very evident that the building that houses the New Museum was completely dark. People speaking to me at the time of the projection had no doubts whatsoever about the meaning of it. I learned that the upper floors of the building were awaiting new tenants at a price of nearly one million dollars each and at the same time the New Museum received the basement and ground floor spaces for free, or at least for a very cheap rent. The very fact that the museum moved into the building creates a certain myth for the building. There are, in fact, two exhibition spaces there. One is for the New Museum exhibitions, and next door there is an exhibition of the former state of the building and how it will look after renovation, a real estate exhibition. There is obviously a connection between the presence of the museum and the subsequent conversion of the entire surrounding area into one of art galleries and other art-related institutions and businesses. I'm not saying that there is direct responsibility on anyone's part, but this is a mechanism and it's important to recognize and reveal our place within that mechanism, even if we cannot change it at this point.

Krzysztof Wodiczko. The Astor Building/New Museum Projection. *New York, 1984.*

Crimp: It is my understanding that the Astor Building functions similarly to the Museum of Modern Art Tower; that is to say, the real estate development of the "tower" is used to provide the financing of the museum's space and perhaps a portion of its operating costs. Is it not a part of your working methods, as it is of Haacke's, for example, to investigate the particulars of such a situation?

Wodiczko: If I were to project information onto the building about its operations I would certainly undertake systematic research, but what was immediately striking here was the emptiness of this huge structure when all around it people were living on the street. The bottom padlock was decided upon later, when I learned more about the connections between the museum and this art/real estate operation. So this was, first, *The Astor Building Projection*, and then, second, *The New Museum Projection.*

Crimp: Since we're on the subject of the New Museum, I wonder if you want to comment on the *Sots Art* exhibition shown there recently, insofar as it is a show of artists from the Eastern bloc, specifically the Soviet Union, working, with one exception, in the American context.

Deutsche: You've already made an interesting comment to me about the exhibition, noting that the museum relegated the critique of bourgeois culture—Connie Hatch's *Serving the Status Quo*, the Group Material work—to the small, back space while giving much greater prominence to the art which purports to be a critique of Soviet society.

Wodiczko: Without in any way taking back that comment, I have to express my enthusiasm for the fact that the New Museum provides so much space and time in its program for critical work, and I'm sure there are many reasons for a political stratification of that space. In order to survive, that institution must deal with a very complex situation, responding to the conflicting demands of its sponsors and supporters, as well as its various curators. If there had been a reversal of critical priorities in this particular case, it would have created a far greater impact on the community, which I obviously would have preferred, but it is impossible for me to judge the organizers' intentions. So, in spite of many reasons for dissatisfaction, this last season at the New Museum consisted of a fair number of critical exhibitions, including, for example, *The Art of Memory, the Loss of History*.

Crimp: Perhaps I can refocus my question regarding a so-called dissident art by Eastern bloc artists showing in the American context by referring to the event organized for May Day at the Palladium by Komar and Melamid, two of the central figures in the *Sots Art* exhibition. They staged a mock May Day celebration in the discotheque which is partially owned by Roy Cohn, who, as you well know, is one of the most repulsive reactionaries in recent American political history and has recently been disbarred in New York State. Another of the owners, Steve Rubell, was quoted in the newspapers as saying that one of the things he liked about the Palladium was that it was a place were young people could forget about the problems of Nicaragua. The Palladium is also the discotheque that uses art-world celebrity events as the drawing card for its clientele.

Deutsche: In such a context, I don't see how Kolmar and Melamid's May Day celebration can be seen as anything but cynical.

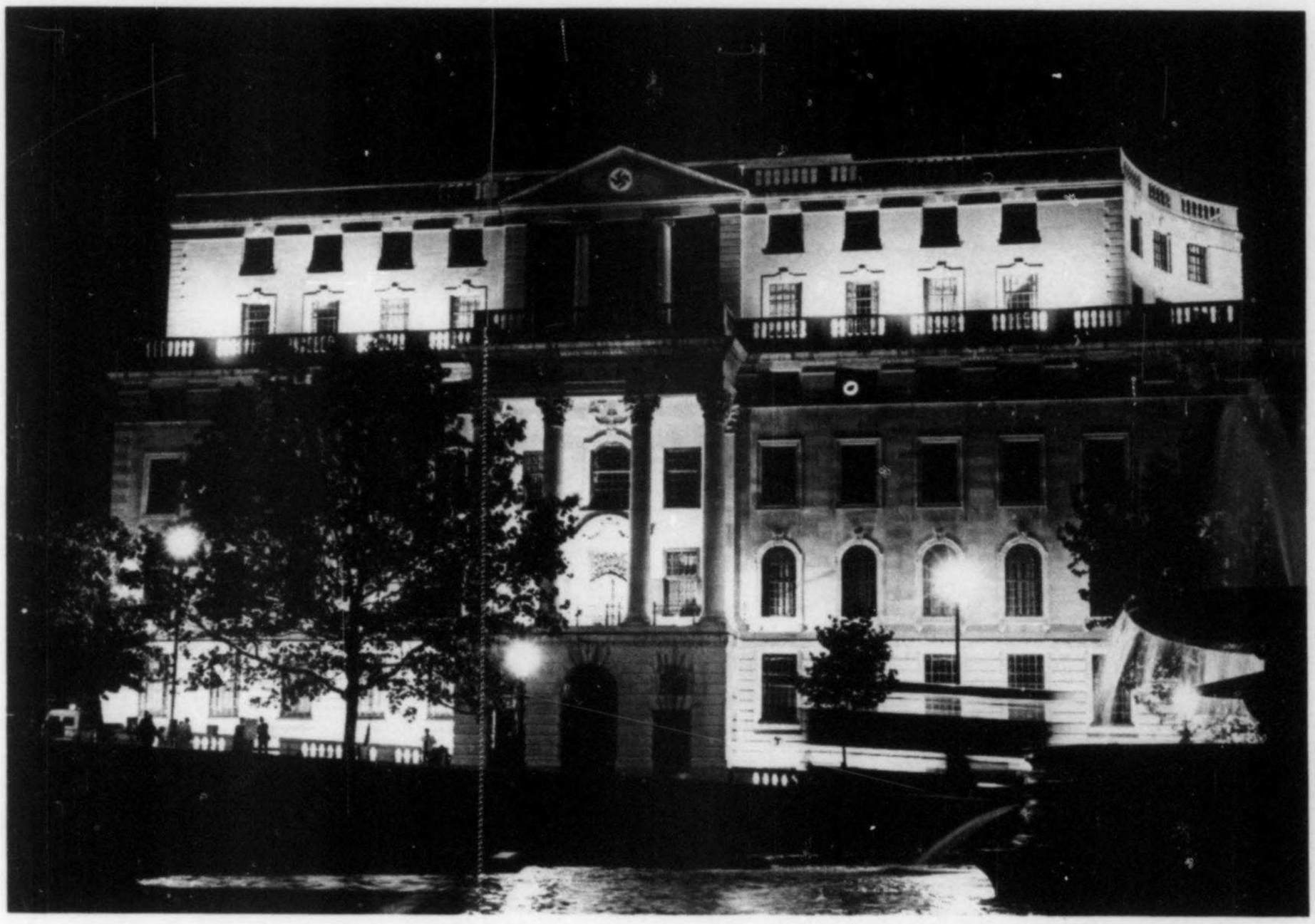
Wodiczko: Not everything is to be seen from the perspective of the New Yorker. From the vantage point of global relations, I would like to try to see their point,

which is not to say that I would support it. Though they have organized this event here, it is possible to imagine that they would prefer a double event, to stage simultaneously a discotheque in Red Square, for example. Perhaps they would like to be able to show the degradation of the Soviet May Day celebration by juxtaposing it with something equally degraded in this context, such as an art-world disco.

Lajer-Burcharth: But what is the purpose of staging this mockery of a Soviet political manifestation in New York in 1986? If Komar and Melamid want to criticize the atrophy of this particular symbolic practice, doing so in New York only diverts our attention from the historically specific factors responsible for this atrophy in the Soviet Union. And, when suggesting that these once spontaneous workers' celebrations ossified into their opposite in the East, do these artists wish to imply that the May Day parade has also lost its meaning in the West? One of the reasons for the loss of meaning of the May Day parades in the Eastern bloc is constraint: people are *forced* to participate. But in the West participation is, of course, still voluntary. It was a great surprise to me to see masses of people joyfully celebrating May Day in Denmark, where I lived after leaving Poland. It is Komar and Melamid's glib implication of the cultural and political equivalence of the two that I find problematic.

Wodiczko: It would be interesting if such an event could be extended—not for balance, not to adopt the liberal position—to show the disco as equally ideologically determined, as equally a part of official life as the political manifestations in the Soviet Union. But, in fact, Komar and Melamid are not clearly critical of either system. They submerge themselves with perverse pleasure in the repressive realities of both Soviet and American existence, wallowing in what they see as the equivalent decadence of both empires. They perform art-historical manipulations to support their political nihilism, creating, for example, pop-art versions of socialist realism. I question the political clarity and social effectiveness of adopting pop-art strategies for the critique of Soviet culture. Even though they developed a powerful humor, which would have been a liberating experience in intellectual circles, it would hardly have been so liberating for anyone who did not enjoy the privileges granted to artists in the Soviet Union. There is a similar problem in the reception of their work here in the United States, where people only have the most general notions of socialist realism and of the Soviet reality.

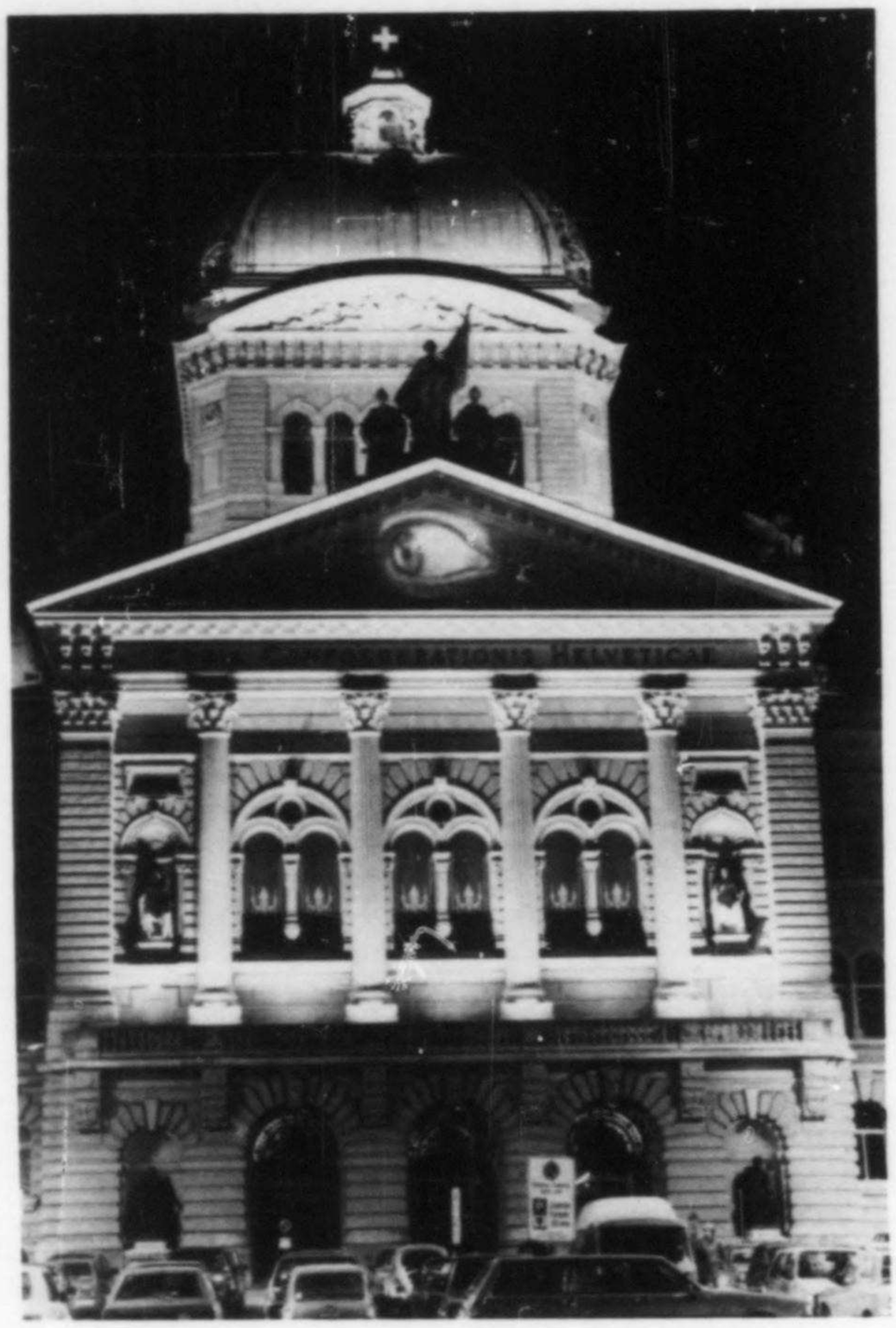
Deutsche: In discussing *The Grand Army Plaza Projection* you mentioned various possible readings of the work. But there are other works, such as the projection of the swastika onto the pediment of the South African embassy in Trafalgar Square, that have very unambiguous meanings. Does the necessity of responding to specific political events suggest a different kind of projection?

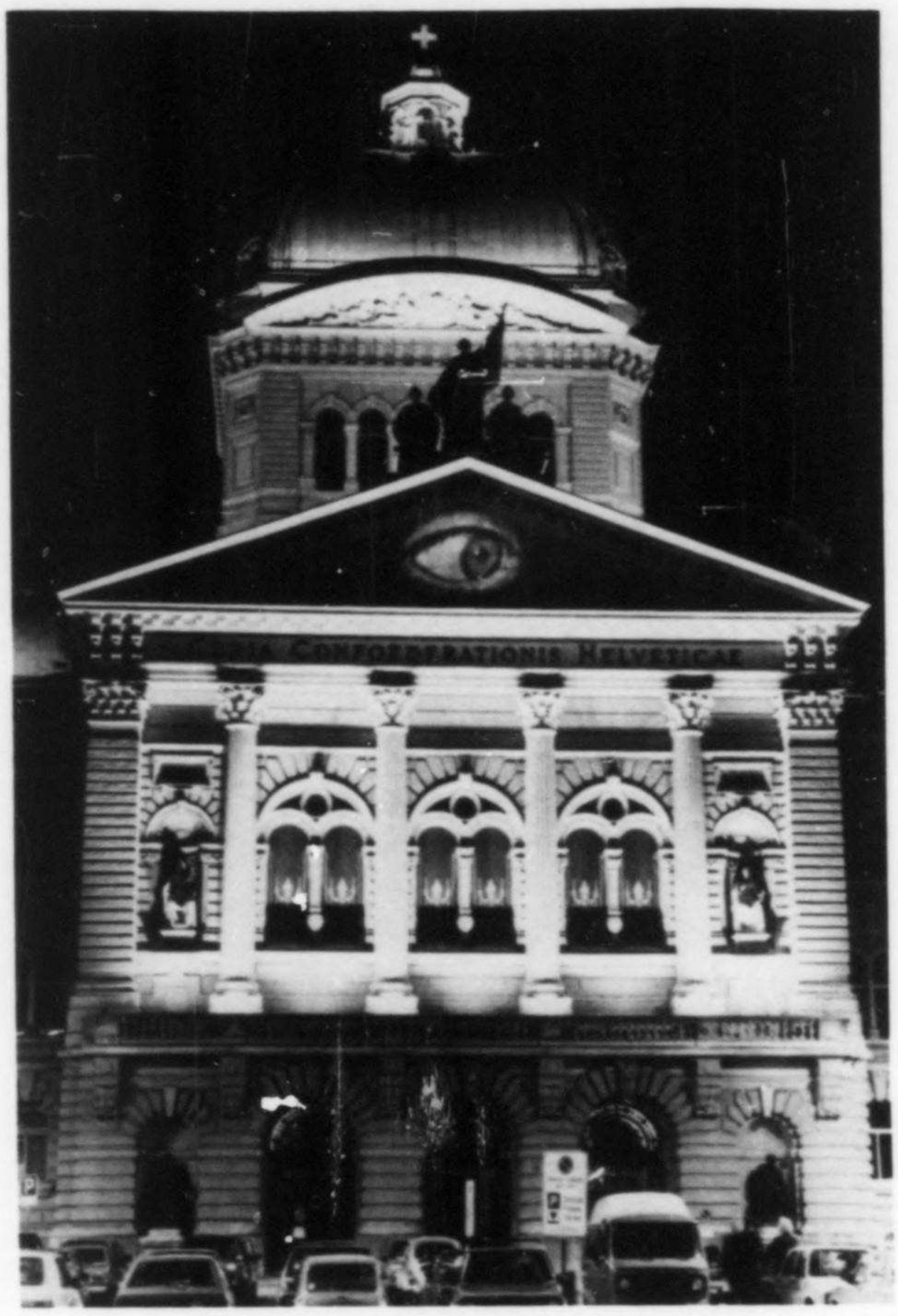


Krzysztof Wodiczko. The South African Embassy Projection. *Trafalgar Square, London, 1985.*

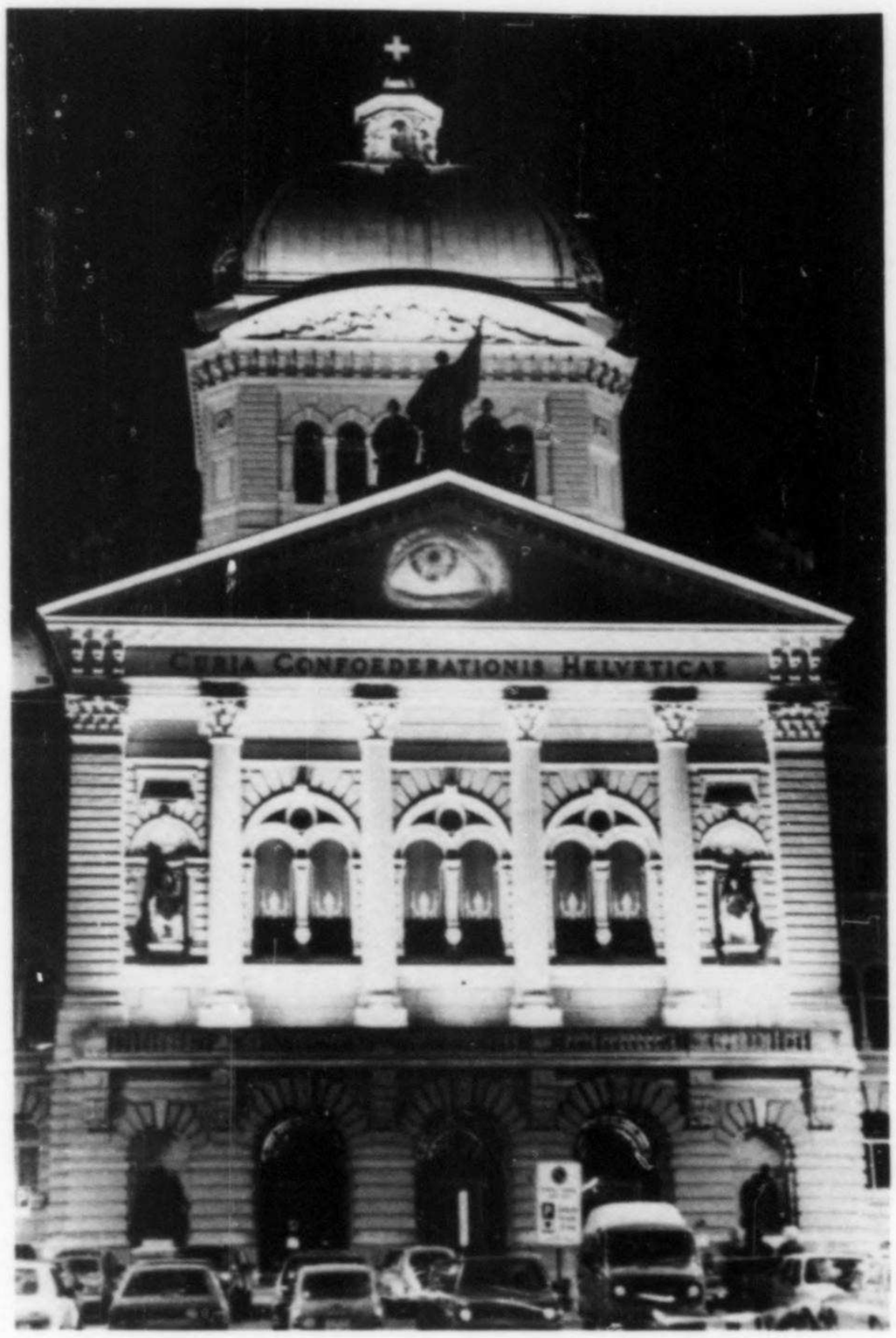
Krzysztof Wodiczko. The Nelson's Column Projection, *detail. Trafalgar Square, London, 1985.*

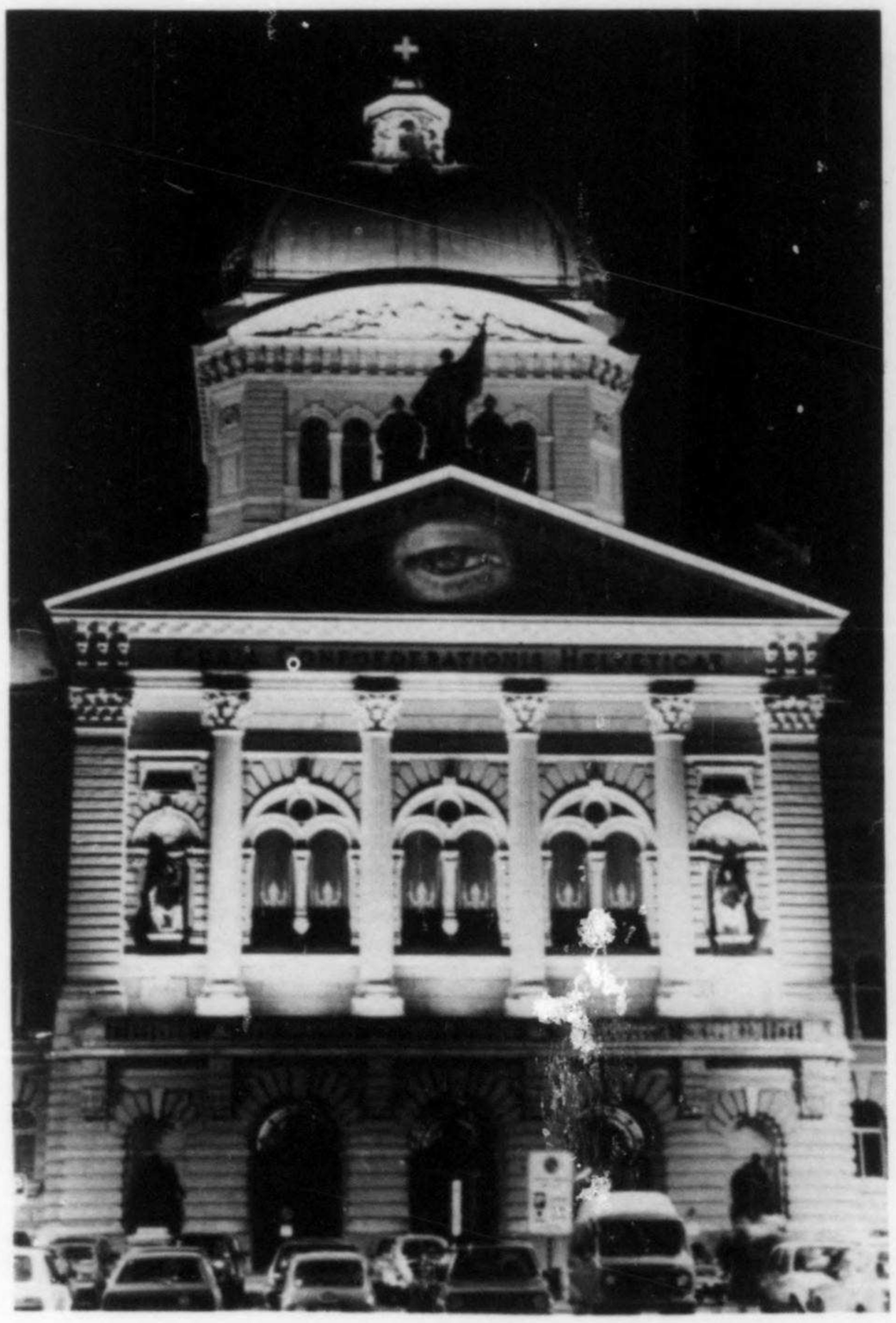
Krzysztof Wodiczko. The Bundeshaus Projection.
Bundesplatz, Bern, 1985.





Wodiczko: That was a very short-lived dilemma for me because I had to make a decision very quickly. I already had permission for the projection on Nelson's Column, permission to project hands onto the column. I had therefore already committed one violation in not projecting hands but rather a huge intercontinental ballistic missile wrapped in barbed wire, and tank treads underneath the lions at the column's base. But I knew they wouldn't be able to stop me. For one thing, bureaucracy doesn't work at night, even if the media does; BBC televised the projection nationally. I also knew that I had six xenon arc slide projectors concentrated in Trafalgar Square. No one knows when such an opportunity might happen again and it certainly never happened to me before. Many people would have liked the opportunity to affect this building, for example those who were demonstrating in front of it just at that time. The projection on Nelson's Column was to take place on two consecutive evenings. So the first evening, I





came prepared with slides with spots of different sizes to test the proper focal length of the projection on the South African embassy. I had a very short negotiation with myself. Artists are so trapped in their own so-called histories. I thought, "Wait a minute, this is not the type of work you do. You do not project swastikas." But the other side of me answered, "So what? Just because you haven't done this sort of thing before doesn't mean that there isn't a reason to do it now. What do you know of your so-called artistic development?" I agree with you, Rosalyn, that this might open up new possibilities for a more specific contextual type of intervention. It's public art, and one must respond to changing circumstances. It was just at this time that a delegation had come from South Africa to ask the British government for more money, which Thatcher actually gave them, a very shameful act. So my little negotiation was quickly resolved and I reproduced the swastika slides of different sizes. All I had to do was to use

one of the projectors from *The Nelson's Column Projection* and turn its 400mm. lens ninety degrees. It was projected over the sign in the pediment, which many people knew. There is a relief of a boat, underneath which it says "Good Hope." This building is the most illuminated of all buildings in central London, obsessively illuminated, as if it were afraid to wake up in the morning and not find itself. The projection lasted for two hours. Of course I consulted a lawyer. The only charge on which they would be able to arrest me was for being a public nuisance, and those were the grounds on which they stopped the projection. After two hours I saw the police sergeant coming. I switched off the projector and removed the slide, so he could do nothing. But he told me that if I were to resume the projection I would be arrested, and he also said, very pompously, "If I might offer my personal opinion, I find your projection in very bad taste." Photographs of the projection appeared in the press the following day in conjunction with condemnations of apartheid, so the South African embassy sent an official letter of protest to the Canadian embassy, which is just across Trafalgar Square, and which was exhibiting documents of my work. The Canadian embassy responded with a letter saying that the views of individual Canadian citizens are not the responsibility of the Canadian government.

Crimp: I'm curious to know more about the legalities of such a situation. Can a slide projection, which is after all immaterial, be considered a means of defacement?

