Art | Theory | Criticism | Politics

OCTOBER

39

$6.00/Winter 1986

Published by the MIT Press

OCTOBER

OCTOBER (ISSN 0162-2870) (ISBN 0-262-75189-5)
is published quarterly by the MIT Press.
Subscriptions: individuals $20.00; institutions $50.00;
students and retired $18.00. Foreign subscriptions
outside USA and Canada add $7.00 for surface mail
or $25.00 for air mail. Prices subject to change
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changes to OCTOBER, MIT Press Journals, 55 Hayward Street,
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by B. DeBoer, Inc., 113 East Centre Street, Nutley, NJ 07110.

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Cover photo: Mayer & Pierson.
Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1860.
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The Body and the Archive*

ALLAN SEKULA

> *. . . there must be arranged a comprehensive system of exchanges, so that there might grow up something like a universal currency of these banknotes, or promises to pay in solid substance, which the sun has engraved for the great Bank of Nature.*
>
> —Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1859

> *On the one side we approach more closely to what is good and beautiful; on the other, vice and suffering are shut up within narrower limits; and we have to dread less the monstrosities, physical and moral, which have the power to throw perturbation into the social framework.*
>
> —Adolphe Quetelet, 1842

I.

The sheer range and volume of photographic practice offers ample evidence of the paradoxical status of photography within bourgeois culture. The simultaneous threat and promise of the new medium was recognized at a very early date, even before the daguerreotype process had proliferated. For exam-

* Earlier versions of this essay were presented at the National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa, October 2, 1982, and at the College Art Association Annual Meeting, New York, February 13, 1986. This version was completed with the assistance of a Visiting Senior Fellowship at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Visual Arts, The National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., summer 1986.

ple, following the French government announcement of the daguerreotype in August 1839, a song circulated in London which began with the following verse:

> O Mister Daguerre! Sure you're not aware
> Of half the impressions you're making,
> By the sun's potent rays you'll set Thames in a blaze,
> While the National Gallery's breaking.

Initially, photography threatens to overwhelm the citadels of high culture. The somewhat mocking humor of this verse is more pronounced if we consider that the National Gallery had only moved to its new, classical building on Trafalgar Square in 1838, the collection having grown rapidly since the gallery's founding in 1824. I stress this point because this song does not pit photography against a static traditional culture, but rather plays on the possibility of a technological outpacing of *already* expanding cultural institutions. In this context, photography is not the harbinger of modernity, for the world is already modernizing. Rather, photography is modernity run riot. But danger resides not only in the numerical proliferation of images. This is also a premature fantasy of the triumph of a *mass* culture, a fantasy which reverberates with political foreboding. Photography promises an enhanced mastery of nature, but photography also threatens conflagration and anarchy, an incendiary leveling of the existing cultural order.

By the third verse of this song, however, a new *social* order is predicted:

> The new Police Act will *take down* each fact
> That occurs in its wide jurisdiction
> And each beggar and thief in the boldest relief
> Will be *giving a color* to fiction.[1]

Again, the last line of the verse yields a surplus wit, playing on the figurative ambiguity of "giving a color," which could suggest both the elaboration and unmasking of an untruth, playing further on the obvious monochromatic limitations of the new medium, and on the approximate homophony of *color* and *collar*. But this velvet wit plays about an iron cage which was then in the process of being constructed. Although no "Police Act" had yet embraced photography, the 1820s and '30s had engendered a spate of governmental inquiries and legislation designed to professionalize and standardize police and penal procedures in Britain, the most important of which were the Gaols Act of 1823 and the Metropolitan Police Acts of 1829 and 1839. (The prime instigator of these modernization efforts, Sir Robert Peel, happened to be a major collector of seven-

1. Quoted in Helmut and Alison Gernshiem, *L. J. M. Daguerre*, New York, Dover, 1968, p. 105 (italics in original).

William Henry Fox Talbot. Articles of China, *plate III from* The Pencil of Nature, *1844.*

teenth-century Dutch paintings, and a trustee of the National Gallery.) Directly to the point of the song, however, was a provision in the 1839 act for taking into custody vagrants, the homeless, and other offenders "whose name and residence [could] not be ascertained."[2]

Although photographic documentation of prisoners was not at all common until the 1860s, the potential for a new juridical photographic realism was widely recognized in the 1840s, in the general context of these systematic efforts to regulate the growing urban presence of the "dangerous classes," of a chronically unemployed sub-proletariat. The anonymous lyricist voiced sentiments that were also heard in the higher chambers of the new culture of photography.

Consider that incunabulum in the history of photography, Henry Fox Talbot's *The Pencil of Nature.* Talbot, the English gentleman-amateur scientist who paralleled Daguerre's metallic invention with his own paper process, produced a lavish book that was not only the first to be illustrated with photographic prints, but also a compendium of wide-ranging and prescient meditations on the promise of photography. These meditations took the form of brief commentaries on each of the book's calotype prints. Talbot's aesthetic ambition was clear: for one austere image of a broom leaning beside an (allegori-

2. The Metropolitan Police Act, 1839, in *Halsbury's Statutes of England*, vol. 25, London, Butterworth, 1970, p. 250. For a useful summary of parliamentary debates on crime and punishment in the nineteenth century, see *Catalogue of British Parliamentary Papers*, Dublin, Irish University Press, 1977, pp. 58–73. On the history of the National Gallery, see Michael Wilson, *The National Gallery: London*, London, Philip Wilson Publishers.

cally) open door, he claimed the "authority of the Dutch school of art, for taking as subjects of representation scenes of daily and familiar occurrence."[3] But an entirely different order of naturalism emerges in his notes on another quite beautiful calotype depicting several shelves bearing "articles of china." Here Talbot speculates that "should a thief afterwards purloin the treasures—if the mute testimony of the picture were to be produced against him in court—it would certainly be evidence of a novel kind."[4] Talbot lays claim to a new legalistic truth, the truth of an indexical rather than textual inventory. Although this frontal arrangement of objects had its precedents in scientific and technical illustration, a claim is being made here that would not have been made for a drawing or a descriptive list. Only the photograph could begin to claim the legal status of a *visual* document of ownership. Although the calotype was too insensitive to light to record any but the most willing and patient sitters, its evidentiary promise could be explored in this property-conscious variant of the still life.

Both Talbot and the author of the comic homage to Daguerre recognized a new *instrumental* potential in photography: a silence that silences. The protean oral "texts" of the criminal and pauper yield to a "mute testimony" that "takes down" (that diminishes in credibility, that transcribes) and unmasks the disguises, the alibis, the excuses and multiple biographies of those who find or place themselves on the wrong side of the law. This battle between the presumed denotative univocality of the legal image and the multiplicity and presumed duplicity of the criminal voice is played out during the remainder of the nineteenth century. In the course of this battle a new object is defined—the criminal body—and, as a result, a more extensive "social body" is invented.

We are confronting, then, a double system: a system of representation capable of functioning both *honorifically* and *repressively*. This double operation is most evident in the workings of photographic portraiture. On the one hand, the photographic portrait extends, accelerates, popularizes, and degrades a traditional function. This function, which can be said to have taken its early modern form in the seventeenth century, is that of providing for the ceremonial presentation of the bourgeois *self*. Photography subverted the privileges inherent in portraiture, but without any more extensive leveling of social relationships, these privileges could be reconstructed on a new basis. That is, photography could be assigned a proper role within a new hierarchy of taste. Honorific conventions were thus able to proliferate downward.[5] At the same time,

3. William Henry Fox Talbot, *The Pencil of Nature*, 1844, facsimile edition, New York, Da Capo, 1968, pl. 6, n.p.
4. *Ibid.*, pl. 3.
5. The clearest of the early, optimistic understandings of photography's role within a new hierarchy of taste, necessitating a restructuring of the portrait labor market along industrial lines, can be found in an unsigned review by Elizabeth Eastlake, "Photography," *Quarterly Review*, vol. 101, no. 202 (April 1857), pp. 442–468.

photographic portraiture began to perform a role no painted portrait could have performed in the same thorough and rigorous fashion. This role derived, not from any honorific portrait tradition, but from the imperatives of medical and anatomical illustration. Thus photography came to establish and delimit the terrain of the *other*, to define both the *generalized look*—the typology—and the *contingent instance* of deviance and social pathology.

Michel Foucault has argued, quite crucially, that it is a mistake to describe the new regulatory sciences directed at the body in the early nineteenth century as exercises in a wholly negative, repressive power. Rather, social power operates by virtue of a positive therapeutic or reformative channeling of the body.[6] Still, we need to understand those modes of instrumental realism that do in fact operate according to a very explicit deterrent or repressive logic. These modes constitute the lower limit or "zero degree" of socially instrumental realism. Criminal identification photographs are a case in point, since they are designed quite literally to facilitate the *arrest* of their referent.[7] I will argue in the second part of this essay that the semantic refinement and rationalization of precisely this sort of realism was central to the process of defining and regulating the criminal.

But first, what general connections can be charted between the honorific and repressive poles of portrait practice? To the extent that bourgeois order depends upon the systematic defense of social relations based on private property, to the extent that the legal basis of the self lies in the model of property rights, in what has been termed "possessive individualism," every proper portrait has its lurking, objectifying inverse in the files of the police. In other words, a covert Hobbesian logic links the terrain of the "National Gallery" with that of the "Police Act."[8]

6. See Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, New York, Pantheon, 1977, and, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley, New York, Pantheon, 1978.

7. Any photographs that seek to identify a *target*, such as military reconnaissance photographs, operate according to the same general logic. See my 1975 essay "The Instrumental Image: Steichen at War," in *Photography against the Grain: Essays and Photo Works, 1973–1983*, Halifax, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1984.

8. The theoretical ground for the construction of a specifically *bourgeois* subject can be found in Hobbes's *Leviathan* (1651). C. B. Macpherson has argued that Hobbes's axiomatic positing of an essentially competitive individual human "nature" was in fact quite specific to a developing market society, moreover, to a market society in which human labor power increasingly took the form of an alienable commodity. As Hobbes put it, "The *Value* or WORTH of a man, is as of all things, his Price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of his Power: and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependent on the need and judgement of another" (Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1968, Chap. 10, pp. 151–152. See Macpherson's introduction to this edition and his *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke*, London, Oxford University Press, 1962).

While it would be farfetched to present Hobbes as a theorist of the "bourgeois portrait," it is interesting to note how he defined individual autonomy and its relinquishment through contractual obligation in terms of dramaturgical metaphors, thus distinguishing between two categories of the

In the mid-nineteenth century, the terms of this linkage between the sphere of culture and that of social regulation were specifically utilitarian.[9] Many of the early promoters of photography struck up a Benthamite chorus, stressing the medium's promise for a social calculus of pleasure and discipline. Here was a machine for providing small doses of happiness on a mass scale, for contributing to Jeremy Bentham's famous goal: "the greatest happiness of the greatest number."[10] Thus the photographic portrait in particular was welcomed as a socially ameliorative as well as a socially repressive instrument. Jane Welsh Carlyle voiced characteristic hopes in 1859, when she described inexpensive portrait photography as a social palliative:

> Blessed be the inventor of photography. I set him even above the inventor of chloroform! It has given more positive pleasure to poor suffering humanity than anything that has been "cast up" in my time . . .—this art, by which even the poor can possess themselves of tolerable likenesses of their absent dear ones.[11]

In the United States, similar but more extensive utilitarian claims were made by the portrait photographer Marcus Aurelius Root, who was able to articulate the connection between pleasure and discipline, to argue explicitly for a moral economy of the image. Like Carlyle, he stressed the salutory effects of photography on working-class family life. Not only was photography to serve as a means of cultural enlightenment for the working classes, but family photographs sustained sentimental ties in a nation of migrants. This "primal household affection" served a socially cohesive function, Root argued—articulating a nineteenth-century familialism that would survive and become an essential ideo-

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person, the "Author" and the "Actor" (*Leviathan*, Chap. 16, pp. 217–218). The analogy between symbolic representation and political-legal representation is central to his thought. (An amusing history of portrait photography could be written on the vicissitudes of the Hobbesian struggle between photographer and sitter, both in the actual portrait encounter and in the subsequent reception of portrait photographs.)