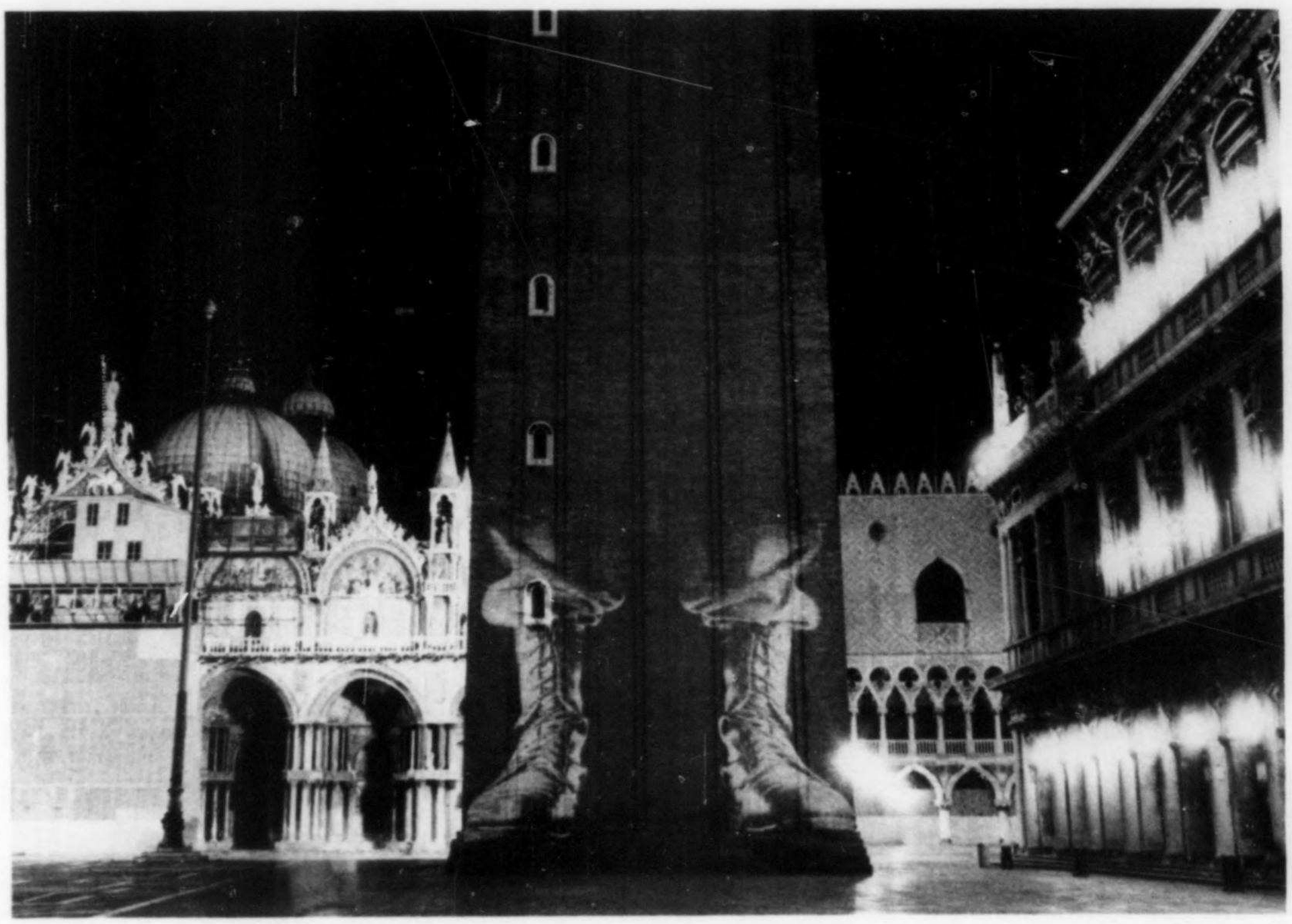
Wodiczko: We should be precise. This is not a clear legal question but a paralegal response of the police based on their own interpretation of regulations. That doesn't mean that what I am doing is illegal, but neither does it mean that I cannot be arrested.

Crimp: Was it especially difficult to get permission from the Swiss government for the projection on the Swiss national parliament building?

Wodiczko: It was a bit difficult, especially for Jean-Hubert Martin, then director of the Kunsthalle in Bern, who was negotiating the permission for me, since my projection was done for a show he was coorganizing called *Alles und noch viel mehr.* I knew that I would have to use an image that would be acceptable to the bureaucracy, and here I think my Polish experience helped. One has to know the psychology of officialdom, which is in many ways similar wherever I work, because it involves the very concept of modern bureaucracy, the kind of bureaucracy which is supposed to be objective, objective in the sense of helping people take advantage of "democracy." I knew I wanted to project onto the pediment, since it was the only free surface on the building. It was a question of what would be acceptable, and then, when accepted, what would make a point. I figured no one would object to the image of an eye, and at the same time they

wouldn't have to know that the eye would change the direction of its gaze, looking first in the direction of the national bank, and then at the canton bank, then the city bank of Bern, then down to the ground of Bundesplatz, under which is the national vault containing the Swiss gold, and finally up to the mountains and the sky, the clear, pure, Calvinist sky. It was difficult for them to refuse to cooperate because the work was part of the Kunsthalle show, which had already received the support of the city. Of course, the parliament building belongs not to the city but to the federal government, which would not want to create tension between itself and the city. I had spent a certain amount of time in bars in Bern and I learned there about the Swiss gold below the parking area in front of the parliament, a fact which most people in Switzerland take for granted. It's not, after all, so bad to be a tourist. Sometimes you learn things that local residents take for granted and are then able to expose the obvious in a critical manner. But of course tourism cannot simply be treated as an individual experience. It is becoming an ever-more complex political phenomenon which requires its own analysis. I intend to focus my projectors on this phenomenon in my work for the Venice Biennale this summer.

Krzysztof Wodiczko. The Second Campanile San Marco Projection. *Piazza San Marco, Venice, 1986.*



The Foksal Gallery PSP is a noncommercial art gallery established in Warsaw in 1966 by a group of critics and artists, including one of the founding members of the Polish constructivist group of the 1920s, with strong ties to constructivism. Except for the period of martial law, during which it was "closed for renovation," the gallery has continued its activities until the present day.

The following texts were published and distributed by the Foksal Gallery both in Poland and abroad:

"An Introduction to a General Theory of Place," written by the founding critics of the gallery, served as its opening manifesto.

"What do we not like about the Foksal PSP Gallery?" provides an example of the gallery's periodic—and public—rethinkings.

"Documentation" was published in conjunction with the "Sea Borne Happening" in which documents of the Foksal Gallery were placed in a trunk and dropped into the sea.

The text of "The Living Archives" appeared as part of a gallery installation of the same title in which art documents—artists' statements, interviews, manifestos, and reports—were presented as film and slide projections, as tape recordings, and as overenlarged images mounted on the gallery's walls.

An Introduction to a General Theory of PLACE

Art has many times in the course of its history proclaimed itself to be liberal art. But by so doing, art expressed not what it actually was, but rather what it desired to become. In fact, art always remains in the process of self-liberation. As has been stated more than once in similar circumstances, art is being liberated from its own inherited characteristics; it strips them off and leaves them behind.

Let us not forget all those hatreds that used to haunt art whenever it took a glance at its own face. The time has arrived, however, when we can no longer refrain from revealing and naming that from which art is now liberating itself. The time has arrived to reveal the present object of hatred. Let us emphasize at the outset, however, that this is a purely internal affair. The hatred of art toward itself is very involved, and only those who are within are entitled thus to hate.

At least one side of the object of hatred is readily apparent. But it is so close at hand that to notice it, a radical shift of point of view must be made. Let us for the moment no longer look at works, but let us stop instead before the territory occupied by them. Let us not enter the exhibition, but remain at its threshold. What shall we find out?

I. The essence of exhibition is transparence. Exhibition is conceived as nonexistent. It must not act upon the work.

But here are the facts: Exhibition acquires flesh of its own; it becomes an independent reality. It is the exhibition rather than the work of art that becomes a fact. An individual work becomes subject to the independent reality of the exhibition. The work becomes an element of the exhibition. The work conceived as unique is now one among many. Has the work of art been made for any coexistence whatever? Has it ever been thought of as showing up in a flock of others?

II. An exhibition is a post-factum operation. The fact of artistic realization has been fulfilled within the walls of the workshop. The finished, final work begins a completely new existence with the exhibition. The exhibition communicates what is already past. What it makes available are but traces of decisive actions. An exhibition is but a communication of what has past, somewhere and at an indefinite time. Its reality has no relationship at all with the reality of the creative act.

III. The beholder. He appears at the exhibition to endorse final formalities connected with the work's reception. His presence has a merely legal significance. And for all that, too much freedom has been allowed him, while he generally doesn't know how to use it. This freedom releases no activity on his part as, for example, the simplest restriction might have done.

As a result, all those present at the exhibition choose one way of behaving: they

contemplate. The contemplative attitude warrants distance toward a work of art, it certifies the legitimacy of the beholder's presence at the exhibition, it allows him to compare, to check, to purchase, etc.

IV. The author. The artist has nothing more to do at the exhibition but hold the flowers. He is now a mere beholder, bored or stimulated by no longer genuine experiences, or else he is an ambassador of his own future designs; his position is that of a servant left standing, without any reason, after he has performed his duties.

The artist's personality is revealed at the exhibition mutilated, artificially portioned, and doused by a rhythm that is incompatible with his maturity. The artist hangs like a cut of beef, while we try in vain to reconstruct the living animal from the cut. The author, persuaded by the learned that sincerity is his essential virtue, feels an awkward uneasiness self-consciously observing his frankness amidst the festive splendor of a public show. Why not make this uneasiness, the most genuine feature of the event, the event's very object?

The PLACE then. Well, the PLACE. The PLACE, for certain.

The PLACE is an area that arises by virtue of the setting outside of all and any principles obtaining in the universe.

The PLACE is not a category of space; it is not an arena, a scene, a screen, a pedestal, and above all it is not an exhibition.

The PLACE is isolated and at the same time exteriorized. Its existence is not merely a subjective matter and it cannot be called into being by purely private endeavors. It must be conspicuous and significantly objective while, at the same time, it cannot subsist if it fails to protect itself from the impact of the world and from becoming identified with the world.

The PLACE is a sudden gap in the utilitarian approach to the world. All and any standards valid beyond the PLACE no longer hold within it. Therein space is devoid of its utilitarian significance; all its measures, reasons, Euclidean and non-Euclidean interpretations are left behind. Events, if they occur at all, are deprived of any outer meaning whatever. There is no hesitation within the PLACE, since there is no difference between the wrong and the right, the good and the good-for-nothing, everything is merely and simply there. The PLACE is neither strange nor common, refined nor vulgar, wise nor stupid. It is neither a dream nor a waking state.

The PLACE is not transparent. The PLACE is actual presence. There are no criteria for a better or more valuable filling of the PLACE. It may be empty, but its emptiness must be conspicuously present.

The PLACE is one and unique. It cannot be divided and it does not procreate.

The PLACE is what we are in. Only when we step outside, can we conceive it as one among many places comparable to it. The PLACE can become an object of hatred only from abroad.

Any place in the world may be possessed and thus constituted as the PLACE.

From a worldly point of view, it is by no means a peculiar area. The PLACE cannot be recognized by its appearance. It does not modify the world's laws because it has nothing at all to do with them. The PLACE may indeed look exactly like any other fragment of reality. There are some areas in the world, however, that are thought of as particularly fit for becoming PLACES.
The PLACE is neither a construction nor a destruction. It comes into being as a result of an indemnified decision. The PLACE has no sufficient reason in the world. It is in the artist that PLACE's reason subsists. It is he who calls forth the PLACE. It is created by he who steps within it. It is only in the PLACE, and not outside it, that "art is created by all."
The PLACE cannot be mechanically fitted up, but it must be incessantly perpetuated.
The slightest moment of inattention may be enough for it to sink into what is around it. There are numerous anonymous forces that professionally destroy the PLACE or produce its false substitutes. These forces take advantage of the PLACE still left and they manipulate by means of elements taken up from within it—with elements restored to real standards and measures. The PLACE cannot be bought or collected. It cannot be arrested. It cannot be an object of virtue.
Protection of the PLACE is not one more among many endeavors with definite authorship, nor is it a product of the present. It appears again and again in the course of the history of art, but it only reaches prominence at moments of radical shifts.
Such was the moment of transubstantiation of the picture into the PLACE. In the temple a picture had not or could not have been the PLACE. Its presence was legitimate only inasmuch as it served the temple and contributed to the effort of the incessant perpetuation of this exceptional area that, ever since the expelling of the buyers and sellers, had been by itself the one and only PLACE.
The picture had gained independence, however, and for a while it remained solitary. The frame remained the same as the only witness of the event. The frame, a kind of naive dam protecting the picture from the world's impact.
Thus began the tendency of the picture to produce an inner bond of its own that would save it as the PLACE without any additional ramparts.
This is how composition arose.
But composition, at last a perfect realization of the enclosure, has remained shut off on its own side, while leaving us on the side of the world. The most we can do is to conceive of composition as the PLACE, we always remain on the outside. Since it is finished and closed, since it is indestructible though defenseless, since nothing more can ever happen to it, composition has been sentenced to manipulation from without. Since it has been hung up in architectural space, it has become an inspiration for utilitarian space. It used to be adopted and readjusted. It used to be thought of as a necessary element of the human envi-

ronment, it has sunk into the world. In its initial and relatively pure form, it has appeared in the exhibition. But there it has lost its solitary character as the only perfect solution and begun to assemble in flocks.

At an exhibition we thus walk from PLACE to PLACE while performing "illegitimate" procedures, like those of evaluating, comparing, coming and carrying in and out, buying, etc. We try in vain to be somewhere—we are nowhere. PLACES here represent to each other the strange outer world with all its aggressive force. What is going on is the self-destruction of PLACES. On the ruin feeds the new monster, the exhibition. Intended to be transparent, called forth as a natural reservation of PLACES, the exhibition has turned out to be an illegal, self-sustained product, a false PLACE, a PLACE—deception and a PLACE—heresy and a PLACE—treason.

The PLACE is a sudden gap in the utilitarian approach to the world. The PLACE arises when all the laws obtaining in the world are suspended. The PLACE is one and indivisible. PLACE.

WIESŁAW BOROWSKI
HANNA PTASZKOWSKA
MARIUSZ TCHOREK
Delivered in August 1966, Pulaway

What do we not like about the Foksal PSP Gallery?

Realizing that we act according to HABIT!
Finding out and revealing what is HABITUAL in our behavior!

We are a gallery whose activity is disinterested.
We are a gallery whose existence here—in Poland—is not justified by picture trade.

Why, then, have we assumed the structure of a commercial gallery?
Why do we imitate its rules of activity and why do we ape the ritual (exhibitions, vernissages, criticism, parody of publicity)?
Why do we admit any rules of activity at all?
Let us examine them!

The Rule of Exhibitions

The gallery's function consists mainly in arranging exhibitions.

Has it not, perhaps, become a convenient and drowsing HABIT, reducing the whole activity to fulfilling a program?—making us fill in the gaps, talk about "better" and "worse" exhibitions, inflicting the burden of indifferent ones.
Let one exhibition last for a year, and then—prolong it for another couple of months! The activity of the gallery, thus uprooted out of its official stand, shall then reveal itself by other means, it shall find for itself another form.

The Rule of Time

"GALLERY FOKSAL PSP
NOVEMBER 1968
WEEKDAYS
11 A.M. TO 5 P.M."

Is it really this month, those hours? Is it really for artistic reasons that dates of exhibitions are determined? Or, perhaps, artists who accept such terms simply yield to what is commonly accepted, while we all give in to social manners and formal ways of distribution.
Creation is always PRESENT.
We should have no more use for the calendar with its divisions into years, months, days, and nights. For artistic ends it is unnecessary and encumbering.
Let us not waste time!
Let us get rid of it!

The Rule of Place

Gallery Foksal PSP, Foksal 1/4, Warsaw.
Corridor—2 × 3, closet—3 × 5, exhibition room—7 × 3.
Height: 3 meters.

Why here and only here?
Architecture? its modules? its functions? To make it the starting point—what opportunism! And how ingenuous to make an idol of it!
Address? Good for an office.
Any place is good. The only bad place is the gallery. Why? Because it has been careless enough to DEFINE its destination.
We must take definition away from it!
We have to look for undefined places!

Rules of Polite Manners

"Gallery Foksal PSP welcomes you to a vernissage"
The audience is informed by the press that at definite hours it may visit the exhibition.

The audience is an unfailing, though not well-appreciated, instrument. It should be remembered that the audience behaves conventionally when it is put into a conventional situation.
IT IS BETTER TO SHUT THE DOOR TO THE PUBLIC than to keep it in the sacred and irresistible half-distance.
Let us challenge it! Scare it away! Be cunning!
Bewilder!
Write letters! Cables!
Await an answer.

Rules of Criticism

As critics managing the gallery, we respect the stale and dishonest status of art criticism—it consists in MEDIATING and MANIPULATION, or, generally speaking, in being OUTSIDE.
Thus:
we chose
How dare we choose? Are we above the facts? Why do we not simply grab it?

we appreciate
The artificial distance so attained as useless, except that it flatters us.

we inform and present
while we know fairly well that information is never true and presentation is one of the best ways of avoiding art.

we plan
as if that which is most important could ever be predicted. The worst thing of all would be to carry out our plans.

we divide, shred, portion
we ought but protect and record, such as it is.

As a result:
Artistic activity—essentially unconventional—is being subject to CONVENTION.
To that of the gallery itself. Artistic facts remain facts with all their meaning and impact.
During the Gallery Foksal PSP history there have been facts strong enough to disrupt and overwhelm the REGIME ruling here.
However, in the next moment the regime was there again. It persisted as if nothing had happened at all.

To the question: when? we answer: NOW
To the question: where? we answer: EVERYWHERE
Let ACTION dislodge and defame performance.

In 1965 we questioned the EXHIBITION. We proposed that the "exhibition lose its secondary and indifferent relation toward works of art and become an artistically active form."
Now we question the GALLERY—in the total structure that it still has.

GALLERY FOKSAL PSP
Warsaw, December 1968

Documentation

The world of art has entered the epoch of DOCUMENTATION.
A work freed of its form and function appears as a single or ephemeral actualization of an idea, without their being left any material trace.
It is made accessible in the form of a record which is either a document or a project.
It was or it will be.
An unapprehended present state remains an ISOLATED MESSAGE.
A work is not vulnerable to anything which might be a pretext for information, for it identifies itself with the information about it.
A work of art has lost its permanence.
Only formal systems, monuments, and institutions endeavor to prolong its existence.
The museum-archives of DOCUMENTATION try to fix and keep the memories of works in the form of various kinds of records.
Thus we want to have everything documented! In a more thoughtless, pedantic, and massive manner than the collectors or the maniacs of scientific collecting used to collect their collections.
We set up an illusion of survival of artistic ideas, while what we actually have is a muddled magma of artistically useless and commercially useful "traces."
We are putting matters together again for unlimited manipulations!
We surrender ourselves to the mass media functionaries.
We are performing a huge-scale exchange of DOCUMENTS and incalculably linked transactions.
DOCUMENTATION is an artificial prolonging of the durability of what is essentially VOLATILE. It keeps in store and reproduces what *used to be* an object of perception, experience, and action. It is more difficult to destroy the DOCUMENTATION than to burn down the museums and collections. The self-reproducing documentation which includes everything and is accessible everywhere is more imperative than all the expositions in the world.
Without our notice, DOCUMENTATION became identical with the museum and the collection, assuming their forms and manners.
But DOCUMENTATION as the final link in the process of transmission becomes a FORM of a work of art.
It cannot be destroyed—it must be denied.

GALLERY FOKSAL PSP
WIESŁAW BOROWSKI
ANDRZEJ TUROWSKI
Warsaw, September 1971

The Living Archives

Artistic activities, while they are under way, remain invulnerable to their own display; they also cast in doubt the perceived reasons for their existence.

An active thought wishes to exist beyond the manipulations of:

—artists themselves

—display managers

—the greedy audience.

A new work, since it is identical with its message, lasts as long as its process of isolation continues. Its real existence spans the time between its broadcasting and its reception.

If the limits are encroached upon from either side, the autonomy of the work is threatened:

—the artist's persistent stroking of his thought contaminates it with the author's lyrical Ego

—when received, a thought is introduced into the circulation of the schematic cultural values.

Once a letter is in a mailbox, it is no longer subject to manipulation until it arrives at its destination. Its objectless, shapeless, impersonal, and necessary authenticity is equivalent to the length of the mail route.

The time of transmission is the only neutral ground of an artistic work. Even if reduced to a minimum, this time determines the occurrence of the fact.

Artistic facts call for an establishing of the LIVING ARCHIVES as a way of apprehending this transmission.

The LIVING ARCHIVES make it clear that a thought is past when it is accessible.

The LIVING ARCHIVES define a work when it is neutrally present—when the artist has already quit it —when the mill of schematizing interpretations has not yet started.

The LIVING ARCHIVES are expected to be a channel in which works remain in their own state of readiness —already beyond the stimulating thought of their maker, but before the audience distorts them. We step in to give a work its frame, we seize the transmission—we don't care about the broadcasting and the reception.

An exposition, as a place of a work's reception and the last phase of the flow of information, has been the point from which the work has been consumed and introduced into the institutional pattern.

A Laboratory of Art used to provide hothouse conditions for the breeding of ideas; it was a local center allowing for exhibitionist advertising of an artist in ways prepared in advance.

By establishing the LIVING ARCHIVES we deny:

—the Laboratory of Art

—the workshop for artistic ideas

in addition, WE DENY ANY AND ALL FORMS OF PRESENTATION OF A WORK.

WE ALSO DENY ALL THE ARCHIVES, since any archive presents history.

WE DO NOT PRESENT HISTORY BUT WE KEEP THOUGHTS ISOLATED.
The LIVING ARCHIVES offer frames which are not institutional or cultural, for any artistic activity.
We do not collect materials in a scientific or methodic way. Our objectives are not that of an archive endeavoring to make its files complete. We've got no use for the archive as a collection of documents which "are not real, but are worth keeping."
A rich collection in the LIVING ARCHIVES is a necessity, but it cannot be used for any purpose.

We are establishing ARCHIVES THAT ARE CURRENTLY FUNCTIONING.
The LIVING ARCHIVES set forth a model for a working, a work which maintains its neutrality.
The LIVING ARCHIVES, by suggesting a changing but always sharp borderline of desistance, become a new context for creative activity.
The LIVING ARCHIVES are subjugated to creation.
The LIVING ARCHIVES are a current reaction to the
—artistic
—nonartistic
—antiartistic phenomena.

WIESŁAW BOROWSKI
ANDRZEJ TUROWSKI
Warsaw, September 1971

Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Projection* and the Site of Urban "Revitalization"

ROSALYN DEUTSCHE

In *The City Observed: A Guide to the Architecture of Manhattan*, Paul Goldberger, architecture critic of the *New York Times*, concluded his historical survey of Union Square with the following observation:

> For all that has gone wrong here, there are still reminders within the square itself of what a grand civic environment this once was. There are bronze fountains and some of the city's finest statuary. The best of the statues are Henry Kirke Brown and John Quincy Ward's equestrian statue of Washington, with a Richard Upjohn base, and Karl Adolf Donndorf's mother and children atop a bronze fountain base. There is also an immense flagstaff base, 9½ feet high and 36 feet in diameter, with bas-reliefs by Anthony de Francisci symbolizing the forces of good and evil in the Revolutionary War; *even if a derelict is relieving himself beside it, it has a rather majestic presence.*[1]

The cynicism inherent in the use of a homeless person as a foil for the aesthetic merits of a sculptural base and for the nostalgic visions evoked by civic monuments will hardly surprise anyone familiar with Goldberger's consistent apologies for the ruthless proliferation of luxury condominiums, lavish corporate headquarters, and high-rent office towers in New York City today. The dangers of this attitude have, however, become fully manifest only in the current period of architectural expansionism. For in his "appraisals" of new buildings—evaluations that appear, appropriately, juxtaposed to real estate news and accompany the incessant disclosures by public officials of private development plans—Goldberger also fails to reflect on the relation between horrifying social conditions and the circumstances of architectural production. Goldberger never mentions the fact that the architects of New York's construction boom not only scorn the flagrant need for new public housing but also

1. Paul Goldberger, *The City Observed: New York, a Guide to the Architecture of Manhattan*, New York, Vintage, 1979, p. 92 (emphasis added).

relentlessly erode the existing low-income housing stock, thereby destroying the conditions of survival for hundreds of thousands of the city's poorest residents. By remaining detached from questions of housing and focusing on what he deems to be properly architectural concerns, he further impedes the more fundamental recognition that this destruction is no accidental by-product of such reckless building but is, along with unemployment and cuts in social services, a necessary component of the economic circumstances that motivate it in the first place. Moreover, the discourse that Goldberger represents blocks comprehension of the full urban context by simulating social responsibility in the form of a concern for the physical environment of the city. Thus, Goldberger intermittently attempts to dispel doubts about the substantial threat this construction poses to New York's light, air, and open space by occasionally appealing to a mythical notion of planning which, in practice, is a considerable part of the problem itself.[2] By declaring the crucial issues in development projects to be the size, height, bulk, density, and style of individual buildings in relation to their immediate physical sites, Goldberger ignores architecture's political and economic sites. He is able to concede in passing that "architecture has now come to be a selling point in residential real estate as much as it has in commercial."[3] Nonetheless, he abets the destruction of housing and communities by aestheticizing the real estate function of current construction, much as he did the commercial function of the early twentieth-century skyscraper.[4] In short, he makes common cause with contemporary development for the rich and privileged, using the same rationale that authorized his exploitative description of the sculptural treasures of Union Square: the exaltation of the essential power and romance of, in the first case, the skyscraper, and, in the second, the historical monument.

2. Reviewing an exhibition of Hugh Ferriss's architectural drawings held at the Whitney Museum's new branch at the Equitable Center, a building that, itself, represents a threat to the city's poor, Goldberger claims that Ferriss "offers the greatest key to the problems of the skyscraper city that we face today," because he demonstrated "that a love of the skyscraper's power and romance need not be incompatible with a heavy dose of urban planning" (Paul Goldberger, "Architecture: Renderings of Skyscrapers by Ferriss," *New York Times*, June 24, 1986, p. C13).

3. Paul Goldberger, "Defining Luxury in New York's New Apartments," *New York Times*, August 16, 1984, p. C1.

4. Observing the omissions of any social or economic history in Goldberger's "history" of the skyscraper, one reviewer wrote, "The building process is born of economics. . . . Some of these factors might be: the state of the national and regional economies; the nature of the local transportation system; the conditions of local market supply-and-demand; the relationship to desirable local geographic features or elements, such as proximity to a park; the perceived or actual quality of building services and image; and the economies of new construction techniques that reduce building costs or enhance efficiency—*all of which are factors that cannot be seen simply by looking at the building's skin*" (Michael Parley, "On Paul Goldberger's *The Skyscraper*," *Skyline*, March 1982, p. 10 [emphasis added]). The factors Parley lists indicate some of the most serious problems with Goldberger's aesthetic history, although they, too, need to be set in a broader economic framework.

The City Observed appeared in 1979, only a few years before "derelicts," along with other members of a "socially undesirable population"[5] were, in fact, evicted from Union Square by a massive program of urban redevelopment. Like all such activities of the latest New York real estate boom, this one also forcibly "relocated" many of the area's lower-income tenants and threatens numerous others with the permanent loss of housing. The publication of Goldberger's guide coincided with the preparation of the redevelopment plan, and it shares prominent features of the planning mentality that engineered Union Square redevelopment and of the public relations campaign that legitimized it: aesthetic appreciation of the architecture and urban design of the neighborhood and sentimental appeals for restoration of selected chapters of its past history. The thematic correspondence between the book and the planning documents is no mere coincidence. It vividly illustrates how instrumental aesthetic ideologies are for the powerful forces determining the use, appearance, and ownership of New York's urban spaces and for the presentation of their activities as an illusory restoration of a glorious past. For Goldberger, "Union Square's past is more interesting than its present. Now the square is just a dreary park, one of the least relaxing green spaces in Manhattan."[6] Invariably, the reports, proposals, and statements issuing from New York's Department of City Planning, the City Parks Commission, and city officials regarding the various phases and branches of redevelopment also reminisce about the square's history and lament its sharply contrasting present predicament. As one typical survey put it, "For the most part, the park today is a gathering place for indigent men whose presence further tends to discourage others from enjoying quiet moments inside the walled open space."[7] These texts disregard the prospects for Union Square's displaced homeless or for the new homeless produced by mass evictions and the raised property values resulting from redevelopment. Instead, they conjure up a past that never really existed; narratives portraying vaguely delimited historical periods stress the late nineteenth-century episode in Union Square's history, when it was first a wealthy residential neighborhood and then a fashionable commercial district: part of the increasingly well-known—due to a wave of museum exhibitions, media reports, and landmark preservation campaigns—"Ladies' Mile."[8] This purportedly elegant and genteel era they are most eager to revive. A principle value of the aesthetic discourse for those seizing control of Union Square lies in this discourse's ability to

5. The designation appears in Department of City Planning, *Union Square: Special Zoning District Proposal*, originally released November 1983, revised June 1984, p. 3.
6. Goldberger, *The City Observed*, p. 91.
7. Department of City Planning, *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, January 1976, p. 28.
8. For a history of the economic factors—the needs of business—that determined the development of Ladies' Mile, see M. Christine Boyer, *Manhattan Manners: Architecture and Style 1950–1900*, New York, Rizzoli International Publications, 1985.

construct a distorted architectural and design history of the area, one that will produce the illusion of a comforting continuity and a reassuring stability of a tradition symbolized by transcendent aesthetic forms. The history of Union Square, it is said, lies in its architectural remains. Using the same methods that cleared the path for the design and execution of redevelopment, reconstructed histories such as Goldberger's conduct their readers on a tour of the area's buildings, monuments, and "compositions."[9]

Krzysztof Wodiczko's *Homeless Projection* interrupts this "journey-in-fiction."[10] Although it employs the same Union Square terrain and the same "significant" architectural landmarks, the work aligns itself with radically different interests within the politics of urban space. Its form: site-specific, temporary, collaborative with its public; its subject: the capitulation of architecture to the conditions of the real estate industry; the contents of its images: the fearful social outcome of that alliance. All of these qualities render *The Homeless Projection* useless to those forces taking possession of Union Square in order to exploit it for profit; they militate, also, against the work's neutralization by aesthetic institutions. Instead of fostering an unreflective consumption of past architectural forms to oil the mechanism of urban "revitalization," the project attempts to identify the system of economic power operating in New York City beneath what the artist once called "the discreet camouflage of a cultural and aesthetic 'background.'"[11] Eroding the aura of isolation that idealist aesthetics constructs around architectural forms, it also—by virtue of its rigorous attention to a broad and multivalent context—dismantles the terms of an even more obscurantist urban discourse that relates buildings to the city conceived only as a physical environment. Wodiczko's project reinserts architectural objects into the surrounding city understood in its broadest sense as a site of economic, social, and political processes. Consequently, it contests the belief that monumental buildings are stable, transcendent, permanent structures containing essential and universal meanings; it proclaims, on the contrary, the mutability of their symbolic language and the changing uses to which they are put as they are continualiy recast in varying historical circumstances and social frameworks. Whereas the architectural and urban discourses promoted in journalism such as Goldberger's and in the documents produced by New York's official urban-planning professionals manufacture an aesthetic disguise for the brutal realities of "revitalization," *The Homeless Projection*, if realized, would dramatically interfere with that image, restoring the viewer's ability to perceive the essential con-

9. "The making of compositions, the making of streets, and the making of theater—it is these things that define the architecture of New York far more than does any single style" (Goldberger, *The City Observed*, p. xv).
10. Krzysztof Wodiczko, "Public Projection," *Canadian Journal of Political and Social Theory*, vol. 7, nos. 1–2 (Winter/Spring 1983), p. 186.
11. *Ibid.*

Krzysztof Wodicizko. The Homeless Projection.

nections that these discourses sever, exclude, or cosmeticize—the links that place the interrelated disciplines of architecture, urban design, and, increasingly, art in the service of those financial forces that determine the shape of New York's built environment. Moreover, the clear ethical imperative that informs the work's engagement in political struggles markedly contrasts with the dominant architectural system's preferred stance of "corporate moral detachment."[12]

Wodiczko entered the arena of New York housing politics when he took advantage of the opportunity offered him for an exhibition at a New York art gallery. *The Homeless Projection* has existed until now only as a proposal presented at 49th Parallel in the winter of 1986. Consisting of four large montaged slide images projected onto the gallery's walls and a written statement by the artist distributed in an accompanying brochure, it outlined a plan for the transformation of Union Square Park. The exhibition coincided with the unfolding of the redevelopment scheme that is transforming Union Square in actuality, occurring several months after the completion of the first phase of the park's restoration

12. Krzysztof Wodiczko, "The Homeless Projection: A Proposal for the City of New York," New York, 49th Parallel, Centre for Contemporary Canadian Art, 1986; reprinted in this issue of *October*.

—the ideological centerpiece and economic precondition for the district's "revitalization." Drastic changes in the built environment, such as this "revitalization," are effected through conventional and institutionalized planning forms. "What has been of fundamental importance," writes a critic of the history of town planning, "is the role of the project, that is of *imagination*."[13] Such projects entail activities of sight and memory. No matter how objective their language, they are, by virtue of their selective focuses, boundaries, and exclusions, also ideological statements about the problems of and solutions for their sites. Given the fact that *The Homeless Projection*'s potential site is the site of the pervasive and calculated urban process of redevelopment, Wodiczko's photographic and textual presentation in the space of aesthetic display—the gallery—appears to echo and critically intervene in the visual and written presentational forms of city planning. Like the official proposals generated by the teams of engineers, landscape architects, designers, demographers, sociologists, and architects who actually shaped Union Square's renovation, Wodiczko's presentation envisioned imagined alterations to its location and set forth the principles and objectives governing his proposal. Unlike such documents, however, it offered no suggestions for enduring physical changes to the area under study. Instead, the artist disclosed a plan to appropriate temporarily the public space of Union Square Park for a performance, in the course of which he would project transient images onto the newly refurbished surfaces of the four neoclassical monuments that occupy symmetrical positions on each side of the park. Yet this is not the core of the difference between the two. Whereas mainstream planning discourse legitimates its proposals through the notion that they will restore a fundamental social harmony, Wodiczko's intervention illuminates the existing social relations of domination which such planning disavows.

The Image of Redevelopment

While *The Homeless Projection* is a proposal for a work to be situated in Union Square, the work's subtitle, "A Proposal for the City of New York," explicitly announces that Union Square represents a determinate location of urban phenomena extending far beyond the immediate area. Indeed, the transformation of Union Square from a deteriorated yet active precinct consisting of a crime-ridden park, low-rent office buildings, inexpensive stores,[14] and single-

13. Bernardo Secchi, "La forma del discourse urbanistico," *Casabella*, vol. 48 (November 1984), p. 14 (emphasis added).

14. The shops along 14th Street from First to Eighth Avenues, including Mays department store facing Union Square, comprise the largest shopping district south of Spanish Harlem for Manhattan's Hispanic residents. Some of these stores' sites have already been purchased for future redevelopment. Known as La Calle Catorse, this street has traditionally provided the link between the concentrations of Hispanics on the Lower East Side and Chelsea, both of which neighborhoods have recently been redeveloped, resulting in large displacements of those populations.

room occupancy hotels into a luxury "mixed-use" neighborhood—commercial, residential, and retail—is only an individual manifestation of an unprecedented degree of change in the class composition of New York neighborhoods. The concluding phases of such metamorphoses—those that follow the preliminary and calculated stages of abandonment, neglect, and deterioration caused by landlords and financial institutions—are identified by a constellation of inaccurate, confusing, and distorting terms. Overtly falsifying, however, is the overarching rubric *revitalization*, a word whose positive connotations reflect nothing other than "the sort of middle-class ethnocentrism that views the replacement of low-status groups by middle-class groups as beneficial by definition."[15] The word *revitalization* conceals the very existence of those inhabitants already living in the frequently vital neighborhoods targeted for renovation. Perhaps the most widely used term to designate current changes is *gentrification*, which, coined in London in the 1960s, implies the class interests at work in the phenomenon. It identifies the gentrifying classes incorrectly, however, suggesting that they represent some fictional landed aristocracy.

Explanations for "revitalization" and gentrification, where they exist, are generally formulated out of the concepts, values, and beliefs espoused by those financial institutions, politicians, corporations, real estate developers, landlords, and upper-middle-class residents who benefit from the process. At their most reactionary and self-serving—and most widely disseminated in the mass media—such "explanations" repress the social origins, functions, and effects of gentrification in order deliberately to thwart the apprehension of its determining causes and present it, instead, as the heroic acts of individuals. New York's former housing commissioner has, in this fashion, asserted,

> When an area becomes ripe for gentrification, a condition that cannot be rigorously identified in advance but seems to depend on the inscrutable whims of an invisible hand, the new purchasers face monumental tasks. First the building must be emptied. Then layers of paint must be scraped from fine paneling; improvised partitions must be removed; plumbing must be installed and heating ripped out and replaced. Sometimes the new buyers spend years under pioneering conditions.[16]

Not all accounts are so blatantly misleading. But even those explanations that identify and criticize some of the real effects of gentrification tend to be super-

15. Bruce London and J. John Palen, "Introduction: Some Theoretical and Practical Issues Regarding Inner-City Revitalization," in J. John Palen and Bruce London, eds., *Gentrification, Displacement and Neighborhood Revitalization*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1984, p. 10.
16. Roger Starr, *The Rise and Fall of New York City*, New York, Basic Books, 1985, p. 36.

ficial, impressionistic, or eclectic rather than based in an understanding of the specific forces that govern patterns of city growth and change.

Recently, however, efforts have been made to "identify rigorously" the structural factors that prepare the conditions for gentrification and to ascertain precisely whose needs and interests regulate the restructuring of urban space within which gentrification plays a role. These theories rest on the fundamental premise that the physical cityscape is the effect of the specific society in which it develops. The wholesale reorganization of that space represents, then, no mere surface phenomenon; rather it reflects a full-scale restructuring within that larger society. Compelled by the imperative to place gentrification within the context of this broader restructuring, Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre produced in 1984 a detailed and urgently needed "Class Analysis of Gentrification."[17] In contradistinction to notions of "inscrutable whims" and "invisible hands," the essay examines a systematic combination of economic processes—a "devalorization" cycle of declining real estate values—whereby inner-city neighborhoods have been historically and concretely "developed" into deteriorated areas in order to produce the prerequisites for gentrification. Occurring within the wider periodicity of capitalist expansion, this devalorization cycle—consisting of new construction, landlord control, blockbusting, redlining, and abandonment—terminates in a situation in which a developer's investment can result in a maximization of profit. The ability to produce profitable investments depends on the existence of a substantial gap between the current capitalization of real estate in a specific location and the potential return on investment. "When this rent gap becomes sufficiently wide to enable a developer to purchase the old structure, rehabilitate it, make mortgage and interest payments, and still make a satisfactory return on the sale or rental of the renovated building, then a neighborhood is ripe for gentrification."[18]

The analysis of this devalorization cycle is, by the authors' own admission, schematic; it requires readjustment to accommodate the variations among development procedures in diverse cities and to account for the variables of conflicting capital interests, forms of state intervention, the emergence of community movements, and other factors. Nonetheless, the analysis is indispensable in destroying the myth that arbitrary, natural, or individual actions produce neglect and abandonment, which can then be "corrected" by gentrification. Rather, it ties the stages of abandonment and gentrification together within the "logic" of an economic system and reveals them to be the product of specific decisions by the primary and powerful actors in the real estate market—financial institutions, developers, government, and landlords.

In their description of the real estate devalorization cycle Smith and

17. Neil Smith and Michele LeFaivre, "A Class Analysis of Gentrification," in Palen and London, pp. 43–63.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 50.

LeFaivre emphasize the commodity function of city neighborhoods under capitalism. They further stress this function when they situate gentrification within the larger transformations taking place in central cities. In so doing they closely follow David Harvey's pioneering analyses of capitalist urbanization, in which Harvey endeavors to discover the constituent elements that propel the flow of capital into the built environment of the city during particular economic periods.[19] His conclusions depend on an application to urban processes of Marx's analysis of the contradictions within capitalist accumulation and of how capitalism attempts to ensure its survival. Harvey emphasizes the tendency toward overaccumulation, in which the production of capital in certain sectors of the economy exceeds opportunities to employ it at the average rate of profit. Manifested in falling rates of profit, overproduction, surplus capital, surplus labor, or greater exploitation of labor, overaccumulation crises can be temporarily solved by switching investment into other sectors of the economy. Harvey views extensive investment in the built environment as a symptom of such a crisis, "a kind of last-ditch hope for finding productive uses for rapidly overaccumulating capital."[20] Due to the long-term, large-scale projects this investment entails, the success of the attempt—its short-lived success—requires the mediation of financial and state institutions. Smith and LeFaivre apply Harvey's conclusions to the processes of contemporary central-city development and gentrification, which they evaluate as a component of this switching process: in order to counteract falling rates of profit, capital moves into areas such as real estate and construction. Characterizing gentrification as "the latest phase in a movement of capital back to the city,[21] the authors offer another crucial argument against the prevailing vision that gentrification represents a spontaneous "back-to-the-city" movement by individuals eager for the excitement of cosmopolitan life.

The use of the city neighborhood as a commodity to be exploited for profit represents, however, only one of its purposes in a capitalist economy. Traditionally, it has also provided the conditions for reproducing necessary labor power. Smith and LeFaivre interpret gentrification as a phenomenon representing a definitive replacement of this function by the neighborhood's alternative service as a commodity: "The economic function of the neighborhood has

19. See, in particular, David Harvey, "The Urban Process Under Capitalism: A Framework for Analysis," in Michael Dear and Allen J. Scott, eds., *Urbanization and Urban Planning in Capitalist Society*, London and New York, Methuen, 1981, pp. 91–121. Other works by Harvey include *Social Justice and the City*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973; and *The Urbanization of Capital: Studies in the History and Theory of Capitalist Urbanization*, Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985.
20. Harvey, "The Urban Process Under Capitalism," p. 108. For another analysis of the contemporary construction boom as a response to the capitalist economic crisis, see Mike Davis, "Urban Renaissance and the Spirit of Postmodernism, *New Left Review*, no. 151 (May/June 1985), pp. 106–116.
21. Smith and LeFaivre, p. 54.

superseded the broader social function."[22] It is possible, however, to interpret gentrification as a means for the reproduction of labor power in a way that does not exclude the neighborhood's commodity function. In New York today, the two uses might signal conflicts within the capitalist class itself between those interests that require the conditions to maintain the labor force—the lower paid and part-time service workers in particular—and those that can profit from their destruction. Seen in this light, the current situation represents a specific historical instance of a more general contradiction between the imperatives of accumulation and reproduction in the late capitalist city. Writing in 1984 about the new commercial art scene that was then unfolding on New York's Lower East Side, Cara Gendel Ryan and I situated gentrification within the shifts taking place in the composition of the late capitalist labor force.[23] Citing heavy losses in manufacturing jobs in New York City, unemployment in the industrial sector due to the automatization of labor power, and the concomitant steady growth in jobs in the financial, business, and service sectors, we reasoned that gentrification was a crucial part of a strategy for restructuring the workforce. Together with the loss of jobs and cuts in basic services, it has helped to impoverish and disperse the traditional, now largely redundant, workforce, and allocated urban resources to fill the needs of the city's white-collar, corporate workers.

The general changes taking place in the nation's labor force are conditioned and modified by a global reorganization of labor which has accelerated since the 1970s. This global restructuring has had profound ramifications for urban spatial organization on a variety of levels. As a system for arranging production on a world scale, the new international division of labor entails the transfer by multinational corporations of their labor-intensive and productive activities to third-world countries and the intense concentration of their corporate headquarters in a few international centers. Allowing for enhanced flexibility and control over vastly extended operations, strategies are formulated, managerial decisions made, and financing administered from the global cities. To qualify as such an international center of business a city must possess, first, a high proportion of headquarters of corporations doing the majority of their business in foreign sales and, second, a centralization of international banks and international corporate-related services: law, accounting, and advertising firms.[24] In the United States, only New York and San Francisco have emerged as such international centers, so that "even the international activities of firms headquartered outside these cities were increasingly linked to financial institu-

22. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
23. Rosalyn Deutsche and Cara Gendel Ryan, "The Fine Art of Gentrification," *October*, no. 31 (Winter 1984), pp. 91–111.
24. R. B. Cohen has devised a "multinational index" for quantifying the status of cities in the United States as international business centers. See his "The New International Division of Labor, Multinational Corporations and Urban Hierarchy," in Dear and Scott, pp. 187–315.

tions and corporate services located within them."[25] But in addition to transforming relationships among international and national cities, the new international division of labor affects the workforce within the corporate center itself. These centers present limited opportunities for blue-collar jobs, further "'marginalizing' the lower class which has traditionally found job mobility extremely difficult."[26]

As an arm of broader governmental policy, urban planning in New York has, since the 1970s, focused its energies on the needs of the city's new economy—its corporate-linked activities and workers—and on the maximization of real-estate profits, engineering the dispersal of that "immobile" population with no place in this economy. Bureaucratic procedures and programs of planned development execute the task. Union Square "revitalization" is just such a program. The coincidence between the pattern of its evolution and the contours of deeper economic trends is clear. The area became the target of City Planning Commission attention in 1976 and the final redevelopment plan was approved in 1984. During this same period, New York lost more than 100,000 blue-collar jobs and gained over twice that many in the finance, insurance, and other business industries. These changes, accelerating since the 1950s, were reflected within the Union Square area itself. In that period, especially between 1970 and 1980, there had been an exodus of light manufacturing companies from the district's lofts, which were subsequently converted to more profitable residential and commercial uses compatible with the city's new economic base. Although it is difficult to furnish accurate figures for Union Square proper, since it comprises portions of four separate census tracts, the neighborhood's middle-class residential population substantially increased; fifty-one percent were employed in the service industries, forty-three percent in wholesale and retail businesses, while other employment sectors showed "less growth."[27] This disparity in employment possibilities illustrates the fact that New York's period of economic prosperity and resurgent business expansion is, more truthfully, an era of intense class polarization. According to a report prepared by the Regional Plan Association and based on 1980 census data, seventeen percent of the New York area's upper-income households accounted for more than forty percent of the area's total income, while forty-two percent—those with incomes under $15,000—accounted for only fourteen percent of that income.[28] (By 1983, those with incomes under $15,000, were, in New York City itself, over forty-six percent of the population.)[29] The report surmised that "the economic outlook for hundreds

25. *Ibid.*, p. 305.
26. *Ibid.*, p. 306.
27. Department of City Planning, Manhattan Office, *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 17.
28. Thomas J. Lueck, "Rich and Poor: Widening Gap Seen for Area," *New York Times*, May 2, 1986, p. B1.
29. "How Many Will Share New York's Prosperity?," *New York Times*, January 20, 1985, p. E5.

of thousands of poorly educated, low-income residents throughout the New York area, stretching from Trenton to New Haven, is growing more bleak."[30]

Only within the overarching framework of this larger urban development can the functions and effects of New York's recent redevelopment programs be assessed with any comprehensiveness. Nevertheless, throughout this period, the City Planning Commission began to codify a restriction of its vision under the misnomer *contextual planning*. Further, this time of extreme class polarization, wrenching restructuring of the economy, and social dislocation of the poor—most evident in the enforced mobility of the displaced homeless—was, to the commission, the interval when the city finally began to be conserved, stabilized, and protected from radical change as well as from the radical impositions of modernist architectural concepts. Advised by the architects, urban designers, planners, and engineers who staff the Department of City Planning, the commission modified its zoning regulations, bureaucratic methods, and physical design orientations in order to "guide" development according to the principles of responsiveness to the needs of distinct city environments. They pursued a design path directed toward the historical preservation of existing circumstances. With relief, one architect and urban planner for the city approvingly wrote, regarding this "preservationist" outlook,

> The urban aesthetic of associational harmony is reasserting itself under the banner of *cultural stability*. The mercurial rise to prominence and power of the urban preservationist movement has helped to fuel this change in direction. Preservation of both our most valued urban artifacts, whether they be the conventionalized row houses of Brooklyn Heights or the sumptuous dissonance of the New York Public Library is an important, if not vital, contribution to our sense of emotional well-being.[31]

This "redevelopment"—the resurgence of tradition and emergence of a severely restricted notion of cultural preservation—helps paper over violent disturbances in the urban social fabric.

From its inception the agenda of Union Square redevelopment was conceived and executed under the aegis of historical preservation, restoration of architectural tradition, and reinforcement of the existing urban context.[32] These

30. Lueck, p. B1.
31. Michael Kwartler, "Zoning as Architect and Urban Designer," *New York Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 4 (1985), p. 118 (emphasis added).
32. This fact can be seen in the role that architecture and urban design are playing in the creation of Battery Park City, one of the largest real estate developments in the country. The project has undergone several permutations since it was first conceived in the early 1960s, but a single one overshadows all the rest in significance. In 1969, the City Planning Commission accepted a plan for the development of Battery Park that called for two-thirds of the new housing units to be subsidized and divided equally between the poor and the middle class. When, however, the project was refashioned in the late 1970s, after the municipal fiscal crisis, it provided subsidies, instead,

concepts dominated the massive ideological campaign accompanying the scheme and the narrower aspects of its decision-making process. The bronze monuments in Union Square Park—refurbished and newly visible—embody with particular efficacy the attempt to preserve traditional architectural appearances in order to deliver the Union Square territory into the hands of major real estate developers and expedite luxury development. In fact the patriotic statues became a useful symbol to the forces of "revitalization" themselves as early as 1976, when the Department of City Planning received from the National Endowment for the Arts a $50,000 "City Options" grant, part of a "New York City Bicentennial Project." The intention of the grant was "to produce designs that would improve city life." After consulting with the community board, elected officials, businessmen, "civic leaders," and other city agencies, the Planning Department published a report entitled *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, the first exhibit in the case history of Union Square redevelopment. This document became the basis for the *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, which was originally released in November 1983, revised in June 1984, and, after passing the city's review procedure, adopted later that year. The final redevelopment plan fulfilled the primary objectives and many of the specific recommendations of *Union Square: Street Revitalization.* When requesting the City Options grant, the Planning Department chose four "historic" neighborhoods for study and design proposals; its application announced that its goal in these neighborhoods was preservation: "Cities contain many centers and communities rich in history and a sense of place. We seek to develop prototypical techniques by which the particular character of these areas can be reinforced so as to assist in their preservation through increased safety, use and enjoyment."[33] Among the strategies developed to "capitalize on existing elements worthy of preservation"[34] was the first proposal for improving the park: "Restore the centerpiece flagpole, a

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in the form of tax abatements, for the World Financial Center and plans for luxury apartments requiring incomes greater than $75,000. The fate of this project encapsulates the solution to the fiscal crisis adopted by the city. To Mayor Koch the change was justified by the fundamental necessity that "we continue to be the financial center of the world" (quoted in Martin Gottlieb, "Battery Project Reflects Changing City Priorities," *New York Times*, October 18, 1985, p. C3). Whereas the chronicle of Battery Park City's growth illuminates important changes in the city's economic and political priorities over the past fifteen years, the design mentality governing its creation increasingly conformed during the course of that growth to the preservationist branch of contemporary planning. Speaking about the traditional street furniture reproduced for the public esplanade of the $4.5 billion project, a *New York Times* article noted that it makes the area "seem like a long-established section of New York—a natural and inevitable part of the city rather than a newly designed environment." And one of the architects who worked out the master plan for Battery Park said, "We wanted to make it look as though nothing was done" ("Esplanade Recalls Old New York," *New York Times*, July 3, 1986, p. C3).

33. Victor Marrero, Chairman, Department of City Planning, "Preface," *Union Square: Street Revitalization.*

34. *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, p. 33.

memorial to the 150th anniversary of the United States, which features the Declaration of Independence engraved in bronze."[35]

The cover of *Union Square: Street Revitalization* "capitalized" on another Union Square monument and patriotic event. It reproduced an engraving from a nineteenth-century copy of *Harper's Weekly* captioned "The Great Meeting in Union Square, New York, To Support the Government, April 20, 1861." The print depicts a crowd of New Yorkers gathered at the base of the colossal equestrian statue of a flag-waving George Washington, now ceremonially located at the southern entrance to the park, but at that time situated on the small island at the park's eastern perimeter. The illustration evoked a brief era during the Civil War when Union Square became a gathering place for a public believed to be unified by nationalist sentiment. Loyal citizens repeatedly rallied around the Washington statue listening to speeches by Mayor Opdyke and letters of endorsement from the governor, president, and other officials; newspapers recounted the patriotic, unified spirit of these crowds:

> The great war-meeting at Union Square effectually removed the false impression that the greed of commerce had taken possession of the New York community, and that the citizens were willing to secure peace at the sacrifice of principle. . . . The patriotism of the citizens was also indicated by the wrath which that meeting excited at the South. The Richmond *Dispatch* said: "New York will be remembered with special hatred by the South, for all time."[36]

The name of the square, originally referring only to its physical position at the juncture of Broadway and the Bloomingdale Road, now implied national unity and a shared public history, dreams believed for some time to have come true as a result of the war.[37] The placard displaying the word *UNION* in the *Harper's Weekly* print indicates these new connotations.

The survival of this myth helped repress beneath high-minded notions of communal harmony the more disquieting memories of the class conflict that was the fundamental reality of modern urban society and which was also insistently visible in Union Square. The park was the scene of some of America's earliest labor demonstrations, including the New York segment of the first May Day celebration in 1886. This class division would reemerge conspicuously in the 1930s when the square became the conventional New York site for communist rallies and militant demonstrations of the unemployed and homeless. At that time its name was linked with trade-union movements. Albert Halper, a

35. *Ibid.*, p. 37.
36. Lossing, *History of N.Y. City*, in I. N. Phelps Stokes, *The Iconography of Manhattan Island 1498–1909* (1926), New York, Arno Press, 1967, p. 1896.
37. Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877–1920*, New York, Hill and Wang, 1967, pp. 11–12.

Cover of Union Square: Street Revitalization.

"proletarian novelist" of the period, wrote a book entitled *Union Square*, in which he employed the park's heroic monuments as a conceit to underscore the contradictions between idealized representations symbolizing spiritual ideals and reassuring authority and the present-day realities of starvation and police brutalization of demonstrators. In this way, he described Donndorf's mother-and-children fountain on the west side of the square—a position it still occupies—as "a dreamy piece of work" facing Broadway right near the "Free Milk for Babies Fund hut."[38] With similar irony, he juxtaposed the "big history" represented by the great men and deeds memorialized in the park's other statues with the historical class struggle, whose skirmishes were being waged in the square itself.