Furthermore, the frontispiece to *Leviathan* took the form of an allegorical portrait. The commonwealth, or state, is literally embodied in the figure of a sovereign, an "artificial man," whose body is itself composed of a multitude of bodies, all of whom have ceded a portion of their individual power to the commonwealth in order to prevent the civil war that would inevitably result from their unchecked pursuit of "natural" appetites. Thus the "body" of the Leviathan is a kind of pressure vessel, containing explosive natural forces. This image is perhaps the first attempt to diagram the social field visually. As such, it has a definite, if usually indirect, resonance in nineteenth-century attempts to construct visual metaphors for the conceptual models of the new social sciences.

9. "The utilitarian doctrine . . . is at bottom only a restatement of the individualist principles which were worked out in the seventeenth century: Bentham built on Hobbes" (C. B. Macpherson, *Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, p. 2).

10. Jeremy Bentham, "A Fragment on Government" (1776), in Mary P. Mack, ed., *A Bentham Reader*, New York, Pegasus, 1969, p. 45.

11. Quoted in Helmut Gernsheim, *The History of Photography: From the Camera Obscura to the Beginning of the Modern Era*, New York, McGraw-Hill, 1969, p. 239.

logical feature of American mass culture. Furthermore, widely distributed portraits of the great would subject everyday experience to a regular parade of moral exemplars. Root's concern for respectability and order led him to applaud the adoption of photography by the police, arguing that convicted offenders would "not find it easy to resume their criminal careers, while their faces and general aspects are familiar to so many, especially to the keen-sighted detective police."[12] The "so many" is significant here, since it implicitly enlists a wider citizenry in the vigilant work of detection. Thus Root's utilitarianism comes full circle. Beginning with cheaply affordable aesthetic pleasures and moral lessons, he ends up with the photographic extension of that exemplary utilitarian social machine, the Panopticon.[13]

12. Marcus Aurelius Root, *The Camera and the Pencil,* 1864, reprint, Pawlett, Vermont, Helios, 1971, pp. 420–421.

13. The Panopticon, or Inspection House, was Jeremy Bentham's proposal, written in 1787, for an architectural system of social discipline, applicable to prison, factory, workhouse, asylum, and school. The operative principles of the Panopticon were isolation and perpetual surveillance. Inmates were to be held in a ring of individual cells. Unable to see into a central observation tower, they would be forced to assume that they were watched continually. (As Hobbes remarked over a century earlier, "the reputation of Power is Power.") The beneficial effects of this program were trumpeted by Bentham in the famous opening remarks of his proposal: "Morals reformed—health preserved—industry invigorated—instruction diffused—public burdens lightened—Economy seated, as it were, upon a rock—all by a simple idea of architecture" (John Bowring, ed., *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol. 4, London, Simpkin, Marshall, 1843, p. 49). With Bentham the principle of supervision takes on an explicit industrial capitalist character: his prisons were to function as profit-making establishments, based on the private contracting-out of convict labor. Bentham was a prototypical efficiency expert. (On these last two points see, respectively, Gertrude Himmelfarb, "The Haunted House of Jeremy Bentham," in *Victorian Minds*, New York, Knopf, 1968, pp. 32–81; and Daniel Bell, "Work and Its Discontents," in *The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties*, Glencoe, Illinois, Free Press, 1960, pp. 227–274.)

For Foucault, "Panopticism" provides the central metaphor for modern disciplinary power based on isolation, individuation, and supervision (*Discipline and Punish*, pp. 195–228). Foucault traces the "birth of the prison" only to the 1840s, just when photography appears with all of its instrumental promise. Given the central optical metaphor in Foucault's work, a reading of the subsequent development of disciplinary systems would need logically to take photography into account. John Tagg has written a Foucauldian account of the "panoptic" character of early police and psychiatric photography in Britain. While I am in frequent agreement with his argument, I disagree with his claim that the "cumbersome architecture" of the Panopticon became redundant with the development of photography ("Power and Photography: Part 1, A Means of Surveillance: The Photograph as Evidence in Law," *Screen Education*, no. 36 [Winter 1980], p. 45). This seems to accord too much power to photography, and to imply that domination operates entirely by the force of visual representation. To suggest that cameras replaced prisons is more than a little hyperbolic. The fact that Bentham's plan was never realized in the form he proposed has perhaps contributed to the confusion; models are more easily transformed into metaphors than are realized projects. Once discourse turns on metaphor, it becomes a simple matter to substitute a photographic metaphor for an architectural one. My main point here is that any history of disciplinary institutions must recognize the multiplicity of material devices involved—some literally concrete—in tracing not only the importance of surveillance, but also the continued importance of confinement. After all, Bentham's proposal *was* partially realized in the cellular and separate systems of confinement that emerged in the nineteenth century. At least one "genuine" panopticon prison was constructed: the Stateville Penitentiary in Illinois, built between 1916 and 1924. (For works on early prison history, see D. Melossi and M. Pavarini, *The Prison and the Factory:*

Notwithstanding the standard liberal accounts of the history of photography, the new medium did not simply inherit and "democratize" the honorific functions of bourgeois portraiture. Nor did police photography simply function repressively, although it is foolish to argue that the immediate function of police photographs was somehow more ideological or positively instrumental than negatively instrumental. But in a more general, dispersed fashion, in serving to introduce the panoptic principle into daily life, photography welded the honorific and repressive functions together. Every portrait implicitly took its place within a social and moral hierarchy. The *private* moment of sentimental individuation, the look at the frozen gaze-of-the-loved-one, was shadowed by two other more *public* looks: a look up, at one's "betters," and a look down, at one's "inferiors." Especially in the United States, photography could sustain an imaginary mobility on this vertical scale, thus provoking both ambition and fear, and interpellating, in class terms, a characteristically "petit-bourgeois" subject.

We can speak then of a generalized, inclusive *archive*, a *shadow archive* that encompasses an entire social terrain while positioning individuals within that terrain.[14] This archive contains subordinate, territorialized archives: archives whose semantic interdependence is normally obscured by the "coherence" and "mutual exclusivity" of the social groups registered within each. The general, all-inclusive archive necessarily contains both the traces of the visible bodies of heroes, leaders, moral exemplars, celebrities, and those of the poor, the diseased, the insane, the criminal, the nonwhite, the female, and all other embodiments of the unworthy. The clearest indication of the essential unity of this archive of images of the body lies in the fact that by the mid-nineteenth century a single hermeneutic paradigm had gained widespread prestige. This paradigm had

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Origins of the Penitentiary System, trans. Glynis Cousin, London, Macmillan, 1981; David Rothman, *The Discovery of the Asylum: Social Order and Disorder in the New Republic*, Boston, Little, Brown, 1971; and Michael Ignatieff, *A Just Measure of Pain: The Penitentiary in the Industrial Revolution, 1750–1850*, London, Macmillan, 1978.)

Certainly prison architecture and the spatial positioning of prisons in the larger environment remain matters of crucial importance. Especially in the United States, where economic crisis and Reaganite judicial tough-mindedness have lead to record prison populations, these are paramount issues of what is euphemistically called "public policy." In fact, the current wave of ambitious prison building has led to at least one instance of (postmodern?) return to the model of the Panopticon. The new Montgomery County Detention Center in Virginia was designed by prison architect James Kessler according to a "new" principle of "podular/direct supervision." In this scaled-down, rumpus-room version of the Panopticon, inmates can see into the central control room from which they are continually observed (see Benjamin Forgey, "Answering the Jail Question," *The Washington Post*, August 2, 1986, pp. G1–G2).

14. For earlier arguments on the archival paradigm in photography, see Rosalind Krauss, "Photography's Discursive Spaces: Landscape/View," *The Art Journal*, vol. 42, no. 4 (Winter 1982), pp. 311–319; and Allan Sekula, "Photography between Labour and Capital," in B. Buchloh and R. Wilkie, eds., *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures: Photographs by Leslie Shedden*, Halifax, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1983, pp. 193–268.

two tightly entwined branches, physiognomy and phrenology. Both shared the belief that the surface of the body, and especially the face and head, bore the outward signs of inner character.

Accordingly, in reviving and to some extent systematizing physiognomy in the late 1770s, Johann Caspar Lavater argued that the "original language of Nature, written on the face of Man" could be deciphered by a rigorous physiognomic *science.*[15] Physiognomy analytically isolated the profile of the head and the various anatomic features of the head and face, assigning a characterological significance to each element: forehead, eyes, ears, nose, chin, etc. Individual character was judged through the loose concatenation of these readings. In both its analytic and synthetic stages, this interpretive process required that distinctive individual features be read in conformity to type. Phrenology, which emerged in the first decade of the nineteenth century in the researches of the Viennese physician Franz Josef Gall, sought to discern correspondences between the topography of the skull and what were thought to be specific localized mental faculties seated within the brain. This was a crude forerunner of more modern neurological attempts to map out localized cerebral functions.

In general, physiognomy, and more specifically phrenology, linked an everyday nonspecialist empiricism with increasingly authoritative attempts to medicalize the study of the mind. The ambitious effort to construct a materialist science of the self led to the dissection of brains, including those of prominent phrenologists, and to the accumulation of vast collections of skulls. Eventually this effort would lead to a volumetrics of the skull, termed craniometry. But presumably any observant reader of one of the numerous handbooks and manuals of phrenology could master the interpretive codes. The humble origins of phrenological research were described by Gall in these terms:

> I assembled a large number of persons at my house, drawn from the lowest classes and engaged in various occupations, such as fiacre driver, street porter and so on. I gained their confidence and induced them to speak frankly by giving them money and having wine and beer distributed to them. When I saw that they were favorably disposed, I urged them to tell me everything they knew about one another, both their good and bad qualities, and I carefully examined their heads. This was the origin of the craniological chart that was seized upon so avidly by the public; even artists took it over and distributed a large number among the public in the form of masks of all kinds.[16]

15. John [*sic*] Caspar Lavater, Preface to *Essays on Physiognomy Designed to Promote the Knowledge and the Love of Mankind*, vol. 1, trans. Henry Hunter, London, J. Murray, 1792, n.p.
16. Quoted in Louis Chevalier, *Labouring Classes and Dangerous Classes in Paris during the First Half of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Frank Jellineck, London, Routledge, 1973, p. 411.

The broad appeal and influence of these practices on literary and artistic realism, and on the general culture of the mid-nineteenth-century city is well known.[17] And we understand the culture of the photographic portrait only dimly if we fail to recognize the enormous prestige and popularity of a general physiognomic paradigm in the 1840s and 1850s. Especially in the United States, the proliferation of photography and that of phrenology were quite coincident.

Since physiognomy and phrenology were comparative, taxonomic disciplines, they sought to encompass an entire range of human diversity. In this respect, these disciplines were instrumental in constructing the very archive they claimed to interpret. Virtually every manual deployed an array of individual cases and types along a loose set of "moral, intellectual, and animal" continua.[18] Thus zones of genius, virtue, and strength were charted only in relation to zones of idiocy, vice, and weakness. The boundaries between these zones were vaguely demarcated; thus it was possible to speak, for example, of "moral idiocy." Generally, in this pre-evolutionary system of difference, the lower zones shaded off into varieties of animality and pathology.

In the almost exclusive emphasis on the head and face we can discover the idealist secret lurking at the heart of these putatively materialist sciences. These were discourses *of* the head *for* the head. Whatever the tendency of physiognomic or phrenologic thought—whether fatalistic or therapeutic in relation to the inexorable logic of the body's signs, whether uncompromisingly materialist in tone or vaguely spiritualist in relation to certain zones of the organic, whether republican or elitist in pedagogical stance—these disciplines would serve to legitimate on organic grounds the dominion of intellectual over manual labor. Thus physiognomy and phrenology contributed to the ideological hegemony of a capitalism that increasingly relied upon a hierarchical division of labor, a capitalism that applauded its own progress as the outcome of individual cleverness and cunning.

In claiming to provide a means for distinguishing the stigmata of vice from the shining marks of virtue, physiognomy and phrenology offered an essential hermeneutic service to a world of fleeting and often anonymous market transactions. Here was a method for quickly assessing the character of strangers in the dangerous and congested spaces of the nineteenth-century city. Here was a gauge of the intentions and capabilities of the other. In the United States in the 1840s, newspaper advertisements for jobs frequently requested

17. In addition to Chevalier's book just cited, see Walter Benjamin's 1938 essay, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," in *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, trans. Harry Zohn, London, New Left Books, 1973, pp. 35–66. See also Judith Wechsler, *A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in Nineteenth Century Paris*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982. For specific histories of phrenology, see David de Guistino, *Conquest of Mind: Phrenology and Victorian Social Thought*, London, Croom Helm, 1975; and John Davies, *Phrenology: Fad and Science*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1955.

18. Lavater, vol. 1, p. 13.

that applicants submit a phrenological analysis.[19] Thus phrenology delivered the moral and intellectual "facts" that are today delivered in more "refined" and abstract form by psychometricians and polygraph experts.

Perhaps it is no surprise, then, that photography and phrenology should have met formally in 1846 in a book on "criminal jurisprudence." Here was an opportunity to lend a new organic facticity to the already established medical and psychiatric genre of the case study.[20] A phrenologically inclined American penal reformer and matron of the women's prison at Sing Sing, Eliza Farnham commissioned Mathew Brady to make a series of portraits of inmates at two New York prisons. Engravings based on these photographs were appended to Farnham's new edition, entitled *Rationale of Crime*, of a previously unillustrated English work by Marmaduke Sampson. Sampson regarded criminal behavior as a form of "moral insanity." Both he and Farnham subscribed to a variant of phrenology that argued for the possibility of therapeutic modification or enhancement of organically predetermined characteristics. Presumably, good organs could be made to triumph over bad. Farnham's contribution is distinctive for its unabashed nonspecialist appeal. She sought to speak to "the popular mind of Republican America," in presenting an argument for the abolition of the death penalty and the establishment of a therapeutic system of treatment.[21] Her contribution to the book consisted of a polemical introduction, extensive notes, and several appendices, including the illustrated case studies. Farnham was assisted in her selection of case-study subjects by the prominent New York publisher-entrepreneur of phrenology, Lorenzo Fowler, who clearly lent further authority to the sample.

Ten adult prisoners are pictured, evenly divided between men and women. Three are identified as Negro, one as Irish, one as German; one woman is identified as a "Jewess of German birth," another as a "half-breed Indian and negro." The remaining three inmates are presumably Anglo-Saxon, but are not identified as such. A series of eight pictures of child inmates is not annotated in racial or ethnic terms, although one child is presumably black. Although Farnham professed a variant of phrenology that was not overtly racist—unlike other pre-Darwinian head analysts who sought conclusive proof of the "separate creation" of the non-Caucasian races—this differential marking of race and ethnicity according to age is significant in other ways. After all, Farnham's work appeared in an American context—characterized by slavery and the massive immigration of Irish peasants—that was profoundly stratified

19. Davies, p. 38.
20. On the history of the illustrated psychiatric case study, see Sander Gilman, *Seeing the Insane*, New York, J. Wiley, 1982.
21. Eliza Farnham, "Introductory Preface" to Marmaduke Sampson, *Rationale of Crime and its Appropriate Treatment, Being a Treatise on Criminal Jurisprudence Considered in Relation to Cerebral Organization*, New York, Appleton, 1846, p. xiii.

along these lines. By marking children less in racial and ethnic terms, Farnham avoided stigmatizing them. Thus children in general were presented as more malleable figures than adults. Children were also presented as less weighted down by criminal biographies or by the habitual exercise of their worst faculties. Despite the fact that some of these boys were explicitly described as incorrigibles, children provided Farnham with a general figure of moral renewal. Because their potential for "respectability" was greater than that of the adult offenders, they were presented as miniature versions of their potential adult-male-respectable-Anglo-Saxon-proletarian selves. Farnham, Fowler, and Brady can be seen as significant inventors of that privileged figure of social reform discourse: the figure of the child rescued by a paternalistic medicosocial science.[22]

Farnham's concerns touch on two of the central issues of nineteenth-century penal discourse: the practical drawing of distinctions between incorrigible and pliant criminals, and the disciplined conversion of the reformable into "useful" proletarians (or at least into useful informers). Thus even though she credited several inmates with "well developed" intellects, and despite the fact that her detractors accused her of Fourierism, her reformist vision had a definite ceiling. This limit was defined quite explicitly by the conclusion of her study. There she underscored the baseness shared by all her criminal subjects by illustrating three "heads of persons possessing superior intellect" (two of which, both male, were treated as classical busts). Her readers were asked to note the "striking contrast."[23]

I emphasize this point because it is emblematic of the manner in which the criminal archive came into existence. That is, it was only on the basis of mutual comparison, on the basis of the tentative construction of a larger, "universal" archive, that zones of deviance and respectability could be clearly demarcated. In this instance of the first sustained application of photography to the task of phrenological analysis, it seems clear that the comparative description of the criminal body came first. The book ends with a self-congratulatory mirror held up to the middle-class reader. It is striking that the pictorial labor behind Farnham's criminal sample was that of Brady, who devoted virtually his entire antebellum career to the construction of a massive honorific archive of photographs of "illustrious," celebrated, and would-be celebrated American figures.[24]

22. For a reading of the emergence of this system in France, see Jacques Donzelot, *The Policing of Families*, trans. Robert Hurley, New York, Pantheon, 1979. Donzelot seems to place inordinate blame on women for the emergence of a "tutelary" mode of social regulation. For a Marxist-feminist critique of Donzelot, see Michèle Barrett and Mary McIntosh, *The Anti-Social Family*, London, New Left Books, 1982.

23. Sampson, p. 175.

24. See Madeline Stern, "Mathew B. Brady and the *Rationale of Crime*," *The Quarterly Journal of the Library of Congress*, vol. 31, no. 3 (July 1974), pp. 128–135; and Alan Trachtenberg, "Brady's Portraits," *The Yale Review*, vol. 73, no. 2 (Winter 1984), pp. 230–253.

Thus far I have described a number of early attempts, by turns comic, speculative, and practical, to bring the camera to bear upon the body of the criminal. I have also argued, following the general line of investigation charted in the later works of Foucault, that the position assigned the criminal body was a relative one, that the invention of the modern criminal cannot be dissociated from the construction of a law-abiding body—a body that was either bourgeois or subject to the dominion of the bourgeoisie. The law-abiding body recognized its threatening other in the criminal body, recognized its own acquisitive and aggressive impulses unchecked, and sought to reassure itself in two contradictory ways. The first was the invention of an exceptional criminal who was indistinguishable from the bourgeois, save for a conspicuous lack of moral inhibition: herein lay the figure of the criminal genius.[25] The second was the in-

25. On this point see Michel Foucault, "Prison Talk," in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972–1977*, ed. Colin Gordon, New York, Pantheon, 1980, p. 46.

B. F.

B. F. is one of the inmates of the Long Island Farms. He is partially idiotic, and the very imperfect development of the superior portion of the brain, with the small size of the whole, clearly indicates the character of his mental capacities. It affords a striking contrast to the last drawing, R. A., and is in harmony with the actual difference between the minds of the two individuals. B. F. is vicious, cruel, and apparently incapable of any elevated or humane sentiments

HEADS OF PERSONS POSSESSING SUPERIOR INTELLECT.

The following drawings are introduced for the purpose of showing the striking contrast between the cerebral developments of such persons as we have been describing and those who are endowed with superior powers of intellect and sentiment.

The two faces to [illegible] were [illegible] of gentle and distinguished [illegible]

From Eliza Farnham, Appendix to Marmaduke Sampson, Rationale of Crime, *1846.*

Recherche signalétique dans le meuble miniature des grandes armoires de classification.

From Alphonse Bertillon, Service d'identification. Exposition universelle de Chicago, *1893. (Album collection National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.)*

vention of a criminal who was organically distinct from the bourgeois: a *biotype*. The science of criminology emerged from this latter operation.

A physiognomic code of visual interpretation of the body's signs—specifically the signs of the head—and a technique of mechanized visual representation intersected in the 1840s. This unified system of representation and interpretation promised a vast taxonomic ordering of images of the body. This was an archival promise. Its realization would seem to be grounded primarily in the technical refinement of strictly optical means. This turns out not to be the case.

I am especially concerned that exaggerated claims not be made for the powers of optical realism, whether in a celebratory or critical vein. One danger lies in constructing an overly monolithic or unitary model of nineteenth-century realist discourse. Within the rather limited and usually ignored field of instrumental scientific and technical realism, we discover a house divided. Nowhere was this division more pronounced than in the pursuit of the criminal body. If we examine the manner in which photography was made useful by the late-nineteenth-century police, we find plentiful evidence of a crisis of faith in optical empiricism. In short, we need to describe the emergence of a truth-apparatus that cannot be adequately reduced to the optical model provided by the camera. The camera is integrated into a larger ensemble: a bureaucratic-clerical-statistical system of "intelligence." This system can be described as a sophisticated form of the archive. The central artifact of this system is not the camera but the filing cabinet.

II.

The institution of the photographic archive received its most thorough early articulation in precise conjunction with an increasingly professionalized and technological mode of police work and an emerging social science of criminology. This occurred in the 1880s and 1890s. Why was the model of the archive of such import for these linked disciplines?

In structural terms, the archive is both an abstract paradigmatic entity and a concrete institution. In both senses, the archive is a vast substitution set, providing for a relation of general equivalence between images. This image of the archive as an encyclopedic repository of exchangeable images was articulated most profoundly in the late 1850s by the American physician and essayist Oliver Wendell Holmes when he compared photographs to paper currency.[26] The capacity of the archive to reduce all possible sights to a single code of equivalence was grounded in the metrical accuracy of the camera. Here was a medium from which exact mathematical data could be extracted, or as the physicist François Arago put it in 1839, a medium "in which objects preserve mathematically their forms."[27] For nineteenth-century positivists, photography doubly fulfilled the Enlightenment dream of a universal language: the universal mimetic language of the camera yielded up a higher, more cerebral truth, a truth that could be uttered in the universal abstract language of mathematics. For this reason, photography could be accommodated to a Galilean vision of the world as a book "written in the language of mathematics." Photography promised more than a wealth of detail; it promised to reduce nature to its geometrical essence. Presumably then, the archive could provide a standard physiognomic gauge of the criminal, could assign each criminal body a relative and quantitative position within a larger ensemble.

This archival promise was frustrated, however, both by the messy contingency of the photograph and by the sheer quantity of images. The photographic archive's components are not conventional lexical units, but rather are subject to the circumstantial character of all that is photographable. Thus it is absurd to imagine a dictionary of photographs, unless one is willing to disregard the specificity of individual images in favor of some model of typicality, such as that underlying the iconography of Vesalian anatomy or of most of the plates accompanying the *Encyclopédie* of Diderot and d'Alembert. Clearly, one way of "taming" photography is by means of this transformation of the circumstantial and idiosyncratic into the typical and emblematic. This is usually achieved by stylistic or interpretive fiat, or by a sampling of the archive's offerings for a

26. Oliver Wendell Holmes, "The Stereoscope and the Stereograph," *Atlantic Monthly*, vol. 3, no. 20 (June 1859), p. 748. For a more extensive treatment of this issue, see my 1981 essay, "The Traffic in Photographs," in *Photography against the Grain*, pp. 96–101.
27. François Arago, letter to Duchâtel, in Gernsheim, *Daguerre*, p. 91.

"representative" instance. Another way is to invent a machine, or rather a clerical apparatus, a filing system, which allows the operator/researcher/editor to retrieve the individual instance from the huge quantity of images contained within the archive. Here the photograph is not regarded as necessarily typical or emblematic of anything, but only as a particular image which has been isolated for purposes of inspection. These two semantic paths are so fundamental to the culture of photographic realism that their very existence is usually ignored.

The difference between these two models of photographic meaning are played out in two different approaches to the photographic representation of the criminal body: the "realist" approach, and by realism here I mean that venerable (medieval) philosophical realism that insists upon the truth of general propositions, on the reality of species and types, and the equally venerable "nominalist" approach, which denies the reality of generic categories as anything other than mental constructs. The first approach can be seen as overtly theoretical and "scientific" in its aims, if more covertly practical. The other can be seen as overtly practical and "technical" in its aims, if only covertly theoretical. Thus the would-be scientists of crime sought a knowledge and mastery of an elusive "criminal type." And the "technicians" of crime sought knowledge and mastery of individual criminals. Herein lies a terminological distinction, and a division of labor, between "criminology" and "criminalistics." Criminology hunted "the" criminal body. Criminalistics hunted "this" or "that" criminal body.