The original intention of monuments such as these, however, when they were erected in American cities in the late nineteenth century was more congruent with their use by the apparatus of Union Square redevelopment. Neoclassical imitations were meant, as M. Christine Boyer observes, to conceal such social contradictions by uplifting "the individual from the sordidness of reality" through the illusions of order, timelessness, and moral perfection that neoclassicism was supposed to represent.[39] Although they never comprised a planned

38. Albert Halper, *Union Square*, New York, Viking, 1933.
39. M. Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City: The Myth of American City Planning*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1983, p. 50.

or unified sculptural program, the Union Square monuments exemplify the type of sculpture and its strategic positioning promoted by the nineteenth-century municipal art movement—copies of Parisian copies of Greek and Roman landmarks of art and architectural history. These decontextualized forms, reinvested with new meanings about America's emerging economic imperialism and national pride, were products of the decorative offshoot of the municipal art movement, itself a branch of the attempt in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to produce order and tighten social control in the American city.[40] Inspired by fears of the unplanned chaos of urban industrialization, squalor, and disease in the slums, extensive immigration, and a wave of labor disturbances, the notion of urban planning and design as a vehicle to counteract these threats appeared in nascent form in the ideas of the civic art crusaders. Their activities are, then, only one aspect of an effort, as David Harvey put it, "to persuade all that harmony could be established around the basic institutions of community, a harmony which could function as an antidote to class war."

> The principle entailed a commitment to community improvement and a commitment to those institutions such as the Church and civil government, capable of forging community spirit. From Chalmers through Octavia Hill and Jane Addams, through the urban reformers such as Joseph Chamberlain in Britain, the "moral reformers" in France and the "progressives" in the United States at the end of the nineteenth century, through to model cities programmes and citizen participation, we have a continuous thread of bourgeois response to the problems of civil strife and social unrest.[41]

As part of this network, municipal art advocates aimed to produce a sense of order and communal feeling through spatial organization and decorative beauty. Pubiic open spaces, such as Union Square Park, were targeted as prime locations for forming the desired community, a public realm characterized by cohesive values conjured up through moral influence. "Modern civic art," wrote one of its foremost advocates, "finds in the open space an opportunity to call [the citizens] out-of-doors for other than business purposes, to keep them in fresh air and sunshine, and in their most receptive mood to woo them by sheer force of beauty to that love and that contentment on which are founded individual and civic virtue."[42] In this regard, municipal art specialists in New York consis-

40. See Wiebe, *The Search for Order*; Paul Boyer, *Urban Masses and Moral Order in America 1820–1920*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1978; Mario Manieri-Elia, "Toward an 'Imperial City': Daniel H. Burnham and the City Beautiful Movement," in Giorgio Ciucci et al., *The American City: From the Civil War to the New Deal*, Cambridge, MIT Press, 1979; Christine Boyer, *Dreaming the Rational City*.
41. Harvey, "The Urban Process Under Capitalism," p. 117.
42. Charles Mulford Robinson, *Modern Civic Art or, The City Made Beautiful*, New York and London, G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1903.

tently lamented that Union Square was a missed opportunity. One of the few public squares provided in the 1811 Commissioner's Map that established the rectilinear grid plan for "upper" Manhattan above Washington Square, Union Square almost failed to materialize. In 1812 it was recommended that plans be dropped since they would require the use of land and buildings with high real estate values. Although the square survived these threats and was finally opened to the public in 1839, greatly enhancing land values in the immediate vicinity, civic art reformers regretted that the park was never properly utilized to create a physically—and therefore, socially—cohesive public space. One critic proposed that it be turned into the civic center of New York;[43] another suggested that a proper and elaborate sculptural program be organized there around the theme and images of liberty secured by the War of Independence. "Could anything influence more forcibly the national pride of our coming generations?"[44] Public statues, embodying social ideals, would, it was hoped, "commemorate in permanent materials the deeds of great citizens, the examples of national heroes, the causes for civic pride, and the incentives to high resolve which are offered by the past."[45] As instruments for the pacification of an unruly populace, the sculptures, as well as street layouts devised by the municipal art movement, "searched not to transform the contradictions between reality and perfection but for the norms that moral perfection must follow."[46] Indeed, when Charles Mulford Robinson, systematizer of municipal art concepts, directed his attention to conditions in the metropolitan slums, he ignored the problem of poverty itself, declaring, "With the housing problem civic art, its attention on the outward aspect of the town, has little further to do."[47]

This resigned abandonment of the most troubling facts of city life and neglect of the motive forces determining the city's social structure could, in the end, only contribute to the persistence of the housing problem. Today, the uses of New York's civic sculptures—and the architectural and urban design system they represent—have *only* to do with the housing problem. This contention is amply supported by examining the fate of the Union Square monuments. The appearance of a nineteenth-century American imitation of a Roman equestrian statue on the cover of a late twentieth-century city-planning proposal for redevelopment during a period of fiscal crisis can demonstrate nothing other than the extreme pliability of the monument's meanings and the mutability of its functions. Nevertheless, the architects of redevelopment (together with the copywriters of real estate advertisements) attempt to bolster the illusions of cultural stability, universal values, and gentility connoted by such architectural forms. By so doing, they fail to realize that their own acts of preservation are

43. J. F. Harder, "The City's Plan," *Municipal Affairs*, 2 (1898), pp. 25–43.
44. Karl Bitter, "Municipal Sculpture," *Municipal Affairs*, 2 (1898), pp. 73–97.
45. Robinson, p. 170.
46. Boyer, p. 50.
47. Robinson, p. 262.

ideologically motivated, determined by particular interests and investments, and present them instead as neutral deeds of cultural rescue.[48] With the words *Union Square: Street Revitalization* parading across it, the nineteenth-century print and the George Washington monument are appropriated to incarnate a false impression of urban redevelopment as restoration. The small but clearly visible and centrally placed "UNION" placard in the engraving seems to promise that the values it connotes—coherence and harmony in the public realm—will adhere to the Union Square created by the redevelopment program. Similarly, the monuments themselves, their dirty images cleaned up, layers of grime and graffiti removed from their surfaces as part of the park renovation, have been enlisted to project an image of redevelopment as an act of benign historical preservation. Suffusing all the official accounts of Union Square's metamorphosis, this aura has become the classic image of gentrification, an image that secures consent to and sells the larger package of redevelopment. In this way, the aesthetic presentation of the physical site of development is indissolubly linked to the profit motives impelling Union Square's "revitalization."

This image of redevelopment can be contested by reconstructing the calculated moves made by the city in creating the new Union Square. The perception of Union Square redevelopment as a beautification procedure was reinforced by the fact that the first visible sign of change in the area came in the form of the park's renovation. Similarly, media reports focused on the park for almost a full year before there was any public indication of more comprehensive activities. This sequence of reported events and appearance of visible signs corresponds to the terminological inaccuracies surrounding urban restructuring. Misidentifying the new residents of "new" neighborhoods as a lost aristocracy, for example, the term *gentrification* participates in the prevalent nostalgia for genteel and aristocratic ways of life that has returned in the Reagan state, a nostalgia fully exploited and perpetuated by prestigious cultural institutions. The term also yields erroneous perceptions of inner-city change as the rehabilitation of decaying buildings. Redevelopment, on the contrary, clearly involves

48. Kurt W. Forster has examined current architectural attitudes toward history and preservation using Alois Riegl's 1903 essay on monuments undertaken to direct the Austrian government's policy in protecting the country's historic monuments. Riegl's efforts to determine the nature of what he called the unintentional monument—the landmark of art or architectural history—led him to the understanding that relative and changing values determine the course and management of programs of preservation. Much of Riegl's essay is devoted to an attempt to identify and categorize these conflicting values. The act of establishing unintentional monuments as landmarks entails extracting art and architecture from its original context and assigning it new roles in new circumstances. Relating Riegl's insights to current architectural attitudes, Forster has designated the unintentional monument as "the homeless of history, entrusted to public and private guardians." He points out the fact that Riegl's study fundamentally undermines the notion that architectural monuments possess stable meanings. See Kurt W. Forster, "Monument/Memory and the Mortality of Architecture," and Alois Reigl, "The Modern Cult of Monuments: Its Character and Its Origins," *Oppositions*, no. 25 (Fall 1982), pp. 2–19 and 21–51 respectively.

rebuilding, usually after buildings have been razed and sites cleared. In these aggressive acts, the power of the state and corporate capital is more obvious.

In Union Square's redevelopment the illusion that the park restoration preceded redevelopment plans produced an equally distorted picture. The actual sequence and coordination of events differed considerably from surface appearances. Documents generated during the process indicate the extent to which planning in the area served as part of the comprehensive policy adopted by the city government following the fiscal crisis. The initial survey of Union Square, financed by the City Options grant, was issued during the period when austerity measures had been imposed on the city's residents. *Union Square: Street Revitalization* was informed by a full acceptance of the popular explanations offered by politicians and financiers about the origins of the crisis—overborrowing, corruption, greedy workers and welfare recipients—and of the "solutions" justified by these explanations—cuts in basic services and deferred wage increases. Thus the report asserted, in a practical, businesslike tone, that "public financing of new [housing] projects must be ruled out" in the development of Union Square's housing "frontier."[49] Instead, private development of housing, as well as of office and retail space, was viewed as a panacea, and the authors of the report hoped that efforts could be made to "enlist the real-estate industry in effort [sic] to market new or rehabilitated housing units."[50] Framed in objective language, the document adopted superficial, received notions about city policy. It was party, though, to the execution of a more brutal solution to a more basic problem—the incompatibility between the city's new economy and its workforce. That solution lay in "attempting to get rid of the poor and take away the better situated housing stock to reallocate to the workers needed by corporate New York."[51] The same year that *Union Square: Street Revitalization* was published, Roger Starr, who had been the city's Housing and Development Administrator during the fiscal crisis, advocated the "resettlement" of those residents no longer needed in the corporate-oriented economy. Referring to deteriorated neighborhoods that would, he hoped, be completely vacated by such "relocation," Starr asserted that "the role of the city planner is not to originate the trend of abandonment but to observe and use it so that public investment will be hoarded for those areas where it will sustain life."[52] Adopting Starr's "empirical" method, the Planning Department complied. It was hardly, then, a question of the city's enlisting the real estate industry in order to fulfill the needs of residents.

49. *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, p. 30.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
51. William K. Tabb, "The New York City Fiscal Crisis," in William K. Tabb and Larry Sawers, eds., *Marxism and the Metropolis: New Perspectives in Urban Political Economy*, New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1984, p. 336.
52. Roger Starr, "Making New York Smaller," *New York Times Sunday Magazine*, November 14, 1976, p. 105.

Rather, real estate and other capital interests enlisted the city government to supply the conditions to guarantee their profits and reduce their risks.

The extent of the city's intervention into the housing market on behalf of corporate profits emerges in its clearest outlines in the 1983 proposal for redevelopment. It acknowledged that "Manhattan-wide market changes in the manufacturing, commercial, and residential sectors"[53] had effected changes in the population and land-uses of its wider study area: the territory bounded by 12th Street to the south, 20th Street to the north, Third Avenue to the east and Fifth Avenue to the west. It discovered, however, that 14th Street and Union Square proper had benefited little from the prevailing trends in the area. That pivotal center needed infusions of government support. "The Square continues to have a poor image,"[54] the report maintained, affirming that a principal barrier to the desired development had been the "social problems" plaguing Union Square Park, particularly its use by a "socially undesirable population (e.g., drug peddlars)."[55] By this time, however, the park had been "fenced off for reconstruction,"[56] a project that had been publicly announced in 1982.

The obstacle that the park's image represented had already been anticipated in the 1976 study, but the full force of the city's class-biased response to the problem and of its rationale for current urban policy is demonstrated by a difference between the 1976 and the 1983 documents. In 1976, the surveyors deduced that "high income households . . . are more likely to be attracted to the Upper East Side or other established prestigious neighborhoods"[57] than to the shabby area around Union Square. While, admittedly, it contained no suggestions for providing low-income housing, the report made some pretense of formulating strategies for furnishing moderate-cost housing. The later proposal totally disregarded both. By that time, the implications of the original report had become clearer and hardened into policy. At the moment when services to the poor were cut and the assumption made that no thoughts of public financing of housing could even be entertained, the government, acting through the Parks Commission and Planning Department, was, in fact, directing its funds toward subsidizing the rich.

The $3.6 million restoration of the park constitutes such a public subsidy. Both Union Square plans indicate the degree to which the triumph of redevelopment depended on cleaning up the park's image and transforming it into an external housing amenity. An indication of the correctness of this prediction is the fact that by the time the restoration was planned and publicized, and, significantly, during the preparation of the final Planning Department proposal,

53. *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 2.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
55. *Ibid.*
56. *Ibid.*
57. *Union Square: Street Revitalization*, p. 30.

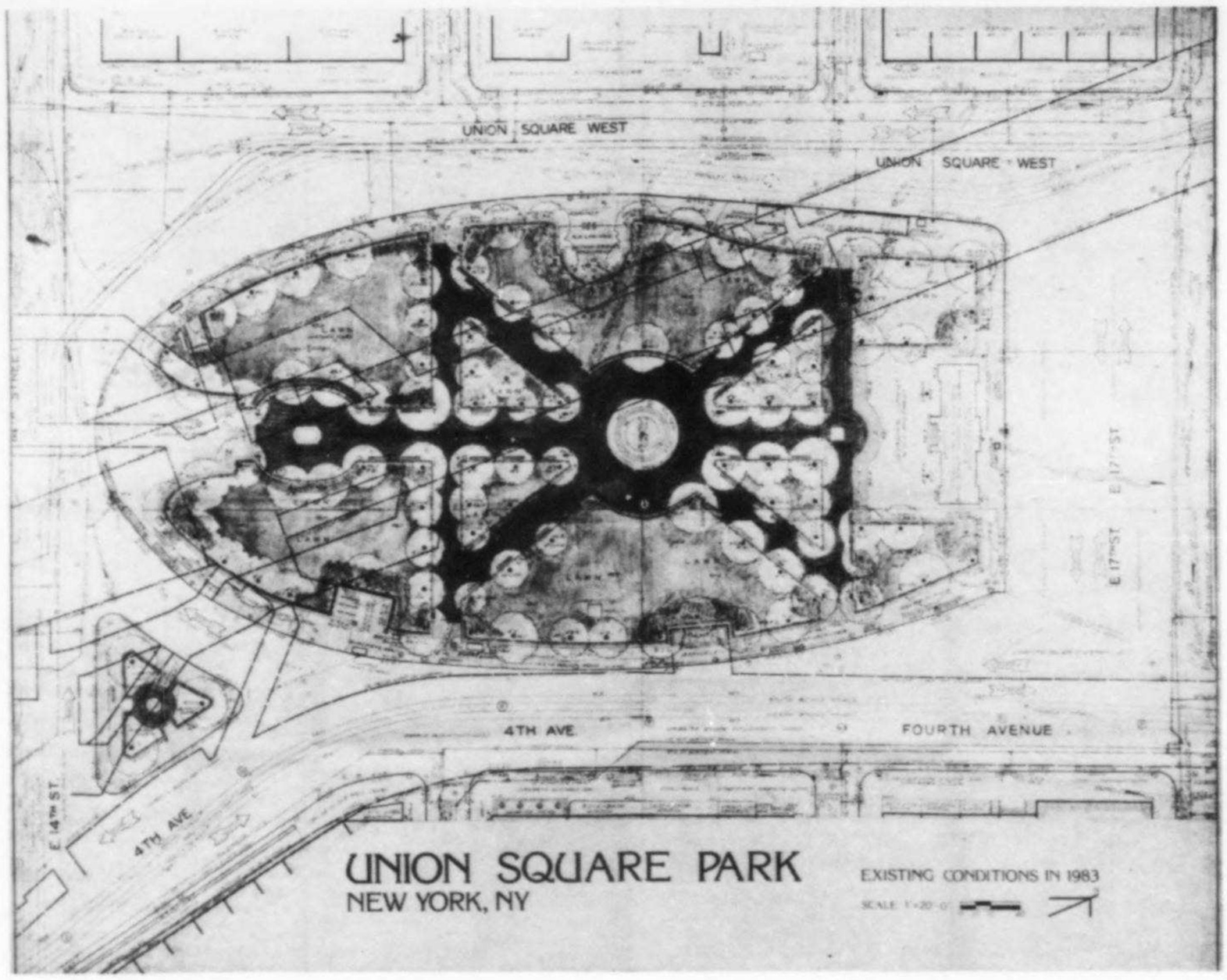
the destiny of the most important development parcel in the area—the entire city block occupied by the abandoned S. Klein department stores—was being decided. In July 1983, a two-year option to buy the property had been acquired by William Zeckendorf, Jr., New York's most active real estate developer, particularly in the speculation in poor neighborhood lots that become catalysts for gentrification. The Planning Department map labeled the property the "S. Klein/Zeckendorf Site." Zeckendorf intended to develop it for luxury commercial and residential use, but his plans were contingent on the fulfillment of various city plans. One such plan was already under way, however, as the hindrance that the park's image represented to the gentrifying classes was in the process of being removed. The restoration of the park, then, can only be viewed as that crucial stage of gentrification in which the poor are dislodged in order to make a neighborhood comfortable for high-income groups.

Typically, this stage of displacement is legitimized under the auspices of crime prevention and the restoration of order; the park was being reclaimed from thieves and drug dealers. This goal, primary in determining the urban design principles that governed the park's renovation, reveals the actual limits of the ideological program of historical preservation and the attempt to create a false congruence between the past and the present. While existing nineteenth-century structures—the park's monuments—were refurbished and sham ones—lights and kiosks—constructed, the park was also thoroughly bulldozed in preparation for the first phase of its "restoration" to its "original" condition. Phase I completely reorganized the park's layout and spatial patterns in order to permit full surveillance of its occupants. This was accomplished through precepts that have been dubbed by one New York planner, "defensible space."[58] The author of this appellation considered as "defensible" that space which allowed "people" to control their own environments. In actuality it describes the application of the disciplinary mechanism that Foucault termed "panopticism" to state-controlled urban surveillance. By producing "defensible space," architecture and urban design become agents of the discreet and omnipresent disciplinary power that is "exercised through its invisibility; at the same time it imposes on those whom it subjects a principle of compulsory visibility."[59] Based in notions of natural human territorial instincts, the principles of "defensible space" assign architecture the role of policing urban space:

> Architectural design can make evident by the physical layout that an area is the shared extension of the private realms of a group of individuals. For one group to be able to set the norms of behavior and

58. Oscar Newman, *Defensible Space: Crime Prevention through Urban Design*, New York, Collier, 1972.

59. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, New York, Vintage, 1977, p. 187. M. Christine Boyer analyzes urban planning as a disciplinary technology in *Dreaming the Rational City*.

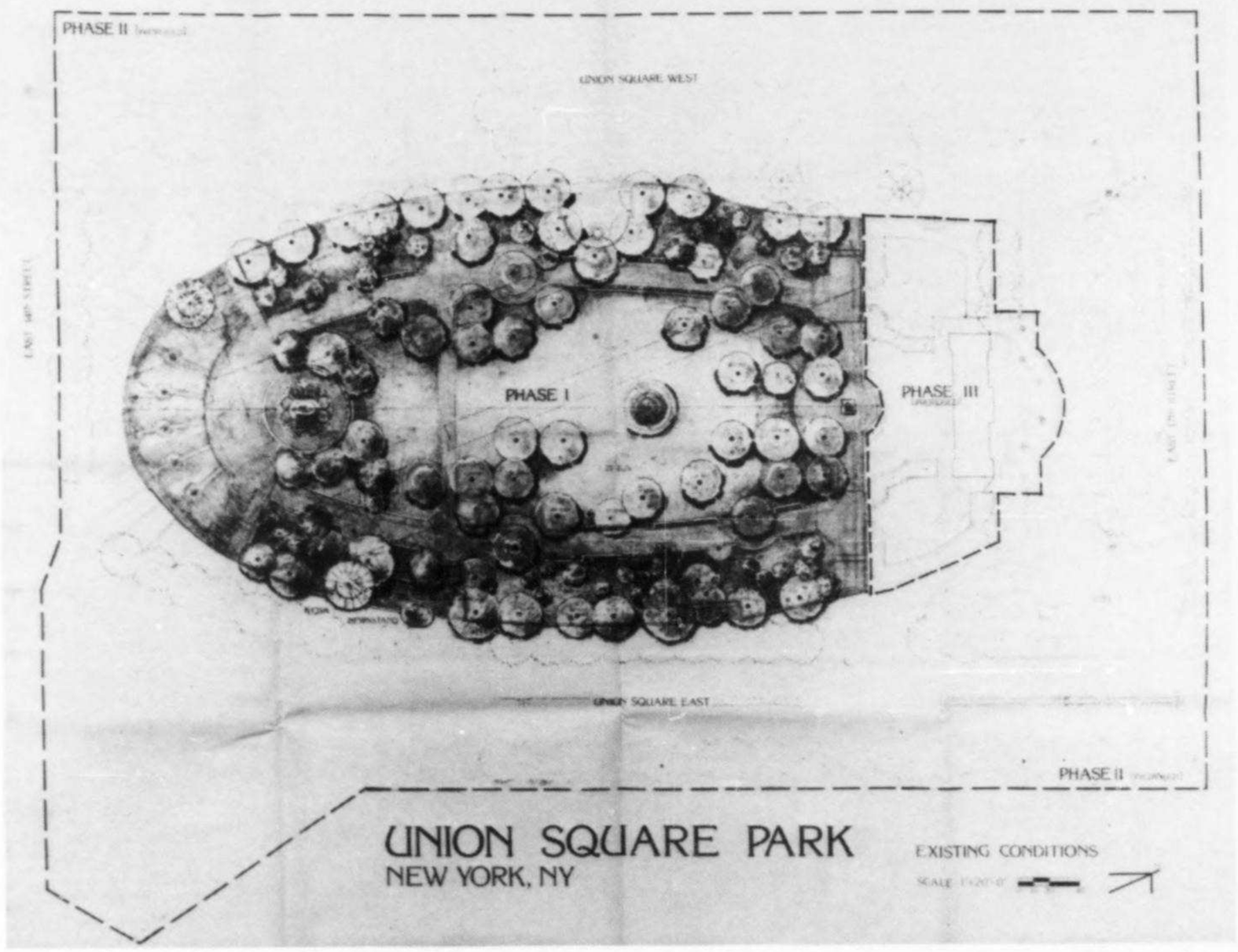


Union Square Park, Architectural drawings. Existing conditions (left); proposed modifications (right).

> the nature of activity possible within a particular place, it is necessary that it have clear, unquestionable control over what can occur there. Design can make it possible for both inhabitant and stranger to perceive that an area is under the undisputed influence of a particular group, that they dictate the activity taking place within it, and who its users are to be. . . . "Defensible space" is a surrogate term for the range of mechanisms—real and symbolic barriers, strongly defined areas of influence, and improved opportunities for surveillance—that combine to bring an environment under the control of its residents.[60]

That the private corporate and real estate interests represented by the new Zeckendorf Towers, its future residents, and other wealthy beneficiaries of Union Square redevelopment should exercise "unquestionable control" over the public space of Union Square Park was assured by a few decisive changes in the park's physical appearance and circulation system. An open expanse of lawn with two walkways cutting directly across the park replaced the original radial pattern of six paths converging on a circle in the park's center; a pathway encircling the entire periphery of the park provided the major circulation route; trees were removed and thinned out; removal of walls and trees created an open plaza at the park's southern entrance. According to the Police Department

60. Newman, pp. 2–3.



in St. Louis, this is the precise configuration of a safe park, because it permits "natural" surveillance by a long periphery that can be easily patrolled.[61] A statement by the design office of the New York City Parks Commission applauded the success of Phase I:

> With design emphasis on improved accessibility, visibility and security to encourage its optimal use, the park has once again recaptured its importance as a high quality open space amenity for this community. Since Phase I began, the area around the park has changed quite dramatically. It is felt that the park redesign has contributed greatly to the revitalization of the Union Square area, and regained the parkland so needed in this urban environment.[62]

The manipulation of New York's high level of street crime has proved instrumental in securing public consent to redevelopment, to the wholesale restructuring of urban space, and to a Haussmannian logic of social control through the kind of spatial organization exemplified in Union Square Park's sophisticated new security system. On April 19, 1984, at the inaugural ceremony for the restoration, the existing landscape had already been demolished. Mayor Koch incited an assembled crowd: "First the thugs took over, then the

61. *Ibid.*, p. 114.
62. "Union Square Park Phase I," statement by the design department of the City Parks Commission.

muggers took over, then the drug people took over, and now we are driving them out."[63] To present the developers' takeover as crime prevention, however, the social and economic causes of crime are repudiated as thoroughly as the real causes and aims of redevelopment itself are obscured. Koch, for example, fully endorses the current resurgence of biologistic notions of the origins of "predatory street crime." Reviewing *Crime and Human Nature*, a recent book by sociobiologists James Q. Wilson and Richard J. Herrnstein, in the pages of the neoconservative *Policy Review*, he reiterates the authors' explanations of such crime in terms of biological and genetic differences that produce unreformable delinquents.[64] This piece of self-serving journalism is used to justify New York's methods of crime control and its continuing attack on the poor: higher levels of indictments and convictions of felons, an increased police force, the imposition of criminal law for the purposes of "moral education,"[65] and, by implication, redevelopment projects that, employing architecture as a disciplinary mechanism, transform city neighborhoods into wealthy enclaves in order to facilitate the movement of "undesirables" and "undesirable market activities"[66] out of the immediate vicinity.

These tactics of urban restructuring are not entirely new; neither is the erasure of the less appealing signs of its manufacture or the denial of its social consequences. Over a hundred years ago, Friedrich Engels described these procedures for transforming the city to meet the needs of capital. At that time disease, even more effectively than crime, sanctioned the violent dislocation of the poor and the exacerbation of their problems that the process entails. Engels referred to this process by the word *Haussmann*, employing the name of Napoleon III's architect for the reconstruction of Paris. His description is still relevant:

> By "Haussmann" I mean the practice, which has now become general, of making breaches in the working-class quarters of our big cities, particularly in those which are centrally situated, irrespective of whether this practice is occasioned by considerations of public health and beautification or by the demand for big centrally located business premises or by traffic requirements, such as the laying down of railways, streets, etc. No matter how different the reasons may be, the result is everywhere the same: the most scandalous

63. Quoted in Deirdre Carmody, "New Day Is Celebrated for Union Square Park," *New York Times*, April 20, 1984, p. B3.
64. Edward I. Koch, "The Mugger and His Genes," *Policy Review*, no. 35 (Winter 1986), pp. 87–89. For alternative reviews by scientists condemning the authors' methods and conclusions, see Leon J. Kamin, "Books: *Crime and Human Nature*," *Scientific American*, vol. 254, no. 2 (February 1986), pp. 22–27; and Steven Rose, "Stalking the Criminal Chromosome," *The Nation*, vol. 242, no. 20 (May 24, 1986), pp. 732–736.
65. Koch, p. 89.
66. *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 23.