Contrary to the commonplace understanding of the "mug shot" as the very exemplar of a powerful, artless, and wholly denotative visual empiricism, these early instrumental uses of photographic realism were systematized on the basis of an acute recognition of the *inadequacies* and limitations of ordinary visual empiricism. Thus two systems of description of the criminal body were deployed in the 1880s; both sought to ground photographic evidence in more abstract *statistical* methods. This merger of optics and statistics was fundamental to a broader integration of the discourses of visual representation and those of the social sciences in the nineteenth century. Despite a common theoretical source, the intersection of photography and statistics led to strikingly different results in the work of two different men: Alphonse Bertillon and Francis Galton.

The Paris police official Alphonse Bertillon invented the first effective modern system of *criminal identification*. His was a bipartite system, positioning a "microscopic" individual record within a "macroscopic" aggregate. First, he combined photographic portraiture, anthropometric description, and highly standardized and abbreviated written notes on a single *fiche*, or card. Second, he organized these cards within a comprehensive, statistically based filing system.

The English statistician and founder of eugenics, Francis Galton, invented a method of composite portraiture. Galton operated on the periphery of criminology. Nonetheless, his interest in heredity and racial "betterment" led

him to join in the search for a biologically determined "criminal type." Through one of his several applications of composite portraiture, Galton attempted to construct a *purely optical* apparition of the criminal type. This photographic impression of an abstract, statistically defined, and empirically nonexistent criminal face was both the most bizarre and the most sophisticated of many concurrent attempts to marshall photographic evidence in the search for the essence of crime.

The projects of Bertillon and Galton constitute two methodological poles of the positivist attempts to define and regulate social deviance. Bertillon sought to individuate. His aims were practical and operational, a response to the demands of urban police work and the politics of fragmented class struggle during the Third Republic. Galton sought to visualize the generic evidence of hereditarian laws. His aims were theoretical, the result of eclectic but ultimately single-minded curiosities of one of the last Victorian gentleman-amateur scientists. Nonetheless, Bertillon's work had its own theoretical context and implications, just as Galton's grimly playful research realized its practical implications in the ideological and political program of the international eugenics movement. Both men were committed to technologies of demographic regulation. Bertillon's system of criminal identification was integral to the efforts to quarantine permanently a class of habitual or professional criminals. Galton sought to intervene in human reproduction by means of public policy, encouraging the propagation of the "fit," and discouraging or preventing outright that of the "unfit."

The idealist proclivities, territorialism, and status consciousness of intellectual history have prevented us from recognizing Bertillon and Galton's shared ground. While Galton has been considered a proper, if somewhat eccentric, object of the history of science, Bertillon remains an ignored mechanic and clerk, commemorated mostly by anecdotal historians of the police.

In order to explore this terrain shared by a police clerk and gentleman statistician, I need to introduce a third figure. Both Bertillon's and Galton's projects were grounded in the emergence and codification of *social statistics* in the 1830s and 1840s. Both relied upon the central conceptual category of social statistics: the notion of the "average man" (*l'homme moyen*). This concept was invented (I will argue shortly that it was actually reinvented) by the Belgian astronomer and statistician Adolphe Quetelet. Although less well remembered than Auguste Comte, Quetelet is the most significant other early architect of sociology. Certainly he laid the foundations of the quantitative paradigm in the social sciences. By seeking statistical regularities in rates of birth, death, and crime, Quetelet hoped to realize the Enlightenment philosopher Condorcet's proposal for a "social mathematics," a mathematically exact science that would discover the fundamental laws of social phenomena. Quetelet helped to establish some of the first actuarial tables used in Belgium, and to found in 1853 an international society for the promotion of statistical methods. As the philoso-

pher of science Ian Hacking has suggested, the rise of social statistics in the mid-nineteenth century was crucial to the replacement of strictly mechanistic theories of causality by a more probabilistic paradigm. Quetelet was a determinist, but he invented a determinism based on iron laws of chance. This emergent paradigm would lead eventually to indeterminism.[28]

Who, or what, was the average man? A less flippant query would be, *how* was the average man? Quetelet introduced this composite character in his 1835 treatise *Sur l'homme.* Quetelet argued that large aggregates of social data revealed a regularity of occurrence that could only be taken as evidence of determinate social laws. This regularity had political and moral as well as epistemological implications:

> The greater the number of individuals observed, the more do individual peculiarities, whether physical or moral, become effaced, and leave in a prominent point of view the general facts, by virtue of which society exists and is preserved.[29]

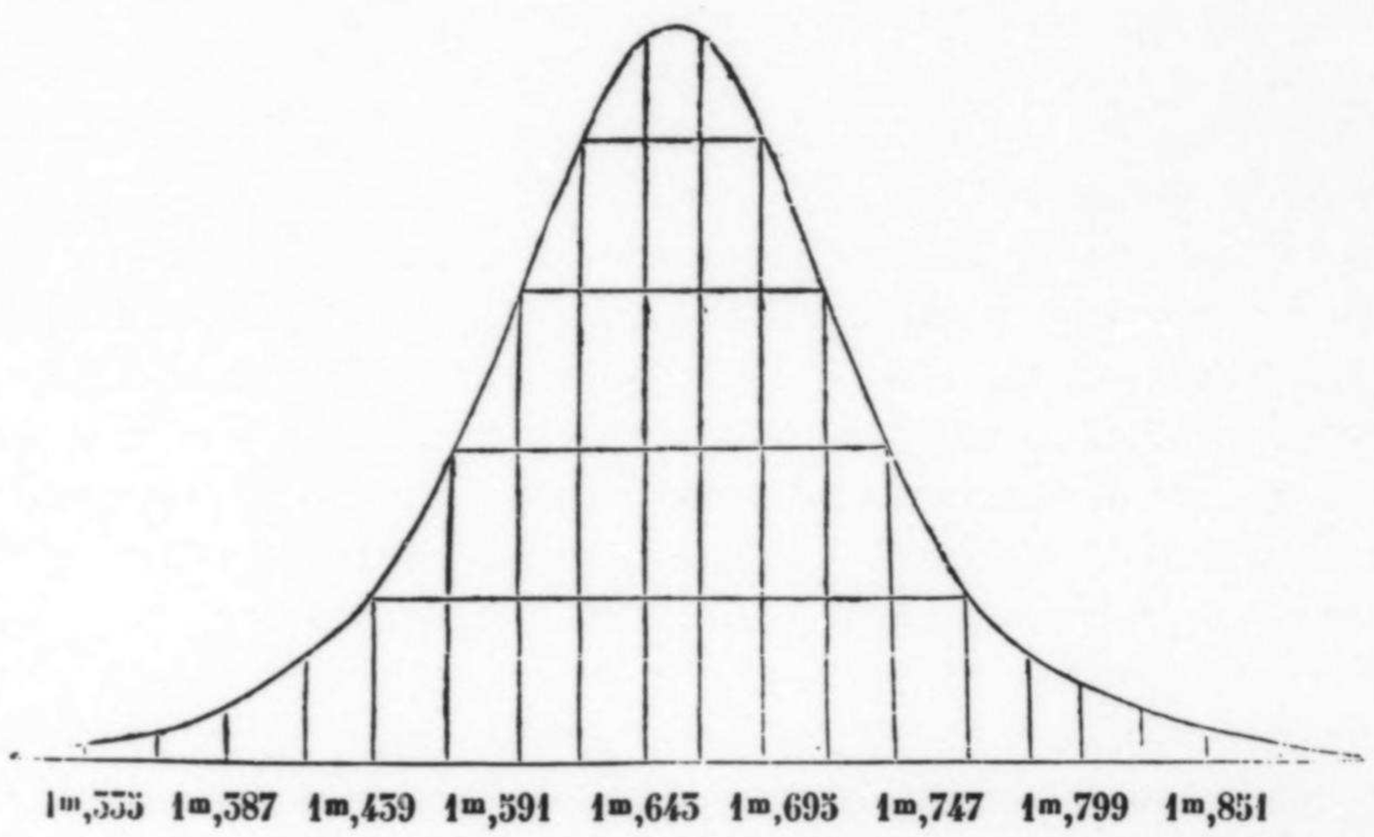
Quetelet sought to move from the mathematicization of individual bodies to that of society in general. In *Sur l'homme* he charted various quantitative biographies of the productive and reproductive powers of the average man and woman. For example, he calculated the fluctuation of fecundity with respect to female age. Using data from dynamometer studies, he charted the average muscular power of men and women of different ages. At the level of the social aggregate, life history read as a graphic curve. (Here was prefiguration, in extreme form, of Zola's naturalism: a subliterary, quantitative narrative of the generalized social organism.)

Just as Quetelet's early statistical contributions to the life insurance industry can be seen as crucial to the regularization of that organized form of gambling known as finance capital, so also his charting of the waxing and waning of human energies can be seen as an attempt to conceptualize that Hercules of industrial capitalism, termed by Marx the "average worker," the abstract embodiment of labor power in the aggregate.[30] And outside the sphere of waged work, Quetelet invented but did not name the figure of the average mother, crucial to the new demographic sciences which sought nervously to chart the relative numeric strengths of class against class and nation against nation.

For Quetelet the most emphatic demonstration of the regularity of social

28. See Ian Hacking, "How Should We Do the History of Statistics?" *Ideology and Consciousness*, no. 8 (Spring 1981), pp. 15–26; and "Biopower and the Avalanche of Printed Numbers," *Humanities and Society*, vol. 5, nos. 3–4 (Summer and Fall 1982), pp. 279–295.
29. Adolphe Quetelet, *A Treatise on Man and the Development of His Faculties*, trans. R. Knox, Edinburgh, Chambers, 1842, p. 6.
30. Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes, London, New Left Books, vol. 1, 1976, pp. 440–441.

phenomena was given by crime statistics. "Moral statistics" provided the linchpin for his construction of a "social physics" that would demolish the prestige of moral paradigms grounded in free will. The criminal was no more than an agent of determining social forces. Furthermore, crime statistics provided the synecdochic basis for a broader description of the social field. As Louis Chevalier has argued, Quetelet inaugurated a "quantitative description which took criminal statistics as the starting point for a description of urban living as a whole."[31] Chevalier has argued further that criminal statistics contributed thus to a pervasive bourgeois conception of the essentially *pathological* character of metropolitan life, especially in the Paris of the July Monarchy. Quetelet's terminological



From Adolphe Quetelet, Physique sociale, ou Essai sur le développement des facultés de l'homme, *1869.*

contribution to this medicalization of the social field is evident in his reference to the statistical study of crime as a form of "moral anatomy."

Quetelet refined his notion of the "average man" with conceptual tools borrowed from astronomy and probability theory. He observed that large aggregates of social data—notably anthropometric data—fell into a pattern corresponding to the bell-shaped curve derived by Gauss in 1809 in an attempt to determine accurate astronomical measurements from the distribution of random errors around a central mean. Quetelet came to regard this symmetrical bino-

31. Chevalier, p. 10.

mial curve as the mathematical expression of fundamental social law. While he admitted that the average man was a statistical fiction, this fiction lived within the abstract configuration of the binomial distribution. In an extraordinary metaphoric conflation of individual difference with mathematical error, Quetelet defined the central portion of the curve, that large number of measurements clustered around the mean, as a zone of normality. Divergent measurements tended toward darker regions of monstrosity and biosocial pathology.[32]

Thus conceived, the "average man" constituted an ideal, not only of social health, but of social stability and of beauty. In interesting metaphors, revealing both the astronomical sources and aesthetico-political ambitions inherent in Quetelet's "social physics," he defined the social norm as a "center of gravity," and the average man as "the type of all which is beautiful—of all which is good."[33] Crime constituted a "perturbing force," acting to throw the delicate balance of this implicitly republican social mechanism into disarray. Although Quetelet was constructing a quantitative model of civil society and only indirectly describing the contours of an ideal commonwealth, his model of a gravitational social order bears striking similarity to Hobbes's Leviathan.[34]

Like Hobbes, Quetelet began with atomized individual bodies and returned to the image of the body in describing the social aggregate. Quetelet worked, however, in a climate of physiognomic and phrenologic enthusiasm, and indeed early social statistics can be regarded as a variant of physiognomy writ large. For example, Quetelet accepted, despite his republicanism, the late-eighteenth-century notion of the *cranial angle*, which, as George Mosse has argued, emerges from the appropriation by preevolutionary Enlightenment anthropology of the classicist idealism of Winckelmann.[35] Based in part on the art-historical evidence of noble Grecian foreheads, this racist geometrical fiction defined a descending hierarchy of head types, with presumably upright Caucasian brows approaching this lost ideal more closely than did the presumably apelike brows of Africans. For his part, Quetelet was less interested in a broadly racist physical anthropology than in detecting within European society patterns of bodily evidence of deviation from "normality." It is understandable that he would be drawn to those variants of physiognomic thought which sought to systematize the body's signs in terms of a quantifying geometrical

32. Adolphe Quetelet, *Lettres sur la théorie des probabilités*, Brussels, Académie Royale, 1846. (*Letters on the Theory of Probability*, trans. O. G. Downes, London, Layton, 1849). See also Georges Canguilhem, *On the Normal and the Pathological*, trans. Carolyn Fawcett, Boston, Reidel, 1978, pp. 86–104.
33. Quetelet, *Treatise on Man*, p. 100.
34. See note 8. Of course, Quetelet's extreme determinist view of the social field was diametrically opposed to the contractual model of human relations advanced by Hobbes.
35. See George Mosse, *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism*, New York, Fertig, 1978, pp. 17–34.

schema. From Quetelet on, biosocial statisticians became increasingly absorbed with *anthropometrical* researches, focusing both on the skeletal proportions of the body and upon the volume and configuration of the head.[36] The inherited idealist fascination with the upright forehead can be detected even in Quetelet's model of an ideal society: he argued that social progress would lead to a diminished number of defective and inferior cases, thus increasing the zone of normality. If we consider what this utopian projection meant in terms of the binomial curve, we have to imagine an increasingly peaked, erect configuration: a classical ideal to a fault.