> alleys and lanes disappear to the accompaniment of lavish self-glorification by the bourgeoisie on account of this tremendous success, but—they appear again at once somewhere else, and often in the immediate neighborhood.[67]

About the housing question, Engels continued, "The breeding places of disease, the infamous holes and cellars in which the capitalist mode of production confines our workers night after night, are not abolished; they are merely *shifted elsewhere*!"[68]

That bourgeois solutions only perpetuate the problem is indicated by the growing numbers of homeless who no longer live inside Union Square Park but on the streets and sidewalks surrounding it. Furthermore, crime has, in the words of the *New York Times*, "moved into Stuyvesant Square," only a few blocks away, having "migrated from nearby areas that have been the focus of greater police surveillance."[69] Parks Commissioner Henry J. Stern concurs: "It's clear some of the problems of Union Square Park, and maybe Washington Square Park, have migrated to Stuyvesant Square."[70] By subsuming all of New York's social ills under the category of crime, the rationale for "revitalization" reproduces and heightens the real problems of poverty, homelessness, and unemployment. Simultaneously, it attempts to eradicate their visible manifestations. Aiding the appropriation of Union Square for the real-estate industry and corporate capital, architecture has colluded in this endeavor. Embodied in the restored park and its monuments, architectural efforts to preserve traditional appearances merely repress the proof of rupture.

The Homeless Projection: Counter-Image of Redevelopment

"Behind the disciplinary mechanisms," Foucault wrote, "can be read the haunting memory of 'contagions,' of the plague, of rebellions, crimes, vagabondage, desertions, people who appear and disappear, live and die in disorder."[71] Similar repressions inhabit the controlled urban space that Wodiczko selected as the site of *The Homeless Projection*. The work stimulates an aggressive public reading of this Haussmannian arena of beautified surfaces, suppressed contradictions, relocated and unsolved problems. If the forms of Wodiczko's proposal at 49th Parallel can be viewed in relation to the presentational modes of contemporary city planning, the project's realization would critically scrutinize—*re-present*—the city environments that such planning produces. For this purpose, Union Square provides a fully equipped, well-arranged, and strategi-

67. Friedrich Engels, *The Housing Question*, Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1979, p. 71.
68. *Ibid.*, p. 74.
69. Keith Schneider, "As Night Falls, Crime Moves into Stuyvesant Square," *New York Times*, October 12, 1985, p. 29.
70. *Ibid.*, p. 31.
71. Foucault, p. 198.

cally located theater—a "fake architectural real estate theater," as Wodiczko calls it—of urban events and social processes. The present "theater" was brought into existence by a series of well-calculated strategies in an urban "revitalization" campaign. Conducted in the name of history—the Zeckendorf Towers are advertised as "The Latest Chapter in the History of Union Square"—that campaign simultaneously attempts to consign its own brutal history to oblivion.

Utilizing the Union Square site, still possessed of memories of recent changes and the forced marginalization of people, *The Homeless Projection* seeks to wrest the memories of alterations and social conditions from the very spaces and objects whose surface images deny them. In order to activate these memories—to liberate suppressed problems and foster an awareness of architecture's social origins and effects—Wodiczko takes advantage of the spectacles created by the park's restoration and the benefits its physical appearance offers. The numerous lamps—reproductions of nineteenth-century Parisian streetlights—and the platform on which the park is elevated—a legacy of

Zeckendorf Towers Sales Office.

Models of proposed condominiums.

alterations to the 14th Street subway station in the 1930s—furnish him with a public stage accessible to a ready-made, collective city audience. The setting contains tangible evidence of social reorganization in the park's spatial reorganization—redirected pathways, newly sodded lawns, thinned-out foliage. Since Wodiczko's work inserts the restoration of the park into the context of more extensive architectural activities, the signs of urban change that ring the park's boundaries crucially complete his site, although most were not in existence when his proposal was made. Scaffolding, cranes, building foundations, demolished structures, fenced-off construction areas, emptied buildings all verify the extensive restructuring of the city and juxtapose signs of destruction with the signs of preservation in the park itself. The huge, luxury Zeckendorf building rising across the street—"The Shape of Things to Come" as its billboard announces—identifies the principal beneficiaries of this activity.

In addition to lighting, stage, audience, and sets, Union Square Park provides Wodiczko, most importantly, with actors for his own theatrical presentation in the form of its figurative monuments. By temporarily appropriating these statues, he stimulates an awareness of the role they are already playing in the gentrification of New York. Evoking memories different from those the monuments were originally meant to conjure up and associations contrary to the ones their official restorers hope to awaken today, *The Homeless Projection* probes the less exalted purposes that underly reverential acts of faithful preservation. Sculptures once placed in "open spaces" in the hope of pacifying city residents are appropriated by Wodiczko to mobilize the public. In opposition to the incursion of private interests, the space is restored as a site of public debate and criticism. Using the monuments in their contemporary incarnation—mediums for repressing the changed conditions of urban life—Wodiczko makes them his own vehicles for illuminating those conditions. In this way he assimilates to the built environment of the city itself the techniques and purposes of Brechtian theater, about which Walter Benjamin wrote, "To put it succinctly: instead of identifying with the characters, the audience should be educated to be astonished at the circumstances under which they function."[72]

Despite energetic exertions by the mass media, the city, real estate advertisements, and segments of the cultural community to present the bronze statues as representatives of eternal and universal values—aesthetic or symbolic—the monuments have been recast in compromising situations and positions. Haphazardly produced, the sculptural program of Union Square is commonly considered to symbolize concepts of liberty and individual freedom. This assessment originated in the nineteenth century when two of the sculptures fortuitously shared a common subject: heroes of the revolution. The George Washington statue was erected in 1856 and, although it adopts the codes of

72. Walter Benjamin, "What Is Epic Theater," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, New York, Schocken, 1969, p. 150.

Roman imperial form, it is generally characterized as a symbol of the freedom secured by the War of Independence. Lafayette, on the park's eastern edge, by Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi, sculptor of the Statue of Liberty, was presented to New York by its French residents in 1873 to commemorate French-American relations. Inscriptions on its base commemorate two instances of solidarity: mutual inspiration and support during the American Revolution and the sympathy offered by the United States to France during the difficult period of the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune. The other two nineteenth-century statues—Abraham Lincoln, erected three years after the death of the Civil War president and author of the Emancipation Proclamation, and the fountain located on the western side of the park, a "heroic bronze group," of a mother and children—do not strictly conform to the Revolutionary War theme but are easily incorporated into the patriarchal motif and atmosphere of eclectic classicism. On July 4, 1926, however, Tammany Hall bolstered the thematic coherence by donating a huge flagpole base—staffless and flagless today—which was placed at the center of the park. It complemented the theme of freedom, containing the full text of the Declaration of Independence, a relief depicting an arduous struggle for liberation, a quotation from Thomas Jefferson encircling the base, and a plaque stating, "This monument setting forth in enduring bronze the full text of the immortal charter of American liberty was erected in commemoration of the 150th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence."

Originally, the park's six wide pathways converged on this monument; as a result of "revitalization," the hyperbolic tribute to individual freedom stands alone in the middle of the large expanse of lawn created to render the public accessible to surveillance and to prevent any illicit activities taking place at the park's center—the most distant point from the policing on its perimeter. The restored structure's new presentation suggests that in the act of commemorating individual freedom the "enduring bronze" simultaneously represents the unfettering of those financial forces in whose interests the renovation was undertaken. The circumstances of that presentation demonstrate the monument's lack of symbolic stability and the extreme mutability of architecture's function. Unequivocal evidence of the nature of its current metamorphosis—what Wodiczko terms architecture's "real-estate change"—is provided by the presentation of the park's monuments in the Zeckendorf Towers sales office which opened in the spring of 1986. Here, framed Cibachrome photographs of the statues hang next to pictures representing Union Square's history and photographs of mounted park police on a wall behind a model of the new condominiums, whose prices approach half a million dollars. The fact that a substantial number of the apartments were sold in the first week of business corroborates the testimony of a 1984 *Times* editorial which, urging support for Union Square redevelopment, seconded the City Planning Commission's belief that "the location of the public

square and its handsome lines and *great statuary* will attract investment from builders."[73]

Nonetheless, the dogma persists that monumental architecture can "survive" overt changes in presentation and the contingencies of history with its dignity and power intact. Successful monuments, this discourse asserts, transcend the "trivialities" of commercialism. Such assertions "logically" extend the argument that successful monuments also transcend the "trivialities" of social conditions—poverty and homelessness, for example. Thus, expressing faith in the enduring power of architecture, Goldberger, who, as we have seen, shielded the Union Square flagpole base from the "degrading" actions of a homeless bum, recently rhapsodized the "essential dignity" of the Statue of Liberty. This defense was not occasioned by a desire to fortify the monument's purported meaning against the present virulent wave of anti-immigrant sentiment and attempts to enact repressive legislation against Hispanics and Asians in the United States. Rather, he applauded the Statue's ability to fulfill a monument's fundamental role in the urban environment: "The city that is too large and too busy to stop for anyone seems, through this statue, to stop for everyone. Suddenly its intense activity becomes background, and the statue itself becomes foreground: we cannot ask of a monument that it do anything more."[74] Unwittingly, Goldberger summarizes with remarkable clarity not the real workings of monuments but the ideological operations of his own idealist aesthetic and urban principles. Stretching the tenets of aesthetic autonomy far enough to embrace the city that surrounds the monument, he fetishizes the city environment, too, at the level of its physical appearances. In the article from which the passage is cited, he describes the Statue of Liberty's compositional relationship, by virtue of its permanent position in New York Harbor, to a city that is, through that relationship, made more physically coherent. Utterly neutralizing and drastically restricting the notion of context, Goldberger indeed employs architecture to push into the background the city's "intense activity"—which is, in fact, its social processes, its intense real estate activity, for one. This blurring of the broader urban context renders it less disturbing; in this originates its usefulness as a weapon of power, for the aestheticization of the city has the most far-reaching implications for the urban environment.

Defining architecture as an institutionalized social system rather than as a collection of permanent aesthetic or narrowly utilitarian objects, and addressing urban space as a terrain of social processes, *The Homeless Projection*, on the contrary, appropriates the Union Square monuments not to depreciate the significance of either the city's activities or the architectural objects but to foreground and illuminate their relationships. Wodiczko plans to project onto the surfaces

73. "Speaking Up for Union Square," *New York Times*, August 16, 1984, p. A22.
74. Paul Goldberger, "The Statue of Liberty: Transcending the Trivial," *New York Times*, July 17, 1986, p. C18.

of the four figurative monuments in Union Square Park—representatives of architecture's attempt to "preserve its traditional and sentimental appearances"[75]—images of the attributes of New York's homeless population—the group most noticeably dispossessed by the results of that attempt. Magnified to the scale of the buildings—although not heroicizing or representing the poor themselves—the images would remain, as they did in the gallery installation, unchanging for the duration of the artist's performance. The photographed images consist of the familiar objects and costumes of the homeless, their means of travel—occasioned by their enforced mobility—and the gestures they adopt to secure an income on the streets. Far from transcending the "trivial" facts of city life, Wodiczko's monuments are forced to acknowledge the social facts they produce. Trivial objects form the content of his images, and while such monumentalized commonplace items as a shopping cart, wheelchair, or can of Windex seem to clash absurdly with the heroic iconography of the neoclassical monuments, their placement is also carefully calibrated and seamlessly joined to the formal language of the sculpture. This appearance of continuity, achieved in some cases by superimposing a photograph of a hand over the statue's bronze surface so that it merges imperceptibly with the figure's anatomy, only renders the presence of the images more astonishing and the statues more uncanny in their mixture of strangeness and familiarity. Disengaging spectators from their usual disregard of the monuments as well as from their seduction by the restoration program's presentation—both of which shield the monuments from their surrounding social conditions—*The Homeless Projection* allows viewers to perceive those objects *only* in relation to those conditions. This primary reading is ensured by the subject of the images as well as by Wodiczko's montage techniques, the relations he establishes between image and architecture. The effect of his formal accommodation of an unchanging image to the appropriated surface of an existing architectural structure is twofold. The viewer's attention is actively focused on the structure—its physical stability as well as its mythical symbolic stability: the images of inevitability and power that it normally projects. Secondly, however, the projection uses the structure's forms to disrupt its seemingly unshakable homogeneity and its authoritative permanence. In a sense, the montage operation symbolically *moves* the object so that its actual mutability can be recognized. At the same time, Wodiczko's method of projection destabilizes the monuments in a more fundamental way. *The Homeless Projection*'s images, depicting the current social outcome of relations of private property, are integrated into symbolic forms commemorating political emancipation and the freedom of the individual. The bourgeois concept of the "rights of man" memorialized in the Union Square statues is, however, as Marx observed, that of the "rights of the *member of civil society*, i.e., of egoistic man, of

75. Wodiczko, "The Homeless Projection."

man separated from other men and from the community."[76] Its practical effect is to ensure the freedom of private property. The monuments, then, can only connote communal harmony and idealized political authority if this sphere of self-interest is constituted, through repression, as a separate domain. By forcing the effects of this private sphere to reappear within the public monuments themselves, *The Homeless Projection* revolutionizes the statues, which, in their altered form, "acknowledge" the contradictions they embody.

Thus, Wodiczko manipulates the statues' own language to challenge the apparent stability of its signification, transforming the classical gestures, poses, and attitudes of the sculpted figures into those used by people begging on the streets. George Washington's left forearm, for example, presses down on a can of Windex and holds a rag, so that the imperial gesture of his right arm is transformed into a signal used by the unemployed to stop cars, clean windshields, and obtain a street donation. The proud but humble bearing of Lincoln becomes, through the addition of a crutch and beggar's cup, the posture of a homeless man standing on a street corner; the graceful stance and friendly extended arm of Lafayette takes on the added identity of a vagrant asking for alms; and the mother sheltering her children becomes a homeless family appealing for help. In addition, Wodiczko projects a continuously fading and re-

76. Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Karl Marx: Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, New York, Vintage, 1975, p. 229.

Krzysztof Wodiczko. Proposed Projection for Abraham Lincoln Monument, *showing facade of emptied building.*

emerging image onto the front of the Lincoln monument: an emptied building whose surface is partially renovated.

This "style" of building—visibly empty at a time of a manifest need for housing—is a familiar New York spectacle. Its surface, like the surface of the monuments, has been partially restored as part of a presentation to encourage neighborhood speculation. By infiltrating the previously unbroken surfaces of the Union Square monuments—the images of gentrification—with images of this building and of the mechanisms by which the homeless survive, *The Homeless Projection* concretizes, albeit in a temporary antimonumental form, the most serious contradiction that New York architecture embodies: that between capital's need to exploit space for profit and the social needs of the city's residents. Mapping these images onto the surfaces of monuments in a public square, Wodiczko forces architecture to reveal this repressed contradiction and, thereby, its identity with the activities and actors in New York's real estate market. By virtue of its attention to these contradictions, Wodiczko's intervention in the space of Union Square "revitalization" addresses the single issue ignored by the city throughout the long and complicated course of redevelopment: the question of displacement. During *The Homeless Projection*, and afterward in the viewers' memories, Union Square's monuments, diverted from their prescribed civic functions, commemorate this urban event—mass eviction and development-caused homelessness.

Real Estate Aesthetics

The indifference to and concealment of the plight, even the existence, of the displaced is entirely predictable. To foster development, the city encourages a suppression of data on displacement and homelessness. Whereas *The Homeless Projection* placed this issue at the center of the urban context, official architecture and urban disciplines, sanctioned by aesthetic considerations, actively colluded in its cover-up in Union Square. To appreciate the extent of this collusion fully, it is necessary to understand the crucial role played by "contextual aesthetics" at a key phase of "revitalization."

Government subsidies to real-estate developers are not confined to direct financial outlays or to tax abatements and exemptions. Benefits also accrue from the city's administration of institutional allowances for building, especially through its bureaucratic procedures and the power of zoning regulations. The development of Union Square hinged on a specialized proceeding through which the Planning Commission permits zoning constraints to be waived or altered. The vehicle for this alteration is called the "special zoning district," defined in the Planning Department Dictionary as a section of the city designated for special treatment "in recognition of the area's unique character or quality."[77]

77. "Glossary: Selected planning terms applicable to New York City real estate development," *New York Affairs*, vol. 8, no. 4 (1985), p. 15.

Permitting changes in the use, density, or design of buildings in the specified area, the creation of a special zoning district is construed to represent a flexible response to "perceived needs."[78] Its flexibility is frequently underscored by comparing it to the rigidity of the 1961 Zoning Resolution, whose rules the special zoning district, since the 1970s, has been used to modify or circumvent. Thus, the 1961 zoning code is characterized as based on the principles of European modernist architecture of the 1920s and therefore "utopian," "anti-tradition," "anti-urban," and "unresponsive to context." Only within the terms of this simplistic "critique of modernism" and by portraying urban problems as aesthetic problems can the current manipulations for the purposes of redevelopment be presented as responsive to the environment or to the city's needs. These distortions can be gleaned from the following assessment of the problems, which led to the frequent utilization of the special zoning district:

> Less than ten years after the adoption of the 1961 Zoning Resolution, disaffection with the results of the utopian vision set in. . . . The prevailing view was that the new zoning was incompatible with the best efforts of architects and urban designers to produce high-quality architecture and good city form. This belief, while most often heard from architects and urban designers was also expressed with great regularity by the developers, bankers, and community representatives, and other professional, lay, and governmental constituencies. They posited that zoning was legislating esthetics, and that a single vision was too restrictive, leaving little room for genuine architectural design quality. The result is a cookie-cutter building that is ugly and sterile, set in an ill-considered and barely usable public open space that is often neglected, or used by the seedier elements of New York's street-corner society. These same buildings appear to be insensitive to the existing buildings around them, creating dissonance in urban form.[79]

The special zoning district, then, is perceived as another means to conserve tradition and restore coherence and stability.

The Zeckendorf Company's plans in Union Square directly depended on the creation of a special district for sites fronting directly on the park. After purchasing the option to build on the Klein site, Zeckendorf announced that the realization of his project was contingent on the rezoning already being proposed by the Planning Department. The change put forward would increase the allowable density for buildings around the square, providing additional space bonuses for the Klein property in return for the developer's renovation of the 14th Street subway station. The rationale for the special zoning district was

78. Kwartler, p. 115.
79. *Ibid.*, p. 113.

contained in the 1983 summary of the Planning Department's two-year study undertaken to "guide" redevelopment so that it would reflect the "existing urbanistic context."[80] In recognition of the historic architectural uniqueness of Union Square and to foster "compatibility between any new construction and the existing significant architectural buildings,"[81] the proposal suggested not only increased density allowances for new buildings to match those of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century structures, but also created special "bulk distribution regulations": no plazas or groundfloor setbacks were allowed—the park made plazas unnecessary—and the facades of all buildings on the square were required to be built to the property line and to rise straight up for a minimum of eighty-five feet. Light and air would be ensured, according to the proposal, by a system of mandated setbacks and a restriction on any towers within 100 feet of the square. Zeckendorf's architects had already designed his mixed-use building to conform to these "contextualist" principles. Four seventeen-story apartment towers would rise from a seven-story base occupying the entire building site. They would begin at a point furthest from the park and terminate in cupolas to "echo" the historic tower of the Con Edison building behind them. According to Zeckendorf, the building plan "addresses the concerns we've heard from the community about not overshadowing the park and fitting in with the rest of the structures there."[82] The key point in the zoning rationale and in Zeckendorf's compliance was that the new buildings would not merely harmonize with the existing environment but recapture its history as an elegant neighborhood. A *Times* editorial stated:

> To understand fully what the rescue of Union Square would mean, the observer has to imagine how it once resembled London's handsome Belgravia and Mayfair residential districts. By insisting on the eight-story rise directly from the sidewalk, the planners hope that modern apartment house builders will produce a contemporary echo of the walled-in space that gives the small squares of London and America's older cities their pleasing sense of order and scale.[83]

Before their ultimate approval (with slight modification) in January 1985, both the rezoning proposal and the design of the Zeckendorf Towers had to pass through a public review process. Over a period of seven months, each project was debated at public hearings, first before the community boards, then before the City Planning Commission, and finally before the Board of Estimate. The city and the developer submitted obligatory and highly technical Environmental Impact Statements in which they were required to show "the potential en-

80. *Union Square Special Zoning District Proposal*, p. 1.
81. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
82. Quoted in Lee A. Daniels, "A Plan to Revitalize Union Square," *New York Times*, July 1, 1984, p. 6R.
83. "Speaking Up for Union Square," p. A22.

vironmental effects of a proposed action on noise level, air and water quality and traffic circulation."[84]

The supreme measure of the city's alignment with corporate interests in the area was the total neglect in any of their reports of the socioeconomic impact of the redevelopment plan on the area's low-income population. Displacement of these residents, the most obvious effect of the literal demolition of housing and the more extensive effect of "revitalization"—raised property values—was virtually unremarked in the hundreds of pages of documents generated throughout the planning and review processes. The unquantifiable numbers of homeless who "find shelter out of the public view"[85] in city parks were driven from the newly visible Union Square, their numbers augmented by the homelessness caused by the larger redevelopment plan. Also unmentioned was the single-room-occupancy hotel directly on the Klein site whose demolition was required by the Zeckendorf project and whose address—1 Irving Place—is now the address of the luxury towers. Similarly, the Planning Department surveyors who, in the proposal, applauded the increasingly residential character of the neighborhood due to middle-class loft conversions and who examined the quality of existing residential buildings, failed to survey the thirty-seven single-room-occupancy hotels and rooming houses in the special district, buildings containing 6,000 housing units for residents on fixed or limited incomes.[86] The relationship between current levels of homelessness and SRO displacement in New York City is well known, however:

> This shrinkage of housing options is nowhere more visible than in the long-time staple housing source for low-income single persons—the single-room-occupancy (SRO) hotel. Across the country the number of units in SROs is declining. In some areas they are being converted to luxury condominiums, while in others they are abandoned by owners unable to afford taxes and maintenance costs. In New York City, SROs have disappeared at an alarming rate. Because of this—and other forces at work—it is estimated that as many as 36,000 of the city's most vulnerable residents, the low-income elderly, now sleep in the streets.[87]

84. "Glossary," *New York Affairs*, p. 13.
85. New York State Department of Social Services, *Homelessness in New York State: A Report to the Governor and the Legislature*, October 1984, p. 3.
86. See the statement of Nancy E. Biberman, Director, Eastside Legal Services Project, MFY Legal Services, Inc., to the City Planning Commission, October 17, 1984.
87. Ellen Baxter and Kim Hopper, *Private Lives/Public Spaces: Homeless Adults on the Streets of New York*, New York, Community Services Society, Institute for Social Welfare Research, 1981, pp. 8–9, cited in Michael H. Schill and Richard P. Nathan, *Revitalizing America's Cities*, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1983, p. 170, n. 120. Schill and Nathan's book provides a rationale for governmental policy of encouraging redevelopment. It concludes that resulting displacement does not justify stopping this process. The authors' credibility is compromised by the fact that their methodology included "an effort . . . to avoid neighborhoods that contained high concentra-

Despite the fact that the number of lower-priced SRO units in New York declined more than sixty percent between 1975 and 1981,[88] the burden of surveying the area and determining the consequences of Union Square redevelopment on the occupants of these dwellings fell to the housing advocates who argued against the development plans at the Board of Estimate hearing. The impact of either primary displacement—the direct consequence of the demolition of the SRO on the Zeckendorf site—or the more significant secondary displacement—that caused by higher rents, enhanced property values, real estate speculation, legal warehousing, and, temporarily, illegal conversion of neighboring rooming houses—were not included in the Environmental Impact Statements.[89]

Throughout, this concealment was facilitated by the notion of aesthetic contextualism and the cultural sentiments informing all three phases of Union Square "revitalization": the park restoration, the creation of the special zoning district, and the approval of the Zeckendorf project. Thus, the architects and designers who minutely calculated the physical effects of rezoning and of the towers on the shadows and air in Union Square or the aesthetic effects on the cornice lines of the square's buildings exemplify that "real idol of late capitalism," "the 'specialist' who is blind to any overall context."[90] The ranks of the city's technocrats today also include artists, critics, and curators who are asked to fulfill the task, as recently defined in a Mobil advertisement, of encouraging, through art, residential and commercial real-estate projects and "revitalizing" urban neighborhoods. One example of compliance with these corporate demands by sectors of the art establishment is that type of public art placed in "revitalized" spaces and applauded as socially responsible because it contributes, functionally or aesthetically, to the "pleasures" of the urban environment. Such work is based on the art-world equivalent of official urban planners' constricted version of contextualism. Knowing the real social consequences of this "contextualism" underscores the urgency of creating alternative art practices such as *The Homeless Projection*, whose reorientation of vision disturbs the tightly drawn borders secured by New York's contextual zoning.

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tions of SROs or transient accommodations" and that "the survey of outmovers does not describe the rate of displacement among the most transient households or examine the problems faced by the homeless."

88. *Homelessness in New York State*, p. 33.

89. Nancy Biberman, a lawyer from MFY Legal Services now doing private housing consulting, represented the tenants of 1 Irving Place and was able to get a good settlement for these victims of direct displacement. Since Zeckendorf was eager to begin construction before December 1985 in order to be eligible for 421-a tax abatements, and since legal problems could have held him up past the deadlines, he was pressured into offering these tenants the option of living in the Zeckendorf Towers themselves at the price of the tenants' old rents. For the victims of secondary displacement Zeckendorf assumed little responsibility. He was required only to purchase and renovate forty-eight units of SRO housing.

90. Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism*, London, Verso, 1975, p. 509.

Hitchcock*

SLAVOJ ŽIŽEK

translated by RICHARD MILLER

The Trouble with Harry: *The Corpse that Wouldn't Die*

Hitchcock called *The Trouble with Harry* an exercise in the art of understatement. In Hitchcock's oeuvre that fundamental component of English humor is present in his ironic subversion of the basic process of his films: far from a diversion of a peaceful, everyday, situation into the *Unheimlich*, far from functioning as the eruption of some actuality disturbing the tranquil flow of life, the "blot," Harry's body—which serves in this film as Hitchcock's famous "McGuffin"—susceptible of corrupting the Vermont idyll, is only a minor, marginal problem, not really all that important, indeed, almost petty. The social life of the village goes on, people continue to exchange pleasantries, they arrange to meet at the corpse, and the child in the film continues to pursue his interest in rabbits and tree toads.

Nevertheless, the film's lesson cannot be summed up in an easy maxim—"let's not take life too seriously; death and sexuality are, in the final analysis, frivolous and futile things,"—nor does it reflect a tolerant hedonistic attitude. Just as in the case of the obsessive personality Freud describes toward the end of his analysis of the "Rat Man," the "official ego" of the characters in *The Trouble with Harry*, open, tolerant, conceals a network of rules and inhibitions that blocks any pleasure; their ironic detachment vis-à-vis Harry's body reveals a similar neutralization of an underlying traumatic complex. Indeed, just as obsessional rules and inhibitions arise out of a symbolic indebtedness contracted by the disjunction between the real and symbolic death of the father (the father, Freud writes, died "without having settled his accounts"), so "the trouble with

* The following analyses by Slavoj Žižek are taken from a book he edited with Mladen Dolar, *Hitchcock* (Ljubljana, DDU Univerzum, collection Analecta, 1984). The French translation from the Slovene will be published in Paris this fall by Navarin under the title *Lacan avec Hitchcock*.

Harry" consists in the fact that his body is present without being dead on the symbolic level. The film's subtitle could be "The Corpse that Wouldn't Die": since the tiny community of villagers, each of whose fate is in various ways linked to Harry, does not know what to do with his corpse, the only denouement the story can have is Harry's symbolic death. When it is arranged so that the boy will happen upon the body a second time, all the accounts are settled and the rite of burial can finally take place.

Here, we should remind ourselves that Harry's problem is the same as Hamlet's (need we stress that Hamlet furnishes a case of obsession par excellence?): in the end, Hamlet is the drama of real death unaccompanied by a symbolic "settling of accounts." Polonius and Ophelia are surreptitiously buried, without the prescribed rituals, and there is, above all, Hamlet's father, killed at an inopportune moment, in a state of sin, left to face his Maker unshriven—it is for that reason, and not because of his murder as such, that his ghost returns and orders his son to avenge him. Or we can go back a step further and recall that the same problem also arises in *Antigone* (which could almost be called *The Trouble with Polineikos*): the action is set in motion by the fact that Creon forbids Antigone to bury her brother and perform the burial rites. In this way we can measure the whole extent of the path traveled by "Western civilization" in the light of the settlement of the symbolic debt: from Antigone's sublime features radiant with beauty and inner calm, for whom the act is an unquestioned, accepted thing, through the hesitation and obsessive doubt of Hamlet—who, of course, finally acts, but only after it is too late, when his action fails of its symbolic aim, to the "difficulty with Harry," in which the entire affair is some kind of quibble, an unimportant inconvenience, a welcome pretext for wider social contacts, for an *understatement* that nevertheless betrays the existence of an utter inhibition for which we would look in vain in either *Hamlet* or *Antigone*.

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The gap between the two deaths, the real death and symbolic death, the "settling of accounts," the working out of a symbolic destiny, the real-traumatic site of the *Ding*, can thus be filled in various ways; it can contain either sublime beauty or fearsome monsters: in Antigone's case, her symbolic death, her exclusion from the symbolic community of the city, precedes her actual death and imbues her character with sublime beauty, whereas the ghost of Hamlet's father presents the opposite case—actual death unaccompanied by symbolic death, without a settling of accounts—which is why he returns as a frightful apparition until his debt has been repaid.

Between Antigone and Hamlet, on the one hand, and Harry on the other, what do we have? Sade, and the Sadian schism. That is, the Sadian notion of a radical, absolute crime that liberates Nature's creative force, as elaborated in the long speech of the pope in the fifth volume of *Juliette*, implies a distinction

between the two deaths: natural death, which is a part of the natural cycle of generation and corruption, of Nature's continual transformation, and absolute death, i.e., the destruction, the eradication, of the cycle itself, which then liberates Nature from its own laws and opens the way for the creation of new forms of life ex nihilo. This difference between the two deaths can be linked with the Sadian fantasy revealed by the fact that in his work his victim is, in a certain sense, indestructible, she can be endlessly tortured and can suffer it, she can endure any torment and still retain her beauty—as though, above and beyond her natural body, a part of the cycle of generation and corruption, and thus above and beyond her natural death, she possessed another body, a body composed of some other substance, one excepted from the vital cycle—a sublime body.

Today, we can find this same fantasy at work in various products of "mass culture," for example in animated cartoons. Consider Tom and Jerry, cat and mouse. They are each subjected to frightful misadventures; the cat is stabbed, dynamite goes off in his pocket, he is run over by a steamroller and his body flattened into a ribbon, and so forth, but in the next scene he appears with his normal body and the game can begin again—it is as though he possessed another indestructible body. Or take the example of video games, in which we deal, literally, with the difference between the two deaths: the usual rule of such games is that the player (or, more precisely, the figure representing him in the game) possesses several lives, usually three; he is threatened by some danger—a monster who can eat him, for example—and if the monster catches him he loses a life, but if he reaches his goal very swiftly he earns one or several supplementary lives. The whole logic of such games is therefore based on the difference between the two deaths: between the death in which I lose one of my lives and the ultimate death in which I lose the game itself.

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To come back to humor in *The Trouble with Harry*: understatement is thus created by a specific way of taking note of the "blot," created by the real of the paternal body: isolate the "blot," act as though it were not serious, keep cool: Dad's dead, so okay, it's cool, no cause for excitement.

The economy of such an isolation of the "blot," such a blockage of its symbolic effectiveness, is given perfect expression in the familiar paradox "situation catastrophic but not yet really serious"—in what in Freud's day was called "Viennese philosophy." The key to the understatement would seem to reside in the split between knowledge (real) and belief (symbolic): "I am quite aware (that the situation is catastrophic), but . . . (I don't believe it and will go on acting as though it weren't serious)." The current attitude toward the ecological crisis is a perfect illustration of this split: we are quite aware that it may already be too late, that we are already on the brink of catastrophe (of which the death throes

of the German forests are the harbinger), but nevertheless we do not believe it; we act as though it were only an exaggerated concern over a few trees, a few birds, and not literally a question of our survival. The same code enables us to understand the slogan—"Let us be realistic and demand the impossible!"—that was scrawled on the walls of Paris in 1968 as a call to be equal to the real of the catastrophe that had befallen by demanding what, in the framework of our symbolic belief, might appear to be "impossible."

Another reading of "understatement" can be effected on the basis of Winston Churchill's well-known paradox. Responding to those detractors of democracy who saw it as a system that paved the way for corruption, demagogy, and a weakening of authority, Churchill said: "It is true that democracy is the worst of all possible systems; the problem is that no other system would be better." That sentence is based on the logic of "everything possible and then some": its first premise gives us the over-all grouping of "all possible systems," and within that context the questioned element (democracy) would appear to be the worst; then, the second premise states that the grouping "all possible systems" is not all-inclusive, and that compared to additional elements the element in question turns out to be quite bearable. The process plays on the fact that such additional elements are *the same* as those included in the over-all "all possible systems," the only difference being that they no longer function as elements of a closed totality: in relation to the *totality* of systems of government, democracy is the worst; but, within the *nontotalized series* of political systems, none would be better. Thus, from the fact that "no system would be better," we cannot therefore conclude that democracy is "the best"—its advantage is strictly limited to the comparative: as soon as we attempt to formulate the proposition in the superlative, the qualification of democracy is inverted into "the worst."

In the afterword to *Psychoanalysis and Medicine*, Freud reproduces the same "not-all" paradox with regard to women when he recalls a snatch of dialogue in *Simplicissimus*, the satiric Viennese newspaper: one of the speakers states that woman is an unbearable creature, impossible to live with, and so on, to which the other calmly replies: "Yes, but there's nothing along the same lines that's better." Thus the logic of woman as symptom of man: unbearable—thus, nothing is more agreeable; impossible to live with—thus, to live without her is even more difficult. The "trouble" with Harry is thus catastrophic from the over-all point of view, but if we take into account the dimension of the "not-all," it isn't even a serious difficulty. The secret of "understatement" resides in investigating just that dimension of "not-all": it is an appropriately English-language way of evoking the "not-all."

It is for this reason that Lacan invites us to back the worst: within the over-all framework there can be nothing better than what seems to be "the worst," as soon as it is transposed to the "not-all" and its elements compared one by one.

The Birds: *The Maternal Superego*

Why do they attack? Robin Wood[1] suggests three possible readings of this inexplicable, "irrational" act by which the idyllic daily life of a small northern California town is derailed: "cosmological," "ecological," "familial."

According to the first, "cosmological," reading, the attack of the birds can be viewed as embodying Hitchcock's vision of the universe, of the (human) cosmos as system—peaceful on the surface, ordinary in its course—that can be upset at any time, that can be thrown into chaos by the intervention of pure chance: its order is always deceiving; at any moment some ineffable terror can emerge, some traumatic real erupt to perturb the symbolic circuit. Such a reading can be supported by references to many other Hitchcock films, including the most sombre of them, *The Wrong Man*, in which the mistaken identification of the hero as a thief, which happens purely by chance, turns his daily life into a hell of humiliation and costs his wife her sanity—the entering into play of the theological dimension in Hitchcock's work, the vision of a cruel, arbitrary, and impenetrable God, who can bring down catastrophe at any moment.

As for the second, "ecological," reading, the film's title could have been "Birds of the World, Unite!": in this reading, the birds function as a condensation of exploited nature that finally rises up against man's heedless exploitation; in support of this interpretation we can cite the fact that Hitchcock selected his attacking birds almost exclusively from species known for their gentle, non-aggressive nature: sparrows, seagulls, a few crows.

The third reading sees the key to the film in the intersubjective relations between the main characters (Melanie, Mitch, and his mother), which are far from being merely an insignificant sideline to the "true" plot, the attack of the birds: the attacking birds only "embody" a fundamental discord, a disturbance, a derailment in those relations. The pertinence of this interpretation emerges if we consider *The Birds* within the context of Hitchcock's earlier (and later) films, in other words, to play on one of Lacan's homophonies, if we are to take the films seriously, we can only do so if we take them serially.[2]

In writing of Poe's *Purloined Letter*, Lacan makes reference to a game of logic: we take a random series of 0s and 1s—100101100, for example—and as soon as the series is articulated into triads (100, 001, 101, etc.), rules of succession will emerge. The same is true of Hitchcock's films: if we consider them as a whole we have an accidental, random series, but as soon as we separate them into linked triads (and exclude those films that are not part of the "Hitchcockian universe," the "exceptions," the results of various compromises), each triad can

1. Cf. Robin Wood, *Hitchcock's Films*, New York, Barnes and Co., 1977, p. 116.
2. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire XX: Encore*, Paris, Seuil, 1975, p. 23.

then be seen to be linked by some theme, some common principle. For example, take the following five films: *The Wrong Man*, *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, *Psycho*, and *The Birds*: no single theme can be found to link all the films in such a series, yet such themes can be found if we consider them in groups of three. The first triad concerns "false identity": in *The Wrong Man*, the hero is wrongly identified as the burglar by witnesses; in *Vertigo* the hero is mistaken about the identity of the false Madeleine; in *North by Northwest* Soviet spies mistakenly identify the film's hero as the mysterious CIA agent "George Kaplan." As for the great trilogy *Vertigo*, *North by Northwest*, and *Psycho*, it is very tempting to regard these three key Hitchcock films as the articulation of three different versions of filling the gap in the Other: their formal problem is the same—the relationship between a lack and a factor (a person) that tries to compensate for it. In *Vertigo*, the hero attempts to compensate for the absence of the woman he loves, an apparent suicide, on a level that is literally *imaginary*: he tries, by means of dress, hair style, and so forth, to recreate the image of the lost woman. In *North by Northwest*, we are on the *symbolic* level: we are dealing with an empty name, the name of a nonexistent person ("Kaplan"), a signifier without a bearer, which becomes attached to the hero out of sheer chance. In *Psycho*, finally, we reach the level of the *real*: Norman Bates, who dresses in his mother's clothes, speaks with her voice, etc., wants neither to resuscitate her image nor act in her name; he wants to take her place in the real—evidence of a psychotic state.

If the middle triad, therefore, is that of the "empty place," the final one is in its turn united around the motif of the *maternal superego*: the heroes of these three films are fatherless, they have a mother who is "strong," who is "possessive," who perturbs the "normal" sexual relationship. At the very beginning of *North by Northwest* the film's hero, Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant), is shown with his scornful, mocking mother, and it is not difficult to guess why he has been four times divorced; in *Psycho*, Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) is directly controlled by the voice of his dead mother, which instructs him to kill any woman to whom he is sexually attracted; in the case of the mother of Mitch Brenner (Rod Taylor), hero of *The Birds*, mocking disdain is replaced by a zealous concern for her son's fate, a concern that is perhaps even more effective in blocking any lasting relationship he might have with a woman.

There is another trait common to these three films without any apparent link to the first three: from one film to the next, the figure of a threat to the superego in the shape of a bird assumes greater prominence: in *North by Northwest* we have what is perhaps the most famous Hitchcockian scene, the attack by the plane—a steel bird—that pursues the hero across a flat, sun-baked landscape; in *Psycho*, Norman's room is filled with stuffed mounted birds, and even the body of his mummified mother reminds us of a stuffed bird; in *The Birds*, after the (metaphorical) steel bird and the (metonymic) dead birds, we finally have actual live birds attacking the town.

The decisive thing is to perceive the link between the two traits: the terrifying figure of the birds is actually the "naturalization," the real embodiment of a discord, an unresolved tension in intersubjective relations. In the film, the birds are like the plague in Oedipus' Thebes: they are the incarnation of a fundamental disorder in family relationships—the father is absent, the paternal function (the function of pacifying law, the Name-of-the-Father) is suspended and that vacuum is filled by the "irrational" maternal superego, arbitrary, wicked, blocking "normal" sexual relationships (only possible under the sign of the paternal metaphor). The dead-end *The Birds* is really about is, of course, that of the modern American family: the deficient paternal Ego-Ideal makes the law "regress" toward a ferocious maternal superego, affecting sexual pleasure—the decisive trait of the libidinal structure of "pathological narcissism": "Their unconscious impressions of the mother are so overblown and so heavily influenced by aggressive impulses, and the quality of her care is so little attuned to the child's needs, that in the child's fantasies the mother appears as a devouring bird."[3]

Here, the essential thing is nevertheless *not* to seize upon the link between the two traits we have noted—the appearance of the ferocious assailant birds and the blockage of "normal" sexual relations by the intervention of the maternal superego—as a relationship of signs, as a correlative between a "symbol" and its "signification": the birds do not "signify," they do not "symbolize" blocked sexual relations, the "possessive" mother, and so on; they are, rather, the making present in the real, the objectivization, the incarnation of the fact that, on the symbolizing level, something "has not worked out," in short, the objectivization-positivization of a *failed* symbolization. At first glance, this distinction may appear factitious, vague; that is why we shall try to explicate it by means of a fairly elementary test question: In *The Birds*, how might the film have been constructed if the birds were to function *in fact* as the "symbol" of blocked sexual relations?

The answer is simple: first, we must imagine *The Birds* as a film *without birds*. We would then have a typically American drama about a family in which the son goes from one woman to another because he is unable to free himself from the pressure exerted by a possessive mother, a drama similar to dozens of others that have appeared on American stages and screens, particularly in the 1950s: the tragedy of a son paying with the chaos of his sexual life for what was in those days referred to as the mother's inability to "live her own life," to "expend her vital energy," and the mother's emotional breakdown when some woman finally manages to take away her son, etc., all seasoned with a touch of "psychoanalytic" salt à la Eugene O'Neill or Tennessee Williams and acted, if possible,

3. Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism: American Life in an Age of Diminishing Expectations*, New York, Norton, 1979, p. 176.

in a psychologistic, Actors' Studio style—the common ground of the American theater at the half century.

Next, in such a drama we must imagine the appearance from time to time, particularly at crucial moments of emotional intrigue (the son's first encounter with his future wife, the mother's breakdown, etc.), of birds—in the background, as part of the ambience: the opening scene (the meeting of Mitch and Melanie in the pet shop, the purchase of the lovebirds) could perhaps remain as it is; and, after the emotion-charged scene of conflict between mother and son, when the sorrowing mother withdraws to the seacoast, we might hear the cawing of birds, etc. In such a film, the birds, even though or, rather, *because* they do not play a direct role in the development of the story, would be "symbols," they would "symbolize" the tragic necessity of the mother's renunciation, her helplessness, or whatever—and everyone would know what the birds signified, everyone would clearly recognize that the film was depicting an emotional drama of a son facing up to a possessive mother who is trying to transfer onto him the price of her own failure, and the "symbolic" role of the birds would be indicated by the title, which would remain unchanged: *The Birds*.

Now, what did Hitchcock do? In his film, the birds are not "symbols" at all, they play a direct part in the story as something inexplicable, as something outside the rational chain of events, as a *lawless* impossible real. The "effective" action of the film is so influenced by the birds that their massive presence completely overshadows the domestic drama: that drama—literally—*loses its significance*, the "spontaneous" spectator does not perceive *The Birds* as a domestic family drama in which the role of the birds is "symbolic" of intersubjective relationships and tensions; the accent is put totally on the traumatic attacks by the birds, and, within that framework, the emotional intrigue is like a mere pretext, part of the undifferentiated tissue of everyday incidents of which the first half of the film is made up, so that, against that background, the weird, inexplicable fury of the birds can be made to stand out even more strongly. Thus the birds, far from functioning as a "symbol" whose "signification" can be detected, on the contrary *block*, *mask*, by their massive presence, the film's "signification," their function being to make us *forget*, during their vertiginous and dazzling attacks, with what, in the end, we are dealing: the triangle of the mother, her son, and the woman he loves. If the "spontaneous" spectator had been supposed to perceive the film's "signification" easily, then one should have quite simply *left out* the birds.

There is a key detail that supports our reading: at the very end of the film, Mitch's mother "accepts" Melanie as her son's wife, gives her consent and abandons her superego role (as indicated by the fleeting smile she and Melanie exchange in the car)—and that is why, at that moment, they are all able to leave the property that is being threatened by the birds: the birds are no longer needed, their role is finished. The end of the film—the last shot of the car driving away

surrounded by hordes of calm birds—is for that reason wholly coherent and not at all the result of some kind of "compromise"; it is worth nothing that Hitchcock himself spread the rumor that he would have preferred another ending (the car arriving at a Golden Gate Bridge totally blackened by the birds perched on it) and was forced to accede to studio pressure—another of the many myths fomented by the director, who was at pains to dissimulate what was really at stake in his work. In general, one should distinguish between Hitchcock's real compromises and that which is, while giving the impression of a "compromise," the most subversive portion of his work: true, in the majority of his films Hitchcock "does not go all the way," but merely hints at the sordid underside of his idyllic surfaces; that is because he is only too well aware of the imposture of "radical unveiling"—in which what is lost is a necessary part of, the structural role of, the mask as such. The frightful content "behind the mask" is frightful only insofar as the mask conceals it, it is, in fact, the retroactive effect of the mask itself; the "demystifying" unveiling does not take into account the manner in which "one is only naked in one's clothes," and we refer to the anecdote Lacan uses to illustrate the analytic process by which the sublimated is recovered:

> If I say that *the king is naked*, it is not quite like the child who is supposed to be destroying a universal illusion, but rather like Alphonse Allais, who used to attract a crowd of people by announcing in a loud voice: "Scandal! Look at that woman! Beneath her dress, she's naked![4]

And, in the end, this is what Hitchcock is doing too: he does not repudiate surface disguise (for example, the whole collection of rules we call "Hollywood"), he accepts it—there are those who find him the exemplary case of "commercial Hollywood," of manipulative entertainment created by playing upon the audience's emotions—but at the same time, and in what is sometimes a nearly imperceptible way, he dilutes disguise, displaces it radically, so that suddenly we perceive that we are *naked beneath our clothes*.

It is clear, therefore, why *The Birds*—according to François Regnault—is the film that closes the Hitchcockian system: the birds, the ultimate incarnation in Hitchcock of the bad Object, are the counterpart of the reign of maternal Law, and it is precisely this linking of the bad object of fascination and the maternal Law that defines the kernel of Hitchcockian fantasy. Although the birds embody the blocking of "normal" sexual relations, which are possible only under the reign of paternal Law, the Name-of-the-Father, it is essential not to fall into what Jacques-Alain Miller has called an "error of perspective": the birds, the object inert, real, do not hinder the emergence of full, genital, "nor-

4. Lacan, "L'Ethique de la psychanalyse" (unpublished seminar), November 18, 1959.

mal" sexual relations; "on the contrary, that which does not exist is anything that can hinder the relationship,"[5] and thus the lack of the impossible sexual relationship is emphasized. This is why the denouement of *The Birds* is not merely the realization of the sexual relationship once it has triumphed over the object-blot hindering its development, but is actually the collapse of that object by which we are allowed to perceive the emptiness, the impossible its massive presence has been concealing: the so-called "normal" sexual relationship cannot be achieved other than through the integration of that impossibility, and indeed the initiatory voyage of so many of Hitchcock's heroes follows the path of that integration of loss, of emptiness, which can enable them to accede to their desire.

Of course, in any such general analysis we are forced to ignore many brilliant details—one would mention only the scene in which the hero's mother, peering into a room that has been ravaged by the birds, sees the pajama-clad body with its eyes torn out. The camera first shows us the entire body, and we expect it to make a typically Hitchcockian slow, forward tracking shot to the fascinating detail, the bloody sockets of the missing eyes—but what Hitchcock actually gives us is an *inversion* of the process we expect: instead of slowing down, he *speeds up* drastically; in two montage cuts, each bringing us closer to the subject, he quickly shows us the corpse's head. The subversive effect of these quickly advancing shots is created by the way in which they frustrate us even as they indulge our desire to view the terrifying object more closely: we approach it too quickly, skipping over the "time for understanding," the pause needed to "digest," to integrate the brute perception of the object.

Unlike the usual tracking shot that endows the object-blot with a particular weight by *slowing down* the "normal" speed and by *deferring* the approach, here the object is "missed" precisely insofar as we approach it precipitously, too quickly. Thus, if the usual tracking shot is obsessional, forcing us to fix on a detail that is made to function as a blot because of the slow motion of the tracking, the precipitous approach to the object makes us see its hysterical bases: we "miss" the object because of the speed, because this object is already empty in itself, hollow—it cannot be evoked other than "too slowly" or "too swiftly," because in its "proper time" it is nothing. So delay and precipitation are two modes of capturing the object-cause of desire, object small *a*, the "nothingness" of pure seeming—and we thereby touch upon the *objectal* dimension of the Hitchcockian "blot" or "stain": the signifying dimension of the blot, its effect of doubling meaning, of conferring on every element of the picture a supplementary meaning that makes the interpretative movement work—none of this should blind us to its other aspect, that of an inert, nontransparent object which must drop out or sink before any symbolic reality can emerge. Put another way, the Hitchcockian tracking shot that produces the blot in an idyllic picture is

5. Jacques-Alain Miller, "D'un autre Lacan," *Ornicar?*, vol. 28, p. 52.

achieved as though to illustrate the Lacanian thesis: "The field of reality rests upon the extraction of the object *a*, which nevertheless frames it."[6] Or, to quote Jacques-Alain Miller's precise commentary:

> We understand that the covert setting aside of the object as real conditions the stabilization of reality, as "a bit of reality." But if the object *a* is absent, how can it still frame reality? . . .

> It is precisely *because* the object *a* is removed from the field of reality that it frames it. If I withdraw from the surface of this picture this piece I represent by a shaded square, I get what we might call a frame: a frame for a hole, but also a frame of the rest of the surface. Such a frame could be created by any window. So object *a* is such a surface fragment, and it is its subtraction from reality that frames it. The subject, as barred subject—as want-of-being—is this hole. As being, it is nothing but the subtracted bit. Whence the equivalency of the subject and object *a*.[7]

We can read Miller's schema as the schema of the Hitchcock tracking shot: from an over-all view of reality we advance toward the blot that provides it with its frame (the hatched square). The advance of the Hitchcockian tracking shot is reminiscent of the structure of a Möbius strip: by moving away from the aspect of reality, we find ourselves suddenly alongside the real whose extraction constitutes reality. Here the process inverts the dialectic of montage: there it was a matter of producing, through the discontinuity of the cuts, the continuity of a new signification linking the disconnected fragments, whereas, here, the continual advance itself produces an effect of banking, of radical discontinuity, by showing us the heterogenous element that must remain an inert, insensate "blot" if the rest of the picture is to acquire the consistency of a symbolic reality.

Whence we could articulate the succession of "anal" and "phallic" stages in the organization of filmic material: if montage is the "anal" process par excellence, the Hitchcockian tracking shot represents the point at which "anal" economy becomes "phallic" economy. Montage thus entails the production of a supplementary, metaphorical signification that emerges from the juxtaposition of connected fragments, and, as Lacan emphasized in *The Four Fundamental Con-*

6. Lacan, *Ecrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 554.
7. Miller, "Montré à prémontré," in *Analytica* 37, 1984, pp. 28–29.

cepts of Psycho-Analysis, metaphor is, in its libidinal economy, an eminently anal process: we give something (shit) to fill out the nothing, that is, to make up for what we do not have. In addition to montage within the framework of traditional narration, typified by "parallel montage," we have a whole series of excessive strategies that are designed to subvert the linear movement of traditional narration (Eisenstein's "intellectual montage," Welles's "inner montage," and the antimontage of Rossellini, who tried to forgo any manipulation of the material and allow for the emergence of the signification of the "miracle" of fortuitous encounters)—and all such processes are only variations and reversals within the same field of the montage, whereas Hitchcock, with his tracking shots, changes the field itself: in place of montage—the creation of a new metaphoric continuity by the combination of discontinuous fragments—he introduces a radical discontinuity, the shifting from reality to the real produced by the continuous movement of the tracking shot. That is, the tracking movement can be described as a moving from an over-all view of reality to its point of anamorphosis—to go back to Holbein's *Ambassadors*: the Hitchcockian tracking shot would advance from the total area of the picture toward the erected, "phallic" element in the background that must fall, that must remain, for the onlooker, a demented blot—the skull, the fantasmatic, inert object as the "impossible" equivalent of the subject ($\$ \diamond a$), and it is no accident that we find this same object on several instances in Hitchcock's own work (*Under Capricorn*, *Psycho*). In Hitchcock this real object, the blot, the terminal point of the tracking shot, can have two principal forms: either the look of the other insofar as the point of our position as spectator is already inscribed in the picture, the point from where the picture itself views us (the eye sockets in the skull, not to mention the most celebrated of Hitchcock's tracking shots, the shot into the drummer's blinking eyes in *The Young and the Innocent*), or the Hitchcockian object par excellence, *the object of nonspecularizable exchange*, the "piece of the real" that circulates from one subject to another, embodying the structural network of symbolic exchanges between them (the most famous example: the long tracking shot in *Notorious* from the over-all view of the entrance hall down to the key in Ingrid Bergman's hand).

We can categorize Hitchcock's tracking shots, however, without reference to the nature of their term-object, that is, based on variations in the process itself—in other words, in addition to the zero-degree of tracking (which goes from the over-all view of reality down to its real point of anamorphosis), in Hitchcock we have at least three other variants:

—The precipitous, "hystericalized" tracking shot: the example from *The Birds* analyzed above, in which the camera draws into the blot too quickly, in jump shots;

—The reverse tracking shot, which begins at the *unheimlich* detail and pulls back to the over-all view of reality: the long shot in *Shadow of a Doubt* that

starts with the hand of Theresa Wright holding the ring given her by her murdering uncle and pulls back and up to the over-all view of the library reading room in which she is nothing but a small dot in the center of the frame—(not to mention the famous reverse tracking shot in *Frenzy*).

—Lastly, the paradox of the "immobile tracking shot" in which the camera does not move: the shift from reality to the real is accomplished by the intrusion into the frame of a heterogenous object—for an example, we can return to *The Birds*, in which such a shift of subjectivization is achieved during one long, fixed shot. A fire breaks out in the small town threatened by the birds, a fire caused by a cigarette butt someone drops into some spilled gasoline. After a series of short and "dynamic" close-up and medium shots, the camera pulls back and up and we are given an over-all shot of the entire town taken from high above. In the first instant we read this over-all shot as an "objective," "epic" panorama shot separating us from the immediate drama going on down below and enabling us to disengage ourselves from the action; this distancing at first produces a certain "pacifying" effect, it allows us to view the action from what might be called a "metalinguistic" distance. Then, suddenly, a bird enters the frame from the right, as if coming from behind the camera and thus from behind our own backs, and then three birds, and finally the entire flock . . . and the same shot takes on a totally different content, it undergoes a radical subjectivization: the camera's elevated eye ceases to be that of a neutral, "objective" onlooker gazing down upon a panoramic landscape and suddenly becomes the subjective and threatening eye of the birds as they zero in on their prey.[8]

8. This scene, creating as it does a fantasmatic effect, also illustrates the thesis that the subject is not necessarily inscribed in the fantasmatic scene as observer, but can also be one of the objects observed. The birds' subjective view of the town creates a menacing effect, even though our view—the camera's view—is that of the birds and not that of their prey, because we are inscribed in the scene as inhabitants of the town.