Certainly physiognomy provided a discursive terrain upon which art and the emerging bio-social sciences met during the middle of the nineteenth century. Quetelet's explicitly stated enthusiasm for the model of artistic practice is understandable in this context, but the matter is more complicated. Despite the abstract character of his procedures, Quetelet possessed the aesthetic ambition to compare his project to Dürer's studies of human bodily proportion. The statistician argued that his "aim had been, not only to go once more through the task of Albert [*sic*] Dürer, but to execute it also on an extended scale."[37] Thus visual empiricism retained its prestige in the face of a new object—society—which could in no way be effectively or comprehensively visualized.[38]

36. See Adolphe Quetelet, *Anthropométrie, ou mesure des différents facultés de l'homme*, Brussels, Muquardt, 1871. Quetelet suffered from aphasia after 1855, and his later works tend to be repetitious and incoherent (see Frank H. Hankins, *Adolphe Quetelet as Statistician*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1908, pp. 31–32). On the intersection of anthropometry and race science, see Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, New York, Norton, 1981.

37. Quetelet, *Treatise on Man*, p. v.

38. Here are some ways in which Quetelet's position in relation to idealist aesthetic theory become very curious. The "average man" can be regarded as a bastard child of Kant. In the "Critique of Aesthetical Judgement" Kant describes the psychological basis of the construction of the empirically based "normal Idea" of human beauty, arguing that "the Imagination can, in all probability, actually though unconsciously let one image glide into another, and thus by the concurrence of several of the same kind come by an average, which serves as the common measure of all. Every one has seen a thousand full-grown men. Now if you wish to judge of the normal size, estimating it by means of comparison, the Imagination (as I think) allows a great number of images (perhaps the whole thousand) to fall on one another. If I am allowed here the analogy of optical presentation, it is the space where most of them are combined and inside the contour, where the place is illuminated with the most vivid colors, that the *average size* is cognizable; which, both in height and breadth, is equally far removed from the extreme bounds of the greatest and smallest stature. And this is the stature of a beautiful man" (Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. H. Bernard, London, Macmillan, 1914, pp. 87–88). This passage prefigures not only Quetelet but also—as we shall see—Galton. However, Kant was careful to respect differences between normal Ideas of beauty appropriate to different races. On an empirical level, he constructed no hierarchy. Furthermore, he distinguished between the empirically based normal Idea, and the "Ideal of beauty," which is constructed in conformity with a concept of morality. Quetelet can be accused of unwittingly collapsing Kant's distinction between the normal Idea and the Ideal, and thus fusing aesthetics and morality on a purely quantitative basis, preparing thus the ground for Galton's plan for the engineering of human reproduction.

Although Kant's more general proposal for a science of the human species based on the model of the natural sciences was known to Comte, Quetelet, "a stranger to all philosophical

By the end of the nineteenth century, this essentially *organismic* model of a *visible* social field was in crisis. The terms of Quetelet's honorific linkage of an emergent statistics to a venerable optical paradigm were explicitly reversed. The French sociologist Gabriel Tarde argued in 1883 that "a statistical bureau might be compared to an eye or ear," claiming further that "each of our senses gives us, in its own way and from its special point of view, the statistics of the external world. Their characteristic sensations are in a certain way their special graphical tables. Every sensation . . . is only a number."[39] Here the transition is made from the prestige of the visual and the organic to the prestige of institutionalized, bureaucratic abstraction.

Tarde was a central figure, not only in the demise of organismic models of society, but also in the development of a French school of criminological thought during the 1880s. Tarde was a magistrate during his early career, and by 1894 became the head of the Bureau of Statistics within the Department of Justice in Paris, which made him the abstract overseer of the quantitative ebbs and flows of a regulated criminality. His background in legal theory and practice led him to attempt a criticism and modification of Quetelet's extreme determinism, which had absolved the criminal of all responsibility. After all, classical legal theory was not about to abandon its ideological capacity to uphold the state's right to punish criminals for their deeds. In 1890, Tarde advanced a notion of "criminal responsibility" based upon the continuity of individual identity within a shared social milieu, a milieu of "social similarity." Tarde's psychological model of individuality assumed an essential internal nar-

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speculation," seems never to have read Kant (Joseph Lottin, *Quetelet, statisticien et sociologue*, Louvain, Institut supérieur de philosophie, 1912, p. 367).

Quetelet's persistent likening of his project to the work of the visual artist can certainly be taken as emblematic of the fusion of idealist aesthetics with Enlightenment theories of social perfection. More specifically, however, Quetelet's evocations of art history—which extended to the measurement of classical sculpture and to long chronological tables of artists who had dealt with problems of bodily proportion—can be seen as a legitimating maneuver to ward off accusations that his strict determinism obliterated the possibility of a human creativity based on the exercise of free will. (It was also an attempt to compare the average bodily types of "ancients" and "moderns.") Thus Quetelet colors his gray determinism with a self-justifying hint of romanticism. But this maneuver also converts the visual artist into a protoscientist, linking Quetelet to the emerging discourse of artistic realism. (See his *Anthropométrie*, pp. 61–169. In this work Quetelet constructed a visual diagram of the biographical course of an average body type from infancy to old age, based on anthropometrical data.)

39. Gabriel Tarde, "Archaeology and Statistics," in *The Laws of Imitation*, trans. Elsie Parsons, New York, Henry Holt, 1903, pp. 134–135 (this essay first appeared in the *Revue philosophique*, October 1883). In an extraordinary passage of the same essay Tarde compares the graphical curve for criminal recidivism with the "curve traced on [the] retina by the flight of [a] swallow," metaphorically linking within the same epistemological paradigm the work of Bertillon with that of the physiologist Etienne Jules Marey, chronophotographer of human and animal locomotion (*ibid.*, p. 133).

rative coherence of the self: "Identity is the permanence of the person, it is the personality looked at from the point of view of its duration."[40]

Tarde's rather nominalist approach to the philosophy of crime and punishment paralleled a more practical formulation by Alphonse Bertillon, director of the Identification Bureau of the Paris Prefecture of Police. In 1893, Bertillon offered the following introduction to his system, then in use for ten years, known variously as "Bertillonage" and the "signaletic notice":

> In prison practice the signaletic notice accompanies every reception and every delivery of a human individuality; this register guards the trace of the real, actual presence of the person sought by the administrative or judicial document. . . . [The] task is always the same: to preserve a sufficient record of a personality to be able to *identify* the present description with one which may be presented at some future time. From this point of view signalment is the best instrument for the *proof of recidivation*, which necessarily implies the *proof of identity*.[41]

In effect, then, Bertillon's police archive functioned as a complex biographical machine which produced presumably simple and unambiguous results. He sought to identify repeat offenders, that is, criminals who were liable to be considered "habitual" or "professional" in their deviant behavior. The concern with recidivism was of profound social importance in the 1880s. Bertillon, however, professed no theory of a criminal type, nor of the psychic continuities or discontinuities that might differentiate "responsible" criminals from "irresponsible" criminals. He was sensitive to the status hierarchy between his Identification Bureau and the more "theoretical" mission of the Bureau of Statistics. (Bertillon was the son of a prominent anthropometrician, Louis Adolphe Bertillon, and seems to have labored mightily to vindicate himself after an inauspicious start as a mere police clerk.) He was more a social engineer, an inventive clerk-technician, than a criminologist. He sought to ground police work in scientific principles, while recognizing that most police operatives were unfamiliar with consistent and rigorous empirical procedures. Part of his ambition was to accelerate the work of processing criminals and to employ effectively the labors of unskilled clerks. He resembles in many respects his American contemporary, Frederick Winslow Taylor, the inventor of scientific management, the first system of modern factory discipline. Bertillon can be seen, like Taylor, as a prophet of rationalization. Here is Bertillon describing the rapidity of his process: "Four pairs of police officers suffice, at Paris, for the measurement, every

40. Gabriel Tarde, *Penal Philosophy*, trans. Rapelje Howell, Boston, Little, Brown, 1912, p. 116.
41. Alphonse Bertillon, *Identification anthropométrique; instructions signalétiques*, Paris, Melun, 1893, p. xiii. I have modified the translation given in the American edition, *Signaletic Instructions*, trans. R. W. Mclaughry, Chicago, Werner, 1896.

From Alphonse Bertillon, Service d'identification. Exposition universelle de Chicago, *1893.*

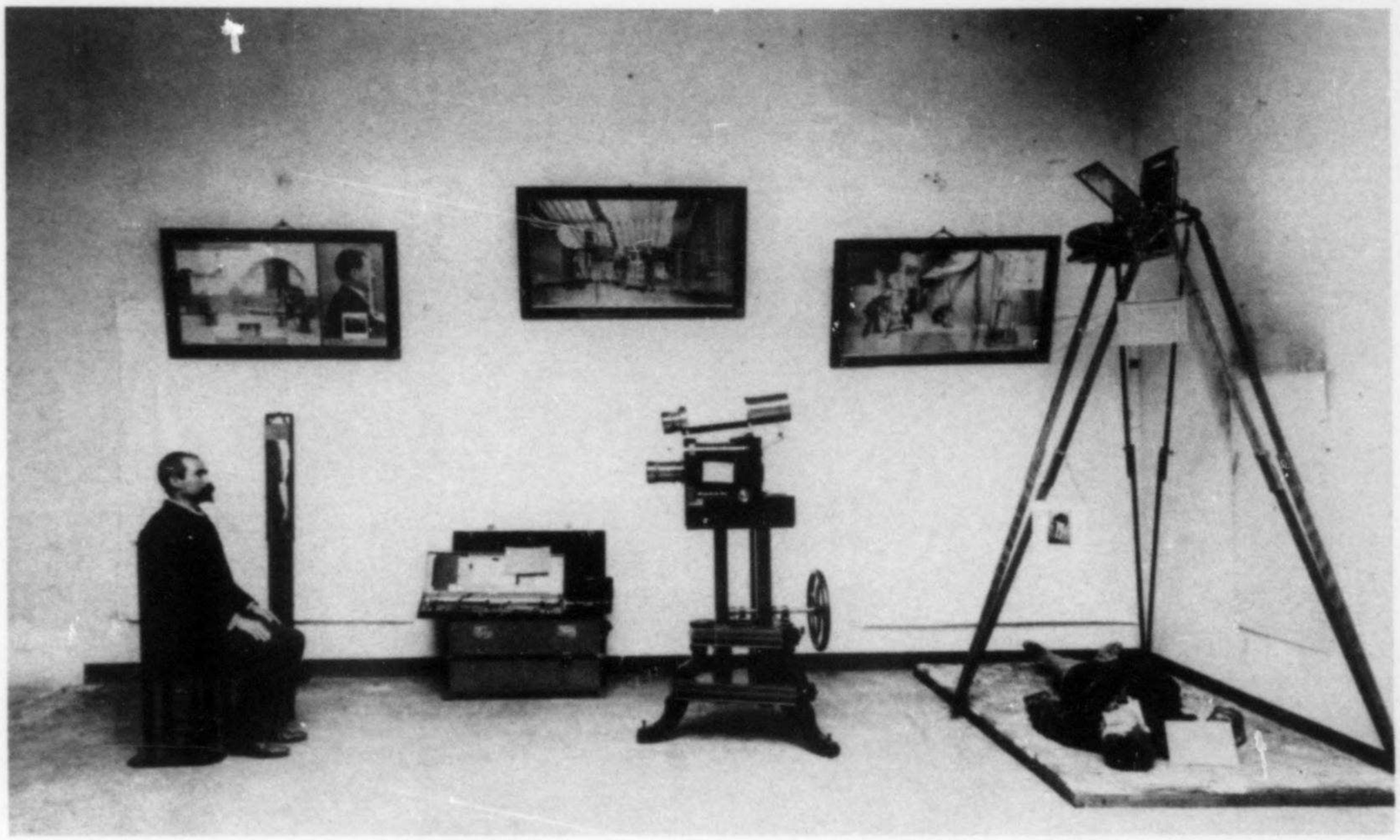
Classification cabinets, Paris Prefecture of Police.

morning between nine o'clock and noon, of from 100 to 150 men who were arrested the day before."[42] Ultimately, this was not fast enough, and therein lay a principal reason for the demise, some thirty years later, of the Bertillon system.

How did the Bertillon system work? The problems with prior attempts at criminal identification were many. The early promise of photography had faded in the face of a massive and chaotic archive of images. The problem of *classification* was paramount:

> The collection of criminal portraits has already attained a size so considerable that it has become physically impossible to discover among them the likeness of an individual who has assumed a false name. It goes for nothing that in the past ten years the Paris police have collected more than 100,000 photographs. Does the reader believe it practicable to compare successively each of these with each one of the 100 individuals who are arrested daily in Paris? When this was attempted in the case of a criminal particularly easy to identify, the search demanded more than a week of application, not to speak of the errors and oversights which a task so fatiguing to the eye could

42. Alphonse Bertillon, "The Bertillon System of Identification," *Forum*, vol. 11, no. 3 (May 1891), p. 335.



Display of apparatus, Chicago Exposition.

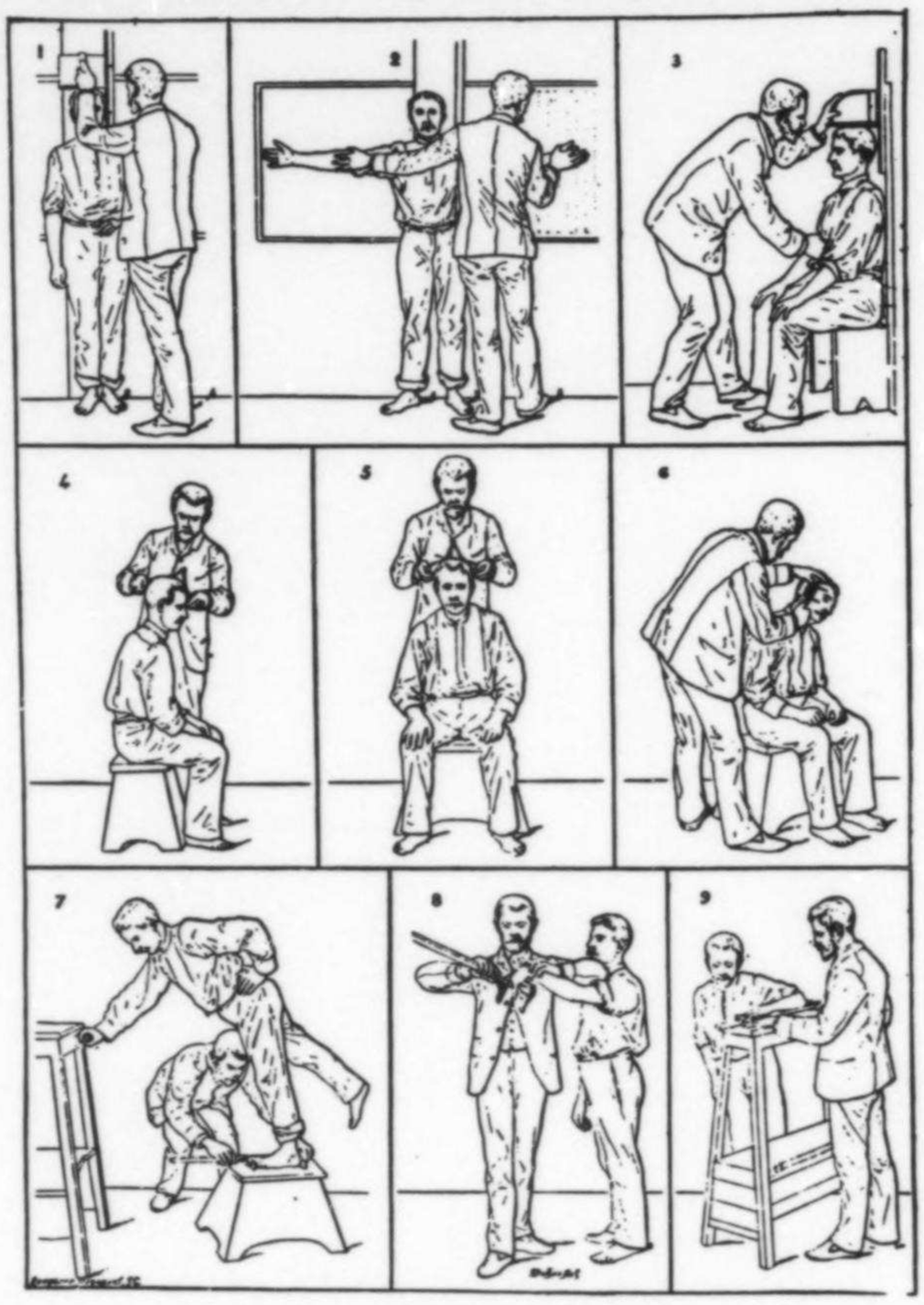
> not fail to occasion. There was a need for a method of elimination analogous to that in use in botany and zoology; that is to say, one based on the characteristic elements of individuality.[43]

Despite the last part of this remark, Bertillon sought not to relate individual to species, but to extract the individual from the species. Thus he invented a classifying scheme that was based less upon a taxonomic categorization of types than upon an ordering of individual cases within a segmented aggregate. He had failed miserably in an earlier attempt to classify police photographs according to the genre of offense, for obvious reasons.[44] Criminals may have constituted a "professional type," as Tarde argued, but they did not necessarily observe a narrow specialization in their work.

Bertillon sought to break the professional criminal's mastery of disguises, false identities, multiple biographies, and alibis. He did this by yoking anthropometrics, the optical precision of the camera, a refined physiognomic vocabulary, and statistics.

First Bertillon calculated, without a very sophisticated grasp of the calculus of probabilities, that the chance that two individuals might share the same series of eleven bodily measurements ran on the order of one in four

43. *Ibid.*, p. 331.
44. Alphonse Bertillon, *L'identité des récidivistes et la loi de relégation*, Paris, Masson, 1883, p. 11.



1. Taille. — 2. Envergure. — 3. Buste. —
4. Longueur de la tête. — 5. Largeur de la tête. — 6. Oreille droite. —
7. Pied gauche. — 8. Médius gauche. — 9. Coudée gauche.

Frontispiece (left) and figures (right) from Alphonse Bertillon, Identification anthropométrique, *1893.*

million.[45] He regarded these eleven measurements as constant in any adult body. His signaletic notice linked this "anthropometrical signalment," recorded as a numerical series, with a shorthand verbal description of distinguishing marks, and a pair of photographic portraits, both frontal and profile views.

Bertillon's second problem was the organization of individual cards in a comprehensive system from which records could be retrieved in short order. To this end, Bertillon enlisted the prodigious rationalizing energies of Quetelet's "average man." By organizing his measurements into successive subdivisions, each based on a tripartite separation of below-average, average, and above-average figures, Bertillon was able to file 100,000 records into a grid of file drawers, with the smallest subset within any one drawer consisting of approximately a dozen identification cards. Having thus separately processed 100,000

45. Bertillon, *Identification anthropométrique*, pp. xvii–xviii.

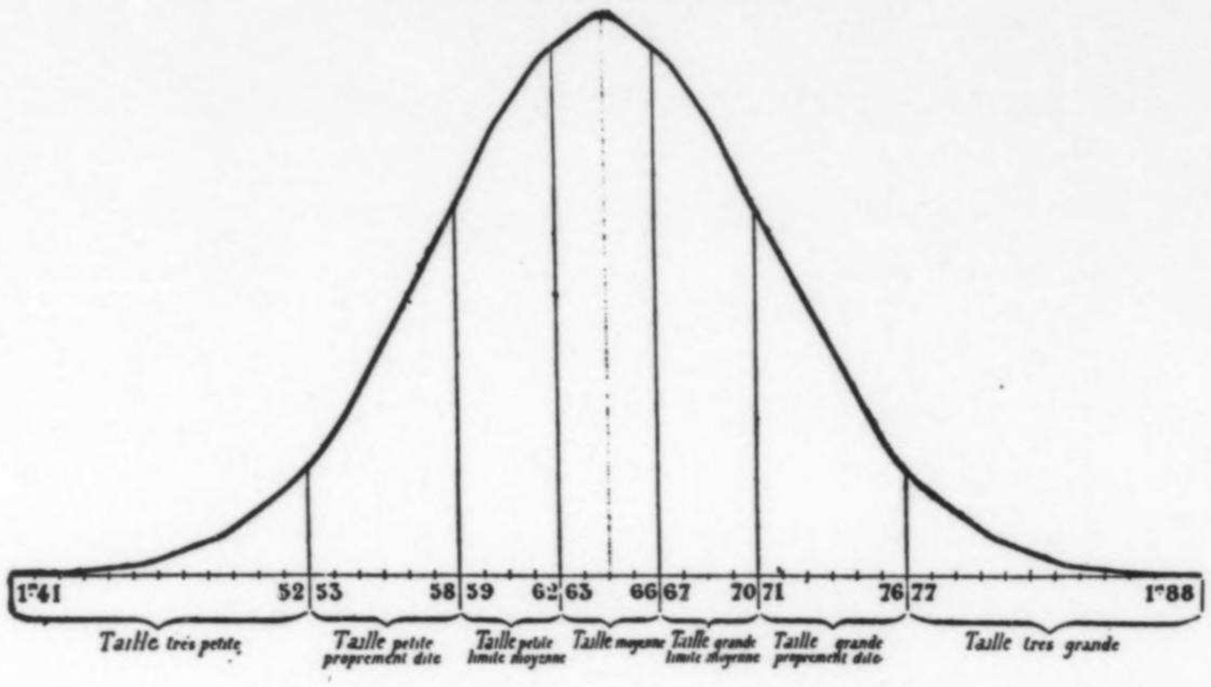


Fig. 4. — Courbe binomiale de la taille sur laquelle on a séparé par des verticales l'emplacement des sept catégories de taille.