Ingmar Bergman. Persona. *1967.*

Kinematography and the Analytic Text: A Reading of *Persona*

P. ADAMS SITNEY

Despite the apparent effort of the filmmaker to camouflage from the viewer, and perhaps even from himself, the real nature of its dramatic event, Ingmar Bergman's *Persona* is organized as a psychoanalysis, seen from the point of view of its patient.

In speaking of camouflage it must be remembered, of course, that Bergman has treated psychiatry in other films, presenting one with the obvious critical stumbling block of there being no reason to believe that he would not have depicted a psychoanalyst and patient directly if that was what he wanted to do. In fact, viewers familiar with the film will immediately realize that there is indeed a psychiatrist in *Persona* who provides us with the background information about Elizabeth Vogler's breakdown and even offers her own summer house for the patient's recovery with the help of her nurse, Alma.

There have been certain critics of this central film in the Bergman canon who have noted the startling analogy of the film's unfolding drama to psychoanalysis.[1] Otto Kernberg, perhaps the first to point toward the allegory of psychoanalysis in *Persona*, in his book *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*, noted that *Persona* "reproduces in essence the transference-countertransference situations that develop in the treatment of severely narcissistic patients." Yet rather literal-mindedly, he views the film as the dramatization of the suffering of a psychoanalyst, as if he were identifying with Alma, the nurse. He tells us, "In a dramatic development, the nurse develops an intense hatred for the sick woman and mistreats her cruelly at one point. It is as if all the hatred within the sick woman had been transferred into the helping one, destroying the helping person from inside."[2] He then quickly moves from the film to a discussion of problems of treating narcissistic patients, almost as if to advise therapists about

1. In addition to Kernberg, see Browne, below. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Leon Balter for his advice and encouragement in writing this essay. Charles Edward Robins, whose knowledge of Bergman's work far exceeds mine, has also been generous in answering my questions.
2. Otto Kernberg, *Borderline Conditions and Pathological Narcissism*, New York, J. Aronson, 1975, p. 246. Richard Drake first brought this work to my attention.

how to avoid Alma's predicament. Interestingly, Kernberg's experience as clinician, which had brought him so close to understanding the structure of Bergman's work, nonetheless betrayed him, despite the originality of his initial insight, into a simplistic conclusion.

In order to see the psychoanalytical drama embedded in the film we must recognize that the actual psychiatrist depicted at its opening is a decoy, deflecting our understanding from the more central confrontation of Alma and Elizabeth. But the psychiatrist is only the first of a series of obstacles that obscure the recognition of the psychoanalytic encounter. The most blatant of these baffles is the masterful *confusion of patient and doctor.* It is this that Kernberg, in his assumption that the nurse, Alma, takes the role of doctor, misses. His point, in any case, does not involve a systematic interpretation of the film, but rather the recognition of a transference-countertransference schema—which is indeed part of the film—for he only mentions Bergman's work in passing as part of a discussion of technical treatment. However, if we are to understand the details of *Persona* as a dramatized psychoanalysis, we must acknowledge that the nurse is the neurotic patient, while the persistently silent Elizabeth represents the psychiatrist.[3] The greatest obstacle of all to such an interpretation, however, is the network of clues—some clearcut and many others highly ambiguous—offered up by the filmmaker for sorting out those scenes that take place in the nurse's imagination or dreams, and those that "really" take place within the fictive matrix of the film. Some of the best critics of the film have been seduced into entering that evidential maze and often they have produced illuminating insights; yet all the best interpretations of the film have broken down in attempting to correlate the imaginary and the real events. In the following pages I shall treat all the parts of the film as if they occurred on the same plane of representation.

Originally titled *Kinematography*, *Persona* projects an identity between the filmic experience and the agon fictively depicted within it. No other film by Bergman so unambiguously affirms the fragility of cinematic illusion. The film begins with the sparking of an arc light within a projector, and ends with its extinguishment; near the middle there is the catching and burning of a frame. Each of these three crucial moments is accompanied by a matrix of images that clearly situate these "events" outside the world of the film's central fiction. The interpretation of these "framing" images has largely occupied the film's critics. In due time, I shall also consider them at length; for I believe they are more central to the unity of the film than has hitherto been acknowledged.

Bergman is an inconsistent and eclectic stylist. Although all his films offer

3. Nick Browne may have been the first to note this in his essay "*Persona* de Bergman: Dispositif/Inconscient/Spectateur," in *Cinémas de la modernité: Films, Théories*, Colloque de Cerisy, ed. Dominique Chateau, André Gardies, François Jost, Paris, 1981, pp. 198–207. Several points in Browne's study coincide with my reading of the film. His emphasis, however, is on the film's relationship to the spectator.

fascinating and innovative moments, he often articulates his cinematic dramas in the conventional visual rhetoric of a standard Hollywood production. *Persona*, however, is his most systematically stylized film. The meditation on the parameters of cinematography coincides in this special case with a thoroughly conscious and original use of basic filmic structures. As we should expect, this is most obvious in the handling of dialogue exchanges and shot-countershot. Since, by far, the greater part of the film describes the interaction of two isolated women, an immense stress falls upon the ways in which the camera and editing align these two people.

The dramatic climax of the film occurs when the nurse confronts Elizabeth with her, Alma's, analysis of her withdrawal into silence as a hysterical reaction to her barely concealed hatred of her son. Of course, we cannot accept this "analysis" unanalytically. Still, for the moment, we can dwell on the way in which it is represented on the screen. First of all, the entire speech is repeated immediately after its initial utterance. The first time, the camera remains fixed on Elizabeth, the silent listener, at times dissolving into progressively closer views of her face. The second time, the same bold camera stare, the same series of dissolves to draw closer, focuses upon Alma, her accuser. Conventional cinematography would dictate the regular exchange of these two long takes (or pseudo-takes, considering the dissolves). What Bergman gives us instead—the repetition of the speech—calls to mind the filmmaker's working materials, as if the paired shots were two long takes from the reversed angles of the same event, filmed that way with the end of shot-countershot in mind. In the second of the "takes" to appear on the screen, he even observed the convention of filming the speaker over the shoulder of the listener to reinforce the spatial continuity. The shoulder disappears with the dissolves, but before that happens Bergman effects a powerful variation on the convention by repeating the image of Elizabeth suddenly turning her head sideways to break eye contact with the vituperative Alma. This gesture dominates the foreground for a moment and cuts into our view of the speaker.

Instead of intercutting the two perspectives back and forth while maintaining the temporal unity of a single speech, thereby reassuring his viewers of the spatial and temporal continuity of the event, and therefore of its "reality," the filmmaker meticulously superimposes Alma's face over Elizabeth's. Yet this is no standard superimposition. He has prepared for the very special effect by filming both faces illuminated from one lateral source—Elizabeth's left, Alma's right—so that only the opposite half of each face is lit during the two long "takes." Before the superimposition occurs at the end of the second recital, this unusual highlighting seemed justified by the crepuscular light entering the house from a window beside the two women. But once the superimposition occurs, these images cease to appear as two half-lit faces, but as a single composite face fused from both women. Not only is the composite image a startling climax of this

charged encounter, itself repeated twice and underlined the second time with a musical stress, but it is the sole visual link to the enigmatic images which begin and end the film.

It is not surprising then that this most central image of the film has inspired the frequent misinterpretation that the two women exchange identities, or even that the film records the schizophrenic hallucination of a single character. Rather than allow this image to ground our reading of the film as a whole, we would profit from holding off and considering its status as an image. In fact, Bergman encourages us to take this route in the framing episodes. There, a boy, apparently awakened in a morgue, reaches out to touch a screen behind which the images of Elizabeth and Alma are rapidly dissolving into each other. This attempt to make tangible contact with the image immediately precedes the film's titles—in fact, it even accounts for the film's title; for *persona* is Latin for "mask"—and it recurs just before the final cooling of the projector's arc lamp. In these shots, the backscreen projection and the pathetic failure to touch the face underscore its status as a mere image.

I take it as significant that the superimposition of the faces occurs within the fictive drama at the point where the spatial and temporal authority of shot-countershot collapses. The film begins after the pretitle sequence, with a marked suppression of shot-countershot. We see the nurse, Alma, being instructed about her new patient without seeing, at first, the doctor who is talking to her. When both figures in the exchange are later edited together, Bergman maintains his distance from the conventional montage by panning sharply from the back of Alma's head—and the talking doctor beyond her—to her hands clasped behind her back. We must wait a long time for the first undisturbed instance of shot-countershot, which occurs significantly when Alma reads Elizabeth a letter from her husband; the countershot marks the moment when Elizabeth snatches away the letter to suppress an explicit allusion to an erotic encounter. By suppressing shot-countershot when we should expect it, as in an early scene in which the offscreen psychiatrist asks Alma about her patient while only Alma is seen in the screen, and by tying reverse-angle cutting to the developing intimacy between the two women, Bergman inscribes meaning in this basic cinematic structure. It will correspond to Alma's growing comfort with her patient. That comfort, however, parallels the development of positive transference in psychoanalytical treatment. Therefore the most extensive use of shot-countershot should occur, as it indeed does, during Alma's long autobiographical and confessional speeches soon after she and Elizabeth move into the doctor's summer house.

The allegory of psychoanalysis proceeds quite efficiently in one respect. The stages of transference and transference neurosis occur in a linear fashion and even constitute the highlights of the drama. In their first meeting, Alma gives a brief account of her history to Elizabeth. As we subsequently learn, this introduction obfuscates the emotional tensions in her life. Immediately follow-

ing that interview, Alma, alone in her room in the hospital where she works, turns straight toward the camera, as if it were a mirror, and thinks out loud about her new "patient." The first stage of her positive transference occurs as she reassures herself of the safety and solidity of her domestic life: "I'll marry Karl-Henrik and we'll have a couple of kids that I'll bring up. That's all decided, it's in me somewhere. I don't have to work things out at all, how they're going to be. That makes you feel safe." From this blinded soliloquy of self-assurance she immediately begins to speculate about Elizabeth Vogler and falls asleep repeating her name.

The next stage begins with a moment Bergman has claimed as the image that generated the whole film. Elizabeth compares her hand to Alma's, who playfully resists, claiming it is bad luck. In the subsequent episode Alma reads to Elizabeth from a book apparently about the psychology of religion. In our schematic account, these two scenes correspond to the patient's identification with the analyst and the subsequent desire to please her and to understand psychological determinations. These two episodes prepare us for the long sequences of monologues which follow it in which the first painful material begins to emerge. For the moment I shall pass over the content of these memories, to which I must naturally return, in order to bring more clearly into focus the shape of the transference. It is immediately after her account of her erotic history that Alma imagines Elizabeth seducing her. This is one of the cruxes of ambiguity as to the status of what is presented. Elizabeth speaks briefly to Alma; she enters her room at night and caresses her; yet the voice is so distant and the twilight so uncanny that the spectator questions the event as possibly one of Alma's imagining. Of course, from the perspective of the allegory of psychoanalysis this makes no difference at all. Everything in *Persona* reflects the perspective of the patient.

At this point one may object that what I am calling transference neurosis is equally true of intersubjective relationships outside of the psychoanalytical encounter. The strength of such an objection does not invalidate my approach. But it does demand that I carefully consider the *content* of the supposed psychoanalysis, not merely its dramatic form. This I shall do when I come to consider the relationship of the frame story to the agon of Alma and Elizabeth. Before I come to this argument, I must describe the negative phase of the transference.

Alma becomes deeply upset and feels betrayed when she reads an unsealed letter Elizabeth has written to her husband and given her to post. The letter describes in distant and somewhat amused tones Alma's confidence in her and the suspicion that she "is a little in love" with her. The letter itself is less significant than Alma's reaction to the impossibility of an erotic relationship with Elizabeth. She deliberately leaves a large splinter of glass (which she accidentally broke) in Elizabeth's path as she walks barefoot. This transformation of love into aggression climaxes in a shot-countershot exchange of glances which tacitly acknowledges Alma's role in the "accidental" injury. The shot-countershot is introduced

by the opening of a veil-like curtain which had been so close to the camera that it was not noticeable until Alma touched it. At this turning point, the "curtain raising" of negative transference, the will to break off the whole process manifests itself in the sudden catching and burning of the very frame of film on which Alma's bold stare is printed. Suddenly we are back in the material of the pretitle sequence. The film does get started again, after a delayed return to focus, as if the eye seen in the interruption resisted returning to the drama. The hostility between the protagonists continues. In the scenes which follow Alma painfully "acts out" her aggression.

An accusation of coldness and mockery gives way to physical violence. By threatening to scald her face with boiling water, Alma elicits speech from Elizabeth, who cries, "No, stop it!" From this point on, the transference neurosis plays its course. Alma manifests considerable ambivalence toward Elizabeth: she aggressively analyses her "illness," then begs forgiveness only to repudiate that plea. The stage is now set for a temporary displacement of the initial erotic transference. In a scene that distinctly parallels the episode following the long confession, Alma inverts that situation by wandering into the room of the sleeping Elizabeth; instead of caressing her, she minutely catalogues her blemishes: "When you're asleep your face is all slack and your mouth is swollen and ugly. . . ." Still, the erotic transference has not been negated, merely displaced. This scene merges into a sudden appearance of Elizabeth's husband. Several details of this strange encounter will ultimately concern us. For the moment it is enough to note that in making love to the husband both in front of Elizabeth's face and behind her back (literally), Alma expresses in a different form her neurotic desire to participate in Elizabeth's erotic life. Then, before a scene of regression in which Alma loses her control of syntax, she offers the analysis of Elizabeth's hatred of her child, which culminates in the compound image of both their faces.

There are no crucial narrative or dramatic developments beyond this point. In fact, the film diverges radically from the published script in its ending. Bergman had intended to bring back the doctor, who would tell us that Elizabeth broke her silence that winter and returned to her family and the theater. As we last see her, in the script, Alma has remained behind on the island and tries to write to Elizabeth about a picture of a young boy held at gunpoint in the Warsaw Ghetto which she has discovered in the house. In the film version, Elizabeth is fascinated by this picture.

The end of *Persona* is significantly more ambiguous than the script indicates. There is a final violent exchange between the two women in which Elizabeth, like a vampire, sucks the blood which comes from the nurse's wrist when she cuts herself with her fingernail. A sudden transition shows them back in the hospital, where Alma coaches her patient to utter a single word: "Nothing." After this, the final shot-countershot exchange shows Alma peering through a door at Elizabeth packing her belongings. When Elizabeth closes her suitcase, the camera makes a downward pan recalling the movement from the back of

Alma's head to her nervous hands during the interview with the doctor. When we are expecting a scene of Elizabeth's departure, we see, instead, Alma closing up the summer house, and eventually, getting on a bus. Of course, upon reflection, we realize that in an offscreen passage of the drama, Elizabeth must have departed first, leaving Alma to close up the house. But the mild shock of the sequence, as Bergman depicts it, corresponds to the ambiguity of the termination of psychoanalysis, necessarily an anticlimax: a mutual, perhaps tacit, agreement between patient and analyst, in which the patient finds herself alone, performing her duties. In the midst of this conclusion there is a dramatic close-up of a statue which had appeared in the background in an earlier shot. In *The Touch*, in which it reappears, it is identified as a medieval Madonna. This will be relevant to the interpretation, later in this essay, of the crucifixion imagery.

By overlooking a large array of details, I have tried to bring to the foreground a schema in which the dramatic events of *Persona* can be seen as representative of the stages of psychoanalysis: a referral (the meeting with the psychiatrist who sends Alma to Elizabeth), the initial interview, the preparation for transference, the acceleration of transference in the confessional disclosures of the patient, transference love, the development of negative transference which leads to the projection of the traumatic source of the neurosis on the analyst, and the termination. The strongest objection confronting this reading is nothing less than its very starting point: Elizabeth's silence. It is this silence and willingness to let Alma work through her trauma that makes her identification with the analyst so immediately apparent. Yet in the end she is too silent. No objective account of a classical Freudian psychoanalysis—or any other for that matter—could account for a rigidly mute doctor. To get beyond this crux, we must examine the peculiarity of the allegory I have outlined.

The first question it poses is: why would a filmmaker operate in this way? Psychoanalytical critics would assume that neurotic complexes can and do determine the infrastructures of films. But why should psychoanalysis itself be so disguised? Bergman could have made a film about psychiatry if that is what he wanted to do. The interesting fact is that he did make such a film a decade after *Persona*. *Face to Face* (1974) dramatizes the mental collapse of a psychiatrist, again played by Liv Ullman (although I do not find that to be very important, since she has played so many diverse roles in Bergman films). The filmmaker's hostility to psychoanalysis—and his interest in it—are quite transparent in this later film, where we hear Dr. Wankel, the Ullman character's hospital superior, say, "Twenty years ago I realized the inconceivable brutality of our methods and the complete bankruptcy of psychoanalysis." The disreputable psychiatrists in *Thirst* (1949) and in *The Lives of Marionettes* (1980) are yet further examples of Bergman's hostility to the process.

I assume this very hostility can tell us something about the genesis of *Persona*. The film not only recreates the dynamics and tensions of psychoanalysis; it forms a massive defense against it. The most blatant form of that defense

would be the presence of the psychiatrist at the beginning of the film (and at the conclusion as well, in the script). She is an ogre who attacks Elizabeth with metaphysical banalities before sending her off to her summer home. In the script Bergman's fury at this creature is barely disguised. Her final "analytical" speech ends, "Personally I would say you have to be fairly infantile to cope with being an artist in an age like ours." The filmmaker adds these remarks: "The doctor is very pleased with what she has said, particularly the last bit."

Her very presence in the film is a decoy to divert systematic viewer/readers from the psychoanalytical relationship between Elizabeth and Alma. That she is female may be another displacement. The world of *Persona* is radically feminized. The weak and perhaps even blind husband of Elizabeth makes an appearance which can easily be read as a fantasy or dream. If Bergman had an experience in psychoanalysis (which has not been confirmed) and draws upon it in this film, then the substitution of a woman for a man parallels the reversal of the roles of nurse and patient. In fact, if we include the doctor, we can see the defensive displacement of a situation involving either two men or one man and one woman (the analyst) into a fiction of three women. While preparing the script for *The Silence* Bergman told Vilgot Sjöman that he would translate his dream of two men into a story about two women; "he was afraid that the part was too close to himself."[4]

Furthermore the very suppression of the interpretive work of the analyst (Elizabeth in the allegory) might emerge from the same hostility. In that case we must look elsewhere for the interpretive moments. Certainly the letter would be one; for it dramatizes both the patient's desire to see the doctor's private notes or to read his mind; and the resistance to the doctor's professional insight is merely a typical neurotic syndrome. Other reflections of interpretive moments (as constructed from the hostile viewpoint of a patient) would be the doctor's banal speech, the reading of the psychology textbook (intercut with the barren stones of the island), and Elizabeth's two speeches: "No, stop it!" and "Nothing." From this negative viewpoint, a psychoanalyst is someone who *says nothing*, or, more luridly, who sucks the patient's blood. The fact that we can so easily accept Elizabeth's first speech as a fantasy of Alma's underlines the repression of analytical interventions. In *Face to Face* Dr. Wankel's bitter speech about psychoanalysis concluded: "I don't think we can really cure a single human being. One or two get well despite our efforts." It is perhaps useful to note (keeping in mind that associations between films made a decade apart are of dubious value) that *Face to Face* begins with the dramatization of ambivalent transference love after a long aggressive speech in which the patient tells the doctor she is sure she would be a poor lover.

4. Vilgot Sjöman, *L 136: Diary with Ingmar Bergman*, trans. Alan Blair, Ann Arbor, Karoma, 1978, p. 190.

Readers generous enough to accept my account of the displacement of the interpretive work of the analyst from the central allegory of the analysis as a function of the defensive resistance to the overt dramatization of the psychiatric event may yet raise another, still more cogent, objection to my thesis. Psychoanalysis is not simply a formal agon between patient and analyst; it must have a specific content, and furthermore, that content determines the nature and character of the transference. Until now, I have skirted this fundamental point. I can no longer avoid it.

To get at the content of the analysis, the neurotic problem, we must resign efforts to distinguish between reality and fantasy, or dream, in the central story of the film and we must simultaneously grant an equal "psychological" status to the interruptive frame story. Everything, then, that appears on the *screen* in *Persona* will become material for analysis. With this in mind, I want to bring into evidence some of the filmmaker's statements about the film. In the interview volume, *Bergman on Bergman*, we find:

> Shall we talk a moment about the boy in the film? Well, while I was working on *Persona*, I had it in my head to make a poem, not in words but in images, about the situation in which *Persona* had originated. I reflected on what was important, and began with the projector and my desire to set it in motion. But when the projector was running, nothing came out of it but old ideas, the spider, God's lamb, all that dull old stuff. My life just then consisted of dead people, brick walls, and a few dismal trees out in the park.
>
> In hospital, one has a strong sense of corpses floating up through the bedstead. Besides which I had a view of the morgue, people marching in and out with little coffins, in and out.
>
> So I made believe I was a little boy who'd died, yet who wasn't allowed to be really dead, because he kept on being woken up by telephone calls from the Royal Dramatic Theater. Finally he became so impatient he lay down and read a book. All that stuff about The Hero of Our Time struck me as rather typical—the overstrained official lying on his sickbed. Well, all this is trivial. But that's how it works—and suddenly two faces are floating into one another. And that's where the film begins. As for the interpretation, you can interpret it any way you like. As with any poem. Images mean different things to different people.[5]

Bergman's description of the genesis of *Persona* encourages speculation about the frailty of his creative powers as he imagined it during that crisis. But

5. Stig Bjorkman, Torsten Manns, and Jonas Sima, *Bergman on Bergman: Interviews with Ingmar Bergman*, trans. Paul Britten Austin, New York, Simon and Schuster, 1973, pp. 189–190.

even without the help of his comments, several patterns would support the allegory of psychoanalysis as a key to this film. They are (1) the recurrent representations of an onlooker; (2) the fantasies of an unwanted or aborted child which accompany every mention of sexuality; (3) the "free association" of images from Bergman's history as a filmmaker which parallel the narrative; and (4) the unusual reservation of shot-countershot to underline the important moments in the drama I have identified with the structure of transference.

Many critics of the film have pointed out that the boy in the frame episode seems to correspond to Elizabeth's son. If one remains strictly within the narrative evidence of the film, this would be unjustified. The photograph of the son, which we see only briefly on the screen, appears to be a different boy. But if one accepts the displacements and condensations I have maintained are at work on all levels in the film, this association of the two boys is more than justified. It is the key to the enigma of the film. Yet we recognize its importance only when we are ready to concede that both Alma and Elizabeth are "masks" for a very different drama than the one we seem to be witnessing during most of the film. Up until this point I have traced an allegory of a psychoanalytic encounter in which Alma plays the role of the patient and Elizabeth that of the analyst. Now I am about to make an argument for the identity of Alma and the boy out of the frame episode. In other words, the entire film reflects the perspective of a patient in psychoanalysis for whom the adolescent boy is a crucial screen memory.

Extreme care is required in the identification of the boy. Bergman offers us an enormous boost when he says that he "made believe he was a little boy who'd died." Why then, we must ask, did he not find an appropriate actor to play this boy? Why did he turn instead to the very figure he had used in his previous film, *The Silence*? To make the identification complete he shows the boy reading the same book in both films, Lermontov's *A Hero of Our Time*. Perhaps most revealing of all is the error Bergman makes in describing the book. There is no "overstrained official lying on his sickbed" in Lermontov's novel. Its place in the earlier film can easily be accounted for. *The Silence* shows the same boy, along with his aunt and mother, passing through a foreign country (the language of which none of them knows) which seems about to go to war, if it has not already done so. Lermontov's novella takes the form of travel notes about a fascinating romantic figure in an exotic Caucasian landscape. The parallelism between the subject of the book and the reader in *The Silence* does not carry over to *Persona*. In place of it, Bergman erroneously attributes his own condition at the time of the film's genesis, "an overstrained official"—Director of the Royal Dramatic Theater, which, in the same interview book, he called "purgatory," adding, "Nothing worse can happen to me for the rest of my life"—"lying on his sickbed." At the time of the creation of the first script of *Persona*, Bergman was hospitalized with an infection that impaired his sense of balance.

The Lermontov book carries over to *Persona* to reinforce the fact that this

boy brings with him all of his associations from the earlier film. Bergman's error underlines the personal identification he had with the boy in both films. This leads us directly to a consideration of *The Silence*, a much less obscure film than *Persona*. In it, the boy is a figure of ambiguous maturity. He reads beyond his years, but he can behave with immaturity, as when he urinates in the corridor of the hotel (where most of the film transpires) immediately after a company of dwarfs dress him up as a little girl. This ambiguity suggests that the adolescent is a screen for an infantile trauma. In *The Silence* the boy's preoccupation with the primal scene is a thematic concern: he is fascinated by a painting of a satyr and faun; he reports to his aunt about the lovemaking he listens to in his mother's room as she makes him wait in the corridor. In fact, the only time we ever see the book in *The Silence* is at the very moment that the boy looks up from reading to tell about his voyeuristic spying.

The primal scene trauma lies at the core of *Persona*. This, above all, accounts for the incorporation of the figure from the earlier film in the later one. I will postpone for a while Bergman's acknowledged identification with this figure. It is time to consider the ways in which primal scene experiences permeate the film and account for its complex structure. Before further discussion of the film, I shall turn to Henry Edelheit's essay "Crucifixion Fantasies and the Relation to the Primal Scene." Here is his definition of "the primal scene schema":

> I do not maintain that every image of an erotic encounter is a primal scene representation, but I believe that such images may (and in the cited instances do) have specifiable traits which label them as "primal scene material." First among these traits is the characteristic double identification, which may be either simultaneous or alternating (the depicted roles are readily reversible). The sensory modality most often represented is the visual (which puts emphasis on the polarity viewer/exhibitor), and the setting is often a theater or an arena. A libidinal-aggressive encounter is represented (often a combat, a contest or a ritual sacrifice) in which the observer is implicated.
>
> The double identification itself results in typical ambiguities. These can be summarized in the following questions: 1) What is happening? 2) To whom is it happening? Who is the victim and who the aggressor? 3) How many people are involved? One? two? several? Or is it one composite creature? 4) What is the anatomy of the scene? If it is made up of more than one individual, which one has the penis? 5) Where am I (the observer)? Am I participating or am I excluded?
>
> These ambiguities arise from the pattern of double identifications which I call *the primal scene schema*.[6]

6. Henry Edelheit, "Crucifixion Fantasies and Their Relation to the Primal Scene," *The International Journal of Psychoanalysis*, LV (1974), p. 194.

When I first read Edelheit's article, I was instantly struck by the way in which his five questions seemed to summarize my experience of *Persona*. I trust that many readers who have not developed concrete interpretations of the film on their own will share my reaction. At this point I am prepared to argue that what is true of the film as a whole is true of its most obscure images. In fact, *Persona*, as a film about primal scene disturbances and the psychoanalytical revelation of them, not only defensively obscures its true theme, it also compulsively projects upon its viewers a repetition of that "libidinal-aggressive encounter."

What Bergman calls "a poem . . . in images" represents his free association of moments in the history of his genesis and development as a filmmaker. These moments also turn out to be the very images Edelheit catalogues in his article. Only one, however, is a direct quotation from an earlier Bergman film. The speeded up farce in which a skeleton figure pops up and chases a frightened man in a nightgown comes from *Prison* (1949, also called *The Devil's Wanton*), the first film Bergman both wrote and directed himself. It is framed by a story about the making of a film. The farce is a film the protagonist finds in an attic, a souvenir of his childhood; it symbolically recapitulates the events which are leading him into psychosis. These frames of films-within-the-film stress the psychological validity of symbolic action. There is even a little boy in the film who hides in a cellar so that his parents will fear he is dead—the forerunner of the filmmaker's fantasy that he was "a little boy who died." Furthermore Bergman tells us, again in the interview book, that the farce is "a reconstruction of one little scrap of film I bought" when he had a primitive projection apparatus for the "toy theater" with which he played as a ten- or eleven-year-old child.