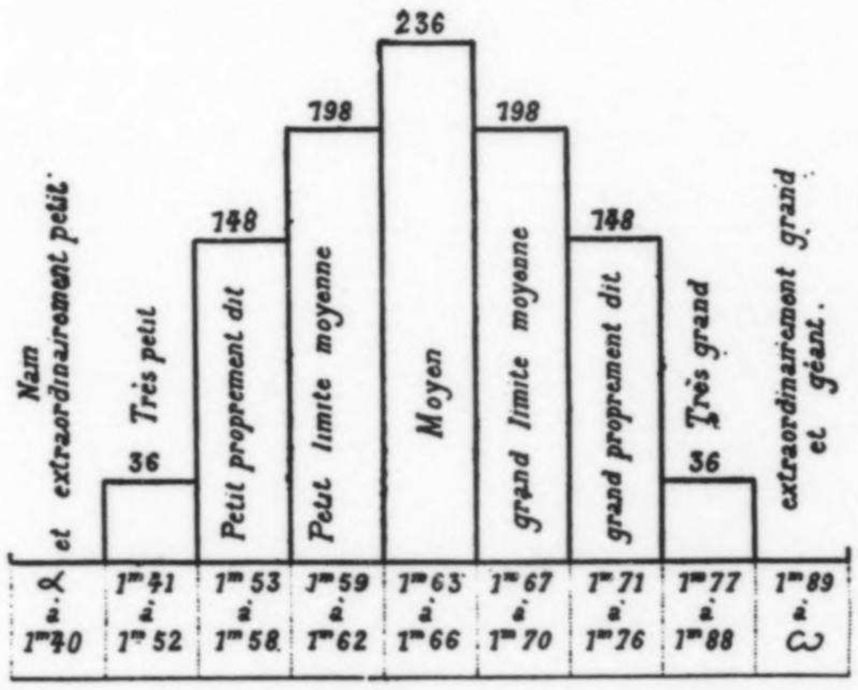


Fig. 5. — Diagramme de la taille indiquant par la hauteur proportionnelle des colonnes le nombre des sujets ressortissant à chacune des sept catégories de taille indiquées sur la courbe binomiale (Fig. 4).

male and 20,000 female prisoners over the decade between 1883 and 1893, Bertillon felt confident in boasting that his system was "infallible." He had in the process "infallibly" identified 4,564 recidivists.[46]

Bertillon can be said to have realized the binomial curve as office furniture. He is one of the first users of photographic documents to comprehend fully the fundamental problem of the archive, the problem of volume. Given his recourse to statistical method, what semantic value did he find in photographs? He clearly saw the photograph as the final conclusive sign in the process of identification. Ultimately, it was the photographed face pulled from the file that had to match the rephotographed face of the suspect, even if this final "photographic" proof was dependent upon a series of more abstract steps.

Bertillon was critical of the inconsistent photography practiced by earlier

46. *Ibid.*, pp. xxi–xxiii, lxxiv.

police technicians and jobbers. He argued at length for an aesthetically neutral standard of representation:

> In commercial and artistic portraits, questions of fashion and taste are all important. Judicial photography, liberated from these considerations, allows us to look at the problem from a more simple point of view: which pose is theoretically the best for such and such a case?[47]

Bertillon insisted on a standard focal length, even and consistent lighting, and a fixed distance between the camera and the unwilling sitter. The profile view served to cancel the contingency of expression; the contour of the head remained consistent with time. The frontal view provided a face that was more likely to be recognizable within the other, less systematized departments of police work. These latter photographs served better in the search for suspects who had not yet been arrested, whose faces were to be recognized by detectives on the street.

Just as Bertillon sought to classify the photograph by means of the Vitruvian register of the anthropometrical signalment and the binomial curve, so also he sought to translate the signs offered by the photograph itself into another, verbal register. Thus he was engaged in a two-sided, internal and external, taming of the contingency of the photograph. His invention of the *portrait-parlé*—the "speaking likeness" or verbal portrait—was an attempt to overcome the inadequacies of a purely visual empiricism. He organized voluminous taxonomic grids of the features of the male human head, using sectional photographs. He devoted particular attention to the morphology of the ear, repeating a physiognomic fascination with that organ that extended back to Lavater.[48] But on the basis of this comparative anatomy, Bertillon sought to reinvent physiognomy in precise nonmetaphysical, ethnographic terms. Through the construction of a strictly denotative signaletic vocabulary, this project aimed for the precise and unambiguous translation of appearance into words.

For Bertillon, the criminal body expressed nothing. No characterological secrets were hidden beneath the surface of this body. Rather, the surface and the skeleton were indices of a more strictly material sort. The anthropometrical signalment was the register of the morphological constancy of the adult

47. Alphonse Bertillon, *La photographie judiciare*, Paris, Gauthier-Villars, 1890, p. 2 (my translation).

48. In 1872, O. G. Rejlander suggested that photographs of ears be used to identify criminals ("Hints Concerning the Photographing of Criminals," *British Journal Photographic Almanac*, 1872, pp. 116–117). Carlo Ginzburg has noted the coincidence of Bertillon's attention to the "individuality" of the ear and Giovanni Morelli's attempt to construct a model of art-historical authentication based on the careful examination of the rendering of the ear by different painters ("Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes: Clues and Scientific Method," *History Workshop*, no. 9 [Spring 1980], pp. 5–29).

Planche 41.

Forme générale de la tête vue de profil.

1. Nègre à prognathisme moyen.

2. Type d'Européen prognathe.

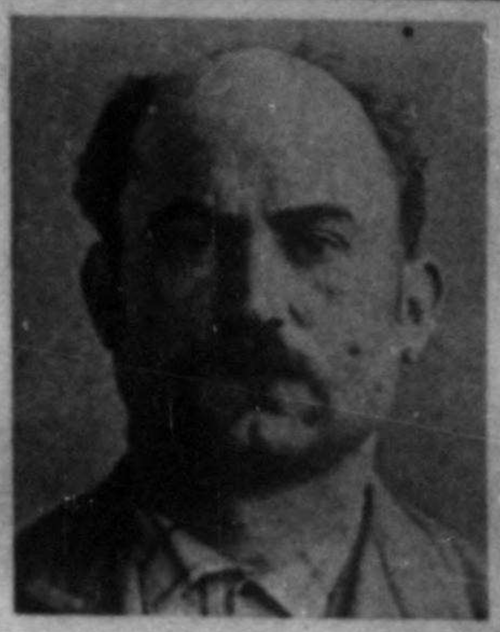
3. Prognathisme limité aux os de la base du nez. (prognathisme nasal).

4. Prognathisme accentué avec proéminence du menton.

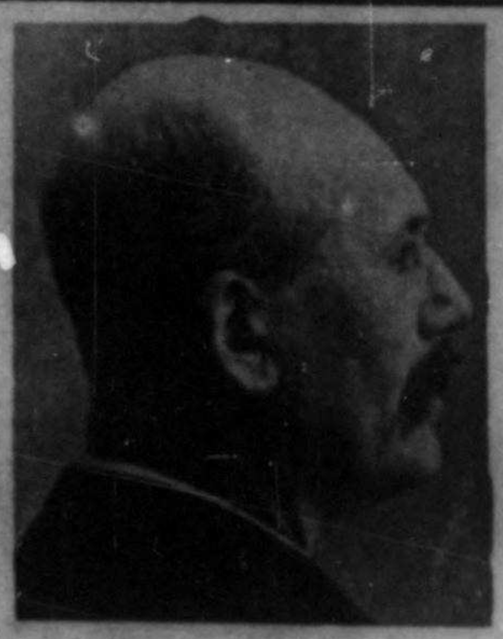
5. Type d'orthognathe.

6. Profil fronto-nasal rectiligne.

7. Tête en bonnet à poils (acrocéphale).



8. Tête en carène (scaphocéphale).



9. Tête en besace. (cymbocéphale).

Plate 41 from Alphonse Bertillon, Identification anthropométrique, *1893.*

Planche 56

Tableau récapitulatif des formes sériées les plus caractéristiques
à signaler sur la fiche en tout état de cause

1. Bord supr plat

2. Bord supr très grand

3. Bord postr très grand

4. Bord postr très grand

5. Lobe descendant

6. Lobe à golfe.

7 Lobe très petit

8. Lobe très grand

9. Antitragus horizontal

10. Antitragus à profil cave.

11. Antitragus verse en dehors.

12. Conque traversée

13. Pli inférieur à coupe convexe

14. Pli inférieur à coupe cave

15. Pli supr nul

16. Pli supr accentué et très long

Clichés Dugast et Félix Geoffray

Plate 56 from Alphonse Bertillon, Identification anthropométrique, *1893.*

skeleton, thus the key to biographical identity. Likewise, scars and other deformations of the flesh were clues, not to any innate propensity for crime, but to the body's physical history: its trades, occupations, calamities.

For Bertillon, the mastery of the criminal body necessitated a massive campaign of *inscription*, a transformation of the body's signs into a *text*, a text that pared verbal description down to a denotative shorthand, which was then linked to a numerical series. Thus Bertillon arrested the criminal body, determined its identity as a body that had *already* been defined as criminal, by means that subordinated the image—which remained necessary but insufficient—to verbal text and numerical series. This was not merely a self-contained archival project. We can understand another, more global, imperative if we remember that one problem for the late-nineteenth-century police was the telegraphic transmission of information regarding suspects. The police were competing with opponents who availed themselves of the devices of modernity as well, including the railroad.

Why was the issue of recidivism so important in France during the 1880s? Robert Nye has argued recently that the issue emerged on the political agenda of Gambettist Republicans during the Third Republic, leading to the passage of the Relegation Law of 1885, which established a Draconian policy of colonial transport for repeat offenders. The bill worked out a variable quota of misdemeanors and felonies, including vagabondage, that could lead to permanent exile in Guyana or New Caledonia. The French agricultural crisis had led to a renewed massive urban influx of displaced peasants during the 1880s. The recidivism debate focused on the social danger posed by the vagrant, while also seeing the milieu of the chronically unemployed urban poor as a source of increased criminality. Not least in provoking the fears of the defenders of order was the evidence of renewed working-class militancy in the strike wave of 1881, after a decade of peace purchased by the slaughter of the Communards. At its most extreme, the debate on recidivism combined the vagabond, the anarchist, and recidivist into a single composite figure of social menace.[49]

Bertillon himself promoted his system within the context of this debate. Having only succeeded in identifying his first recidivist in February of 1883, he quickly argued that his binomial classification system would be essential to the application of any law of relegation. He described a Parisian working-class milieu that was undergoing what might facetiously be called a "crisis of identity." During the Commune, all city records prior to 1859 had been burned; any Parisian over twenty-two years old was at liberty to invent and reinvent an

49. See Robert Nye, *Crime, Madness, and Politics in Modern France: The Medical Concept of National Decline*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1984, pp. 49–96. Although Nye mentions Bertillon's project only in passing, I have relied upon his social history for an understanding of the politics of French criminology during the late nineteenth century. A more directly relevant study of Bertillon, Christian Pheline's *L'image accusatrice* (Paris, Cahiers de la Photographie, 1985), unfortunately came to my attention only after this essay was going to press.

entirely bogus nativity. Furthermore, Bertillon claimed that there was an extraordinary traffic in false documents, citing the testimony of foremen at the more "insalubrious" industrial establishment—white lead and fertilizer factories, for example—that job applicants frequently reappeared two weeks after being rejected with entirely new papers and different names.[50] In effect, Bertillon sought to reregister a social field that had exploded into multiplicity.

One curious aspect of Bertillon's reputation lies in the way in which his method, which runs counter to any metaphysical or essentialist doctrine of the self, could be regarded as a triumph of humanism. One biographer put it this way: "A man of his type inevitably found a kind of romance in a technique the aim of which was to individualize human beings."[51] Bertillon himself contributed to this "humane" reading of his project: "Is it not at bottom a problem of this sort that forms the basis of the everlasting popular melodrama about lost, exchanged, and recovered children?"[52] But in more technical and theoretical contexts, the degree to which Bertillonage actually eroded the "uniqueness" of the self became clear. Writing with a coauthor in 1909, Bertillon noted that according to the logic of the binomial curve, "each observation or each group of observations is to be defined, not by its absolute value, but by its deviation from the arithmetic mean."[53] Thus even the nominalist Bertillon was forced to recognize the higher reality of the "average man." The individual could only be identified by invoking the powers of this genie. And the individual only existed *as an individual* by being identified. Individuality as such had no meaning. Viewed "objectively," the self occupied a position that was wholly relative.

The Bertillon system proliferated widely, receiving an enthusiastic reception especially in the United States and contributing to the internationalization and standardization of police methods. The anthropometric system faced competition from the fingerprint system, a more radically synecdochic procedure, invented in part by Francis Galton, who had interests in identification as well as typology. With the advent of fingerprinting, it became evident that the body did not have to be "circumscribed" in order to be identified. Rather, the key to identity could be found in the merest trace of the body's tactile presence in the world. Furthermore, fingerprinting was more promising in a Taylorist sense, since it could be properly executed by less-skilled clerks. By the late nineteentens, the Bertillon system had begun to yield to this more efficient and less cumbersome method, although hybrid systems operated for some years.[54]

50. Bertillon, *L'identité des récidivistes*, pp. 2, 5.
51. Henry Rhodes, *Alphonse Bertillon: Father of Scientific Detection*, London, Abelard-Schuman, 1956, p. 83.
52. Bertillon, "The Bertillon System of Identification," p. 330.
53. A. Bertillon and A. Chervin, *Anthropologie métrique*, Paris, Imprimerie Nationale, 1909, p. 51 (my translation). The same text drolly likens the shape of the binomial curve to that of a "gendarme's hat."
54. Bertillon noted that his system was adopted by 1893 in the United States, Belgium,

Bertillon card, 1913.