I do not know the origin of the cartoon which first appears in the projector gate after the Academy leader. It suggests a childhood memory of the cinema. The fragment from *Prison* follows it, after a return of the shot of film rushing through the projector gate and a flash of a child's hands. We do not see enough of the farce to know what is going on, yet it is significant that it takes place in a bedroom, where the haunted man dives under the covers to escape what pursues him. Psychoanalysts would call this multiplication of reasons for the relevance of the fragment "overdetermination"; for it condenses the origin of Bergman's cinematic experiences with his first filmmaking efforts while alluding covertly to primal scene experiences.

The next two images of the opening "poem" are more displaced references to his earlier films. We see a spider, then several shots of a lamb being fleeced and butchered. In *Through a Glass Darkly*, the mentally disturbed heroine, Karin, tells of her hallucination, which we do not see, in which God attacks her as a lusty spider. The lamb seems to be an even further displaced allusion ("God's lamb," Bergman calls it) to the Apocalyptic background of *The Seventh Seal*. The climax of this series of images, in terms of violence reinforced by the sound track, is the next shot of a nail being driven into a hand, clearly a representation of

crucifixion. At this point, we can profit from turning back to Edelheit's article, which centers upon crucifixion fantasies.

> In crucifixion fantasies (which may be either conscious or unconscious) the figure of Christ nailed to the cross represents the combined image of the parents and *at the same time*, by way of the double identification with the parents, it represents the helpless, observing child.[7]

Edelheit bases these conclusions on his own clinical experience as well as diverse analyses of literary and psychoanalytical sources. In "Mythopoesis and the Primal Scene," he presented a more elaborate argument for interpreting compound mythological beasts (centaurs, and so forth) as figures of the same double identification with the parents.[8] One persistent feature of such figures is the multiplication of legs. The image of the spider, filmed from below, perhaps through a glass, would be just such a displacement for the legs of the parents engaged in lovemaking.

The collage of images referring to earlier Bergman films quickly gives way to the representation of a morgue, but only after a series of transitional images: a blank brick wall, a forest, a fence of iron spikes. The verticals of the forest trees and the fence suggest the bars of a crib, as indeed does the ironwork of the bed in the farce fragment. This may be significant because the adolescent boy "wakes up" in the morgue to witness the "two faces floating into one another" just as an infant might awake in his crib to discover the parents "floating into one another."

The sequence ends with a dramatic presentation of reverse-angle cutting. The boy wakes up, tries to read his book, cannot, looks around, and becomes fascinated by the camera; he reaches out as if to caress it. This is the moment when Bergman reverses the angle showing the boy from behind, reaching out to caress the image of the dissolving faces, or, more literally, the screen from behind which they are projected. This first instance of shot-countershot in the film calls attention to itself in two ways: first, by having the boy look directly into the camera, and reach out as if to touch it, the filmmaker brings into play the only locus of offscreen space that would not be automatically absorbed into the fictive arena which all other pivots of shot-countershot generate. Secondly, the reversed shot does nothing to hide the fact that the boy is confronting a screen. The unified spatial "event" that he thus depicts has been drained of its fictional authority. Nowhere else in the prologue does montage elaborate coherent spatial relationships. The projector is a composite of fragments; the spider, lamb, crucified hand, wall, and forest are autonomous entities. There are two shots of the fence, one close on its spikes and the other, further back, locating

7. *Ibid.*, p. 198.
8. Henry Edelheit, "Mythopoesis and the Primal Scene," *Psychoanalytic Study of Society*, V (1972).

the fence between a snowdrift and what may be the side wall of a church or hospital. The morgue likewise is a sequence of details—dead heads, hands, feet, a woman whose eyes pop open in stop-motion, forecasting the "awakening" of the boy—but there is nothing to help us see whose face, hands, and so on, we are seeing. The abstraction of this montage had been announced by the powerful transition from the fence to the morgue; for Bergman has carefully composed a very close shot of the first corpse so that it graphically reflects the pattern of the snowdrift in the shot before it. A "poem" then, it would seem for Bergman, differs from a narrative in that it has a thematic and associational structure while the latter articulates a spatial unity.

After a brilliant title sequence in which images from the film to come flash between the stark credits, the filmmaker repeats a version of the shot-countershot with which the prologue ended. After the white screen dissolves into the white door of a hospital office, Alma enters and stares attentively toward the camera while the offscreen voice of the doctor instructs her about her patient. After a long time, the angles reverse, but the focus is set on Alma's back, not on the blurred doctor in the far background. This self-conscious articulation of narrative space deliberately differentiates itself from the "poetic" montage of the prologue and the credits. In no other film by Bergman does the mechanics of narration demand so much attention. The emphasis on narration is reflected on the soundtrack as well by the long erotic story which Alma tells Elizabeth.

I believe the peculiar temporality of the psychoanalytical encounter can clarify this formal distinction in cinematic modes between the poetic and the narrative. The psychoanalytic process, represented in *Persona* by the story of the two women, and punctuated by the restrained and systematic deployment of shot-countershot to distinguish the critical stages of the process, takes the special temporal and dramatic form I have outlined regardless of the nature (or content) of the disturbance it seeks to uproot. But by structuring so clearcut a frame around the film, and by dramatically interrupting the center of the narrative with material from that frame, Bergman presents us with an alternative to the narrative mode. Within the story itself there are two episodes within conceptual brackets, and both, significantly, show us Elizabeth when she is alone. She is horrified by the telecast of a burning bonze in Vietnam and fascinated by the image of the boy in the Warsaw Ghetto. On one level, the distinction between documentary and fictive images corresponds to the discrimination between narrative and poetic modes of representation. But we must not forget that Elizabeth gives her attention in both cases to mediated events and furthermore that the mediations occur at the outer boundaries of cinematography, television, and photography. In addition to that, both have been doctored, or transformed by editing. The apparently "direct" transmission of the newsreel from Vietnam turns out to be a subtle montage when we listen to the muted soundtrack carefully. The English-speaking newscaster is describing a battle

while we are looking at the monk burning himself to death. Only the mention of "flame-throwers" connects, as if in free association, the commentary to the imagery. Correspondingly, the fracturing of the photograph into details, and the temporalization of those details as montage, recovers its crude reality for cinema.[9]

In the allegory of psychoanalysis these scenes represent the analyst, or the patient's fantasy of the analyst, reacting to and puzzling over evidence. The sociopolitical nature of the images, as well as their appearance as films within the larger film indicate that the issue of reality is emerging within the fictional matrix.[10] Yet, at the very moment when reality-testing becomes an issue, Berg-

9. This effort to animate a still photograph automatically brings us face to face with the difference between photography and cinema. Bergman is not original in his technique here. In fact, he may have been influenced by a remarkably successful short film which exploited this principle: Chris Marker's *La Jetée*, which had been released four years before *Persona*. I am struck by the possibility of a profound influence not because the technique of reframing details of a single photograph for dramatic emphasis is common to both films—for that had not been original with Marker—but by the thematic, or rather psychoanalytical, similarity of the two films. A primal scene disturbance is represented more obviously in the Marker film, which narrates the story of a man who had been a young boy when atomic bombs destroyed Paris in the sudden beginning of a Third World War. In an allegory of psychoanalysis, similar to that of *Persona*, a team of doctors work with the now-grown man to explore the imagery of his repressed memory. The chief doctor is at first frightening, then benign, and finally diabolical as the stages of transference are refracted through the story.

The painful journey into the past becomes the narrative of his love affair. But the woman he loved in this fiction of interpenetrating times was none other than the woman he watched as he stood by the criblike railing of the airport on the day of the traumatic bombing. At the end of the film the doctors succeed in making him realize that the man he saw killed on the observation deck, just before the massive destruction, was himself as he rushed to the woman. The splitting of the character into lover and observing child characterizes the primal scene structure.

The brilliance of this short film devolves from Marker's ingenious association of still photography with the discontinuities of memory; his imitation of shot-countershot, reframing, and elliptical montage within the limitation of the still format; his identification of the initiation of a sexual relationship with the one instance of actual cinematography in the film—after a series of dissolves on the face of the sleeping woman, closing in on a calculus of diminishing time gaps, she opens her eyes in conventional film time, implicitly acknowledging with her glance her lover and confirming in the same gesture the Orphic theme of the film—and his situating the penultimate meeting (the most elaborate in terms of montage) of the lovers in a natural history museum, where the static, stuffed animals they are inspecting metaphorically correspond to the snapshots through which we imagine the lives of these characters.

The primal scene schema and the allegory of psychoanalytical therapy is sufficiently disguised by the science fiction narrative of *La Jetée*—the critical literature shows no notice of it—for it to have been an unconscious influence on Bergman. It is significant that, like Marker, he shows us a young boy on the verge of confronting a violent trauma, and perhaps even more significant that Bergman's Jewish boy (somewhat older than Marker's and therefore closer to the figure of the prologue) is the *real* victim of a historical war. This establishes a distance from Marker's film and reinforces the function of the film-within-a-film as a form of reality testing.

10. Dr. Balter has shared his work on the "play within a play" as a sign of reality testing with me. See Jacob Arlow's "The Revenge Motive in the Primal Scene," which contains an extended and masterful interpretation of Antonioni's *Blow Up* (*Journal of American Psychoanalytical Association*, XXVIII [1980], 519–541). In Arlow's "Fantasy, Memory, and Reality Testing" (*Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XXXVIII [1969], pp. 28–51) we find the background for Balter's observation

man, as a filmmaker conscious of his art, confesses that the violence of political reality escapes that art, but undercuts that confession by mediating both the newsreel and the photograph through montage.

In the story of the two women, the primal scene disturbance embedded in the poetic prologue emerges in the persistent association of sexual voyeurism and rejection of a child. Alma's long erotic story, which marks the success of the transference, is a tale of the stimulation of watching others make love and being watched. It ends, significantly, in abortion. This form of the positive transference leads immediately to a fantasy in which the patient (through Alma, the surrogate) makes love to the doctor. In the negative transference, the patient imagines the doctor watching, ambivalently, while the surrogate makes love to the doctor's lover. This scene entails the corresponding hysterical affirmation of affection for the child. After this reversal has run its course, the patient projects upon the doctor the full force of the obsession. In the repeated scene, which I have already described, the patient elaborates a fantasy of parental rejection and painfully realizes that the actual subject of the fantasy is not the doctor, but herself.

The evidence of the film cannot take us further into the infantile development of the Oedipal trauma than this. The ambiguous age of the boy at the beginning of the film is an indication of this barrier. As a figure of late childhood, or early adolescence, he screens out the crib memory of the primal scene which the prologue enacts. Yet he is decidedly younger than the two boys who are described in Alma's erotic confession. Their youth, of course, is central to that episode. It provides another reason for the ambiguous age of the boy. If the reader can accept my postulate that the psychoanalytical subject of the film is a male adult who projects an image of himself as the infant/adolescent, the association of the primal scene schema and the story of the two boys' initiation should not be difficult. From the perspective of this hypothetical subject, the primal scene experience has exacerbated his adolescent sexuality at the end of the latency period. Furthermore, his desire to replace the father as the mother's lover seems to have left an unconscious residue of guilt which has manifested itself in the defensive idea that the mother wished to destroy or reject the child.

Persona is replete with parallels and echoes on the visual, dramatic, and auditory levels. One of the latter provides an important link between the primal scene schema and the transference. The morgue in the prologue is represented through a series of unconnected details, to the accompaniment of the sound of dripping water. That same sound recurs as Alma reads Elizabeth's letter about her. The film covers up this connection by situating the letter episode during a

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on the play within a play. In this context, Bertram Lewin's "The Nature of Reality, the Meaning of Nothing, with an addendum on Concentration" (*Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, CLXXVIII [1948], pp. 524–526), provides an interesting hint for interpreting Elizabeth Vogler's one word speech, "Nothing," as a declaration of castration anxiety.

heavy rainstorm. Alma sets off to post the letters during a downpour, but by the time she comes to read the "report" on herself, the storm has diminished to the steady dripping which we had first heard during the prologue. This auditory repetition dramatizes the association between the primal scene memory and the turning point of the transference. This remains unconscious for the patient and, if we can judge from the silence of the critical literature on this point, the filmmaker has subtly projected this unconsciousness onto his viewers.[11]

The dramatic parallels are more overt, and subject to traditional literary analysis. The radio soap opera, in which a plea for forgiveness had provoked a fit of laughter from Elizabeth, matches the radio fragment Alma hears the night of her violent fight. This time it urges the defensive withdrawal into silence we associated with Elizabeth: "—don't speak, don't listen, cannot comprehend— What means are we—us to persuade—to listen. Practically—excluded. These continuous calls up—." That is all the script gives us. Even in its elliptical incoherence it constitutes the bridge between the situation of Elizabeth ("don't speak") and the complementary speech about Elizabeth's son. Not only the dissolution of syntax but the concatenation of pronouns ("are we—us to persuade") forecasts the later regression: ". . . the incomprehensible disgust and pain and then all the many words. I, me, we, us, no, what is it? Where is closest, where can I get a grip?"

In terms of cinematic construction, the meeting with Elizabeth's husband reflects the initial presentation of the doctor. The camera remains a long time on Alma as she listens to his offscreen voice while trying to tell him she is not Elizabeth. Like the doctor also, his speech is impervious to the particularity of the person he addresses. This solipsism coincides with the ambiguity of his appearance. When we do finally see him he takes off his dark glasses but does not acknowledge that Alma is not Elizabeth or that there are two women before him. The way in which he stares and his gesture with the glasses creates a disturbing ambiguity in which the viewer does not know if he can see or if he is blind.

The very suggestion of blindness marks him as an Oedipal figure, in his weakened, self-defeated stage. This direct hint of the myth of Oedipus merely reinforces the overt mythological reference that Bergman gives us, twice. We are told, and we see in an insert, that Elizabeth broke down during the last performance of *Electra*. The insert, near the beginning and at the end of the film, shows her in that persona. In psychoanalytical mythology, Electra corresponds

11. Cf. *The Collected Papers of Otto Fenichel: First Series* (New York, Norton, 1953), "On the Psychology of Boredom," pp. 295–96: "Sounds like, say, a dripping tap or snoring put the child into a state of excitation or of anxiety and give it 'unpleasure from interruption.' When we discover excitations or fears of this kind we might think at once of experience in the nature of the primal scene. But in making this interpretation we must not forget that excitement, anxiety, and restlessness can also correspond to those situations in which the child, having on one occasion experienced a primal scene, expects its repetition in vain."

to Oedipus. The female version is consistent with the transposition of sexual identities throughout the film.

In the corpus of surviving Greek tragedies there are two plays entitled *Electra*, one by Sophocles and one by Euripides. Bergman, whose knowledge and experience of theater may be more extensive than that of cinema, does not tell us which *Electra* Elizabeth was performing when she first broke down. It would hardly have mattered; for the difference between the plays has no relevance for *Persona*. On the other hand, the fact that he left this point undefined may have a meaning. There is no other instance of two surviving Greek plays called by the same title. *Electra* as a title, then, represents a loss or confusion of authorship, and furthermore suggests the common denominator of the mythic persona—the female counterpart of Oedipus—as more important than the poet who dramatized it.

Much of *Persona* can be seen as a defense against the threat to creativity an artist imagines psychoanalysis as posing. The internal allusion to *Prison, Through a Glass Darkly, The Seventh Seal*, and *The Silence* suggests that Bergman is both questioning and seeking assurance for his achievement as an artist. The allusion to the films he projected as a child reinforces this suggestion and leads to speculation about the relationship of that creativity to his childhood fantasies. In these terms, becoming a filmmaker would be the fulfillment of a fantasy in which the child, as a passive viewer of films, becomes their engendering agent. This sense of threat to creativity would have been confirmed by the conclusion of the smug hospital psychiatrist, had Bergman not removed it from the script.

Nowhere is the intimacy between the frame story and the central drama so explicit as in the interruption of the burning frame which follows the first outbreak of violence between Alma and Elizabeth. Again the crucifixion and the haunted sleeper reappear from the opening. But this time the sequence ends not with the boy reaching out, as in the first shot-countershot, to touch the image, but in a closeup of an eye, itself a synecdoche for the boy and a metaphor for his voyeuristic obsession. From the eye Bergman cuts back to the cottage where Elizabeth is convalescing, but the image is very slow to regain focus, as if it were seen by that traumatized and fascinated eye from the interruption. The entire film defensively asserts that the repression of free association, analysis, and reflection on one's own achievement is essential to keeping the fictional story in focus, to keep the work going.

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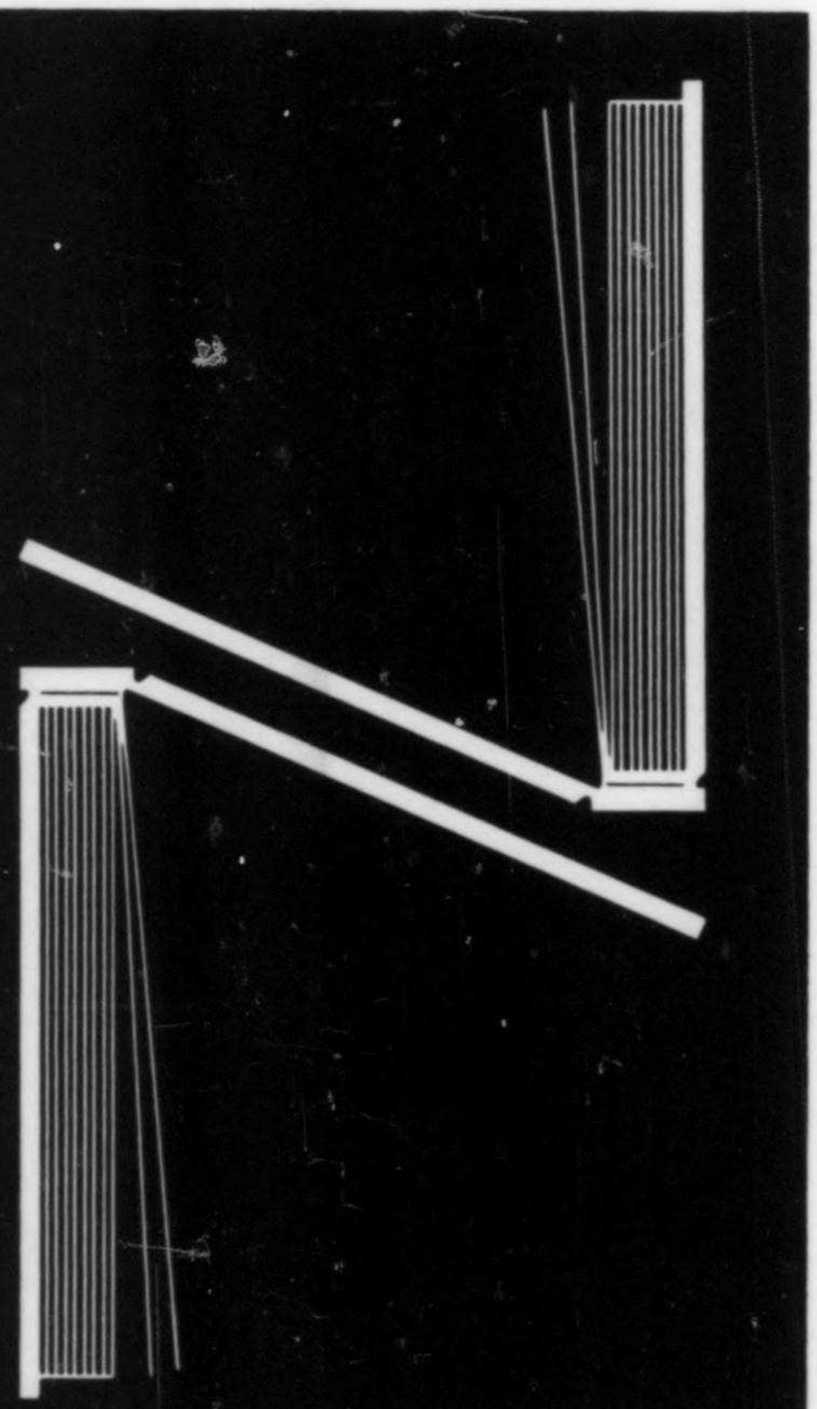

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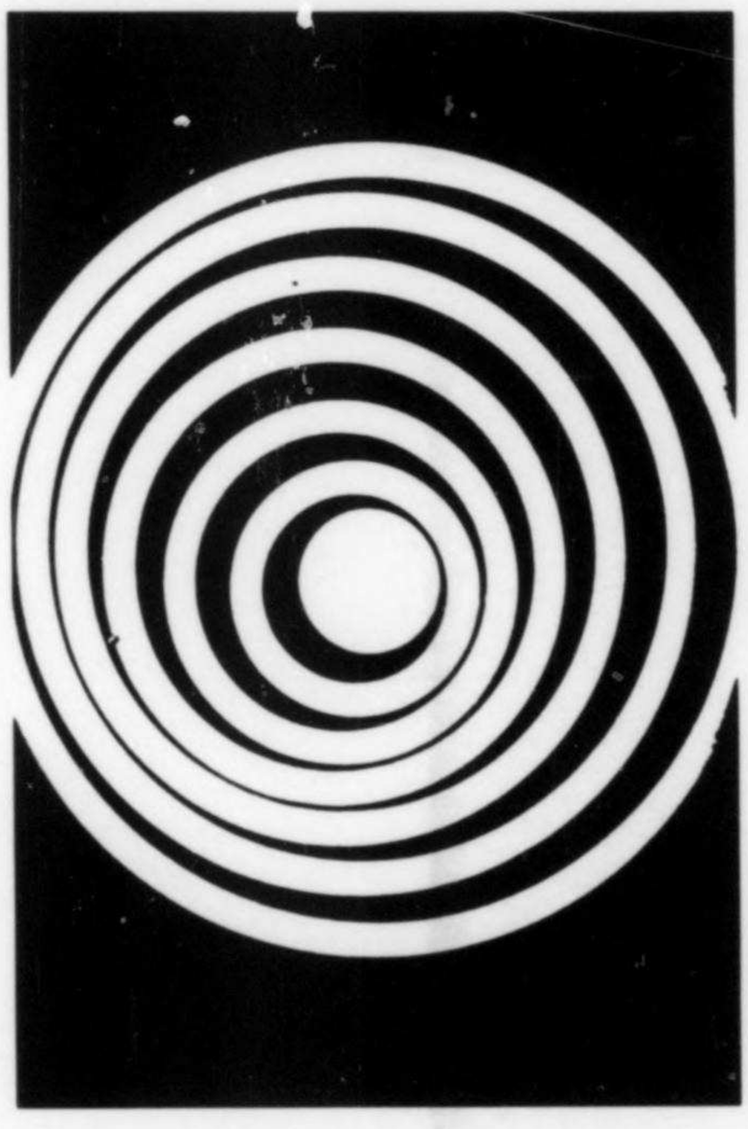

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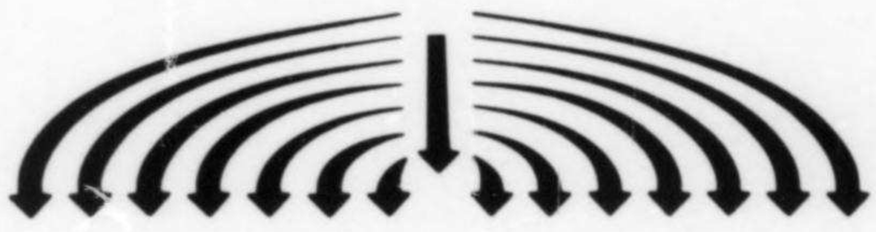

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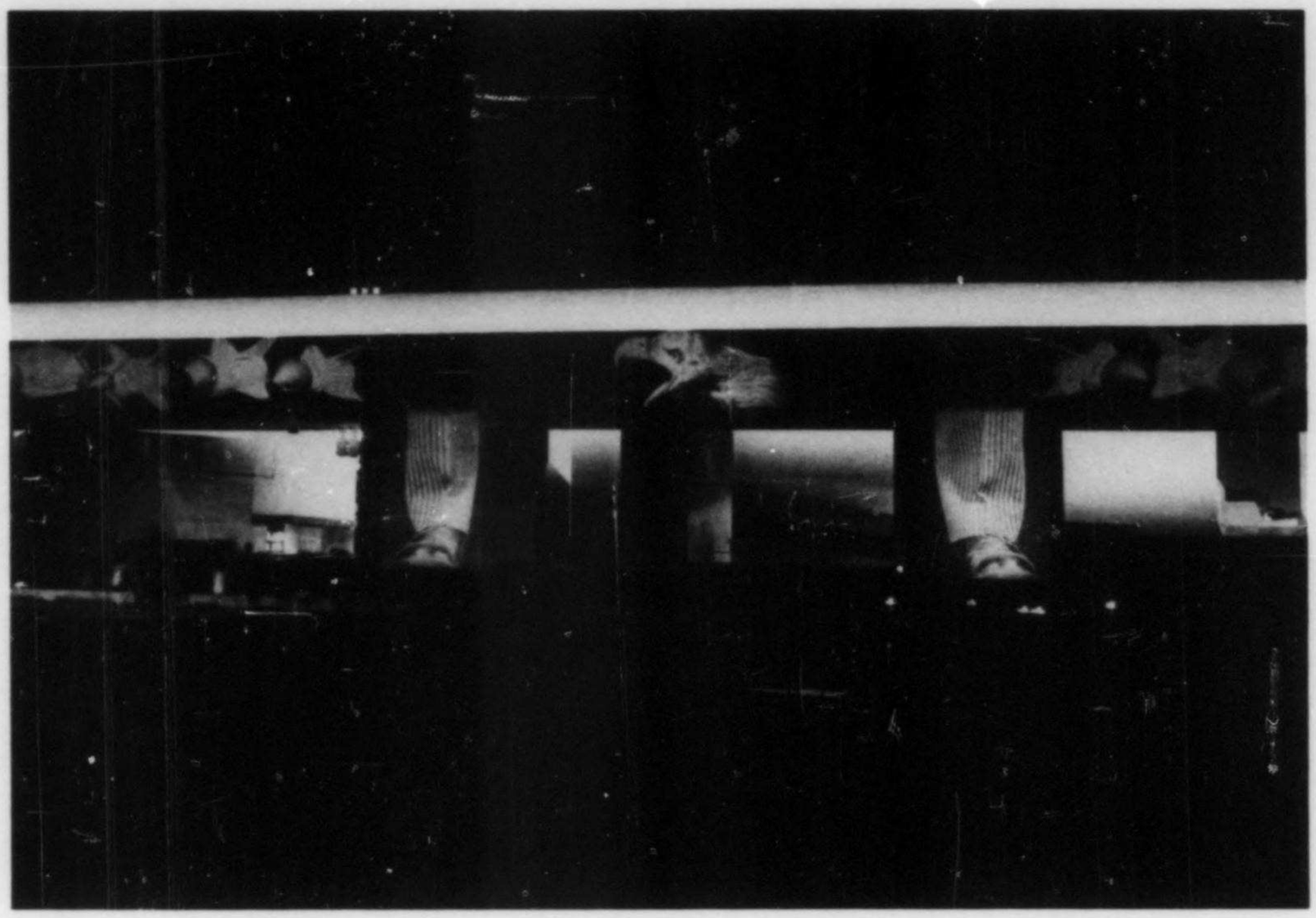

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