POLICE DEPARTMENT, SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

Height	1 m 60.0	Head lgth	18.0	L Foot	23.5	Color of Eye	Class	Age 24
Stretch	1 m 57.0	Head wdth	15.5	L Mid F	10.3		Areola	Apparent Age
Trunk	87.0	Cheek width	13.1	L Lit F	8.0		Periph Mar.	Nativity Mexico
Curve		R. Ear lgth	6.9	L Cubit	42.4		Pecul	Occup Laborer.

Eng. Height 5-3

Remarks relative to Measurements

Forehead: Inc. I; Height M; Width M; Pecul.

Nose: Profile: Bridge R.; Base El. Root M

DIMENSIONS

Height	Projection	Breadth
P	M	G

Pecul.

R Ear: L.Att.

Teeth Good.

Chin Ball.

Hair Black.

Complexion M-Dark.

Weight 112

Build P

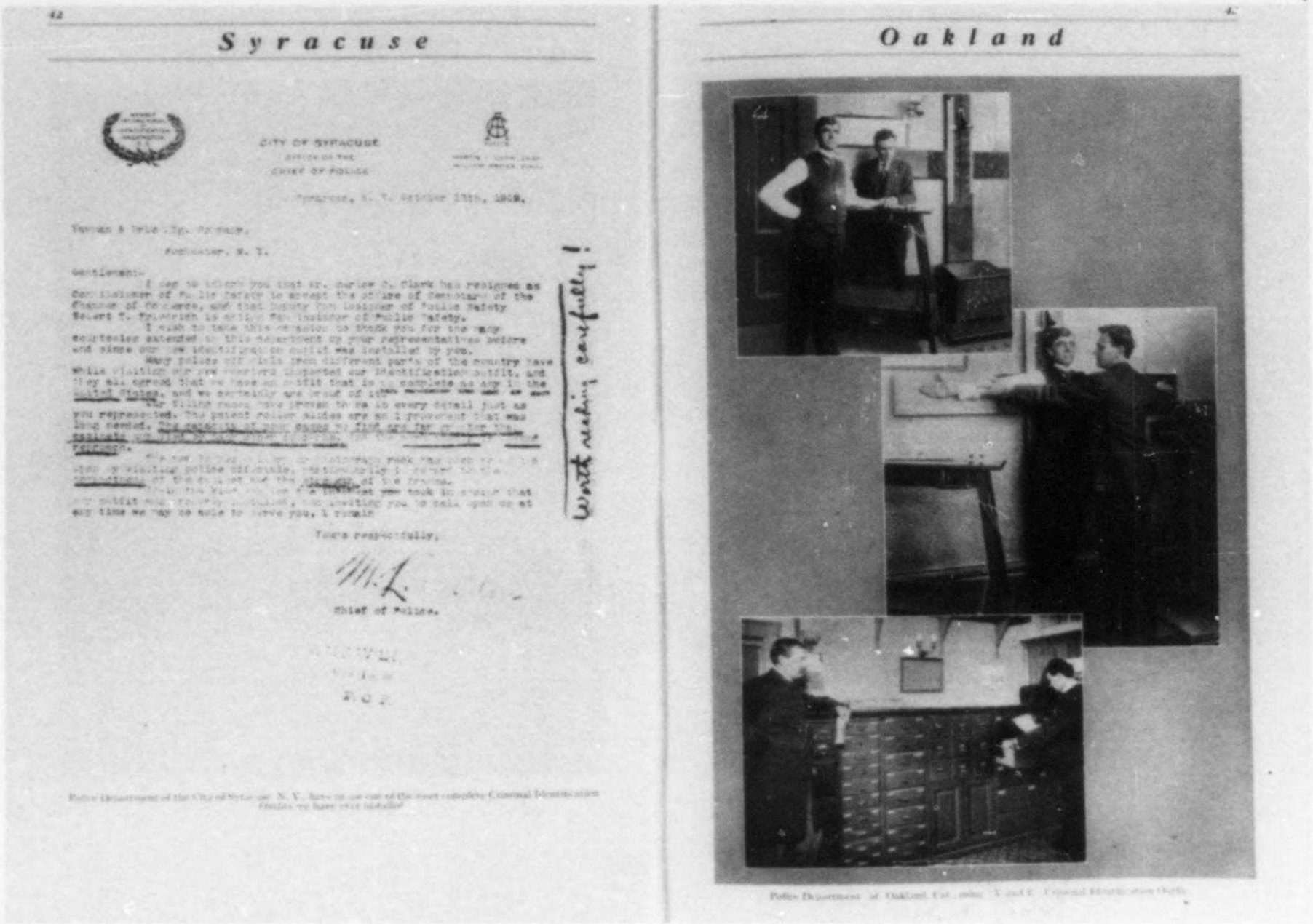
Beard Black.

Right						14 A
Left						22 A

Examined 1-17-13.

By Gabrielson.

Switzerland, Russia, much of South America, Tunisia, the British West Indies, and Rumania (*Identification anthropométrique*, p. lxxxi). Translations of Bertillon's manuals of signaletic instructions appeared in Germany, Switzerland, England, and Peru, as well as the United States. On the enthusiastic American reception of the Bertillon system, see Donald Dilworth, ed., *Identification Wanted: Development of the American Criminal Identification System, 1893–1943*, Gaithersburg, Maryland, International Association of Chiefs of Police, 1977. The IACP promoted the general adoption of Bertillonage by the geographically dispersed and municipally autonomous police forces of the United States and Canada, and the establishment of a National Identification Bureau in Washington, D.C. This office was absorbed intc the Federal Bureau of Investigation in 1924. (Canada adopted Bertillonage with the Criminal Identification Act of 1898.) Starting in 1898, a quasi-official monthly publication of the IACP, called *The Detective*, carried Bertillon measurements and photographs of wanted criminals. This publication provides a reasonable gauge of the ratio of reliance by American police on the Bertillon and fingerprint systems over the next twenty-five years. The British resisted Bertillon's method, largely because the fingerprint system



From Yawman and Erbe Mfg. Co., Criminal Identification by "Y and E": Bertillon and Finger Print Systems, *1913*.

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was of British origin. Nonetheless, regulations were established in 1896 under the Penal Servitude Act of 1891 for the photographing, fingerprinting, *and* Bertillon measurement of criminal prisoners (Great Britain, *Statutory Rules and Orders*, London, H. M. Stationary Office, 1896, no. 762, pp. 364–365). By 1901, however, the anthropometric signalment was abandoned.

Bertillon and Galton traded jibes at their respective systems. Bertillon faulted Galton for the difficulties encountered in classifying fingerprints ("The Bertillon System of Identification," p. 331). Galton faulted Bertillon for his failure to recognize that bodily measurements were correlated and not independent variables, thus grossly underestimating the probability of duplicate measurements (Francis Galton, *Memories of My Life*, London, Methuen, 1908, p. 251; see also his "Personal Identification and Description," *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, vol. 18 [May 29, 1888], pp. 177–191).

The two men's obsession with authorship may have been a bit misplaced, however. In "Morelli, Freud, and Sherlock Holmes" (cited in note 48, above), Carlo Ginzburg has suggested that the whole enterprise of rationalized criminal identification rested on the *theft* of a more popular, conjectural form of empiricism, grounded in hunting and divining. Sir William Herschel had appropriated fingerprinting in 1860 from a usage customary among Bengali peasants under his colonial administration. The source of police methods in what Ginzburg describes as "low intuition" was obliquely acknowledged by Bertillon in a passage in which he argues for a rigorously *scientific* policing, while invoking at the same time the distinctly *premodern* image of the hunter: "Anthropology, by definition, is nothing but the natural history of man. Have not hunters in all times been interested in natural history? And, on the other hand, have not naturalists something of the hunter in them? No doubt the police of the future will apply to their particular form of the chase the rules of anthropology and psychology, just as the engineers of our locomotives are putting in practice the laws of mechanics and thermodynamics" ("The Bertillon System of Identification," p. 341). Ginzburg has proposed a model of observation and description that is more open to multiplicity and resistance than that advanced by John Tagg, who subsumes all documentary within the paradigm of the Panopticon (Tagg, "Power and Photography," p. 55).

For Bertillon, the type existed only as a means for refining the description of individuality. Detectives could not afford not to be nominalists. Bertillon was not alone in this understanding of the peculiarities of the policeman's search for the specificity of crime. For example, the New York City detective chief Thomas Byrnes published in 1886 a lavish "rogues' gallery" entitled *Professional Criminals of America*. Although Byrnes practiced a less systematic mode of photography than did Bertillon, he clearly articulated the position that classical physiognomic typing was of no value whatsoever in the hunt for the "higher and more dangerous order" of criminals, who "carried no suggestion of their calling about them."[55] In Bertillon's case, the resistance to the theory of a *biologically given* criminal type was also in keeping with the general drift of late-nineteenth-century French criminological theory, which stressed the importance of environmental factors in determining criminal behavior. Thus the "French school," notably Gabriel Tarde and Alexandre Lacassagne, opposed the biological determinism of the "Italian school" of criminal anthropology, which centered on the anatomist-craniometrician Cesare Lombroso's quasi-Darwinian theory of the criminal as an "atavistic being who reproduces in his person the ferocious instincts of primitive humanity and the inferior animals."[56] Against this line of reasoning, Lacassagne argued that "the social milieu is the mother culture of criminality; the microbe is the criminal."[57] (In this context, it is worth noting the mutual admiration that passed between Pasteur, the microbe-hunter, and Bertillon, the hunter of recidivists.[58]) The French were able to medicalize crime while simultaneously pointing to environmental factors. A range of positions emerged, some more medical, some more sociological in emphasis. Tarde insisted that crime was a profession that proliferated through channels of imitative behavior. Others argued that the criminal was a "degenerate type," suffering more than noncriminals from the bad environmental effects of urbanism.[59]

Despite the acute differences between the warring factions of the emerging criminological profession, a common enthusiasm for photographic illustration of the criminal type was shared by almost all of the practitioners, with the notable exception of Tarde, who shunned the lowly empiricism of the case study for more lofty, even if nominalist, meditations on the problem of crime. Before looking at Francis Galton's peculiar contribution to the search for a criminal type, I will note that during the 1890s in particular, a profusion of texts ap-

55. Thomas Byrnes, "Why Thieves are Photographed," in *Professional Criminals of America*, New York, Cassell, 1886, p. 53.
56. Cesare Lombroso, "Introduction," to Gina Lombroso-Ferrero, *Criminal Man*, New York, Putnam, 1911, p. xxv.
57. Quoted by Nye, p. 104.
58. Rhodes, p. 190.
59. See Nye, pp. 97–131.

115

ELLEN CLEGG,
ALIAS ELLEN LEE,
SHOP LIFTER AND PICKPOCKET.

116

MARY HOEY,
ALIAS MOLLY HOLLBROOK,
PICKPOCKET.

117

MARGRET BROWN,
ALIAS OLD MOTHER HUBBARD,
PICKPOCKET AND SATCHEL WORKER.

118

CHRISTENE MAYER,
ALIAS KID GLOVE ROSEY,
SHOP LIFTER.

119

LENA KLEINSCHMIDT,
ALIAS RICE and BLACK LENA,
SHOP LIFTER.

120

MARY CONNELLY,
ALIAS IRVING,
PICKPOCKET AND SHOP LIFTER.

From Thomas Byrnes, Professional Criminals of America, *1886.*

Fig. 110. — *Clayes.*

Fig. 111. — *Clayes.*

(Photographies prises 1/4 d'heure après la décapitation).

Fig. 112. — *Degroote.*

Fig. 113. — *Degroote.*

From Charles Marie Debierre, Le crâne des criminels, *1895.*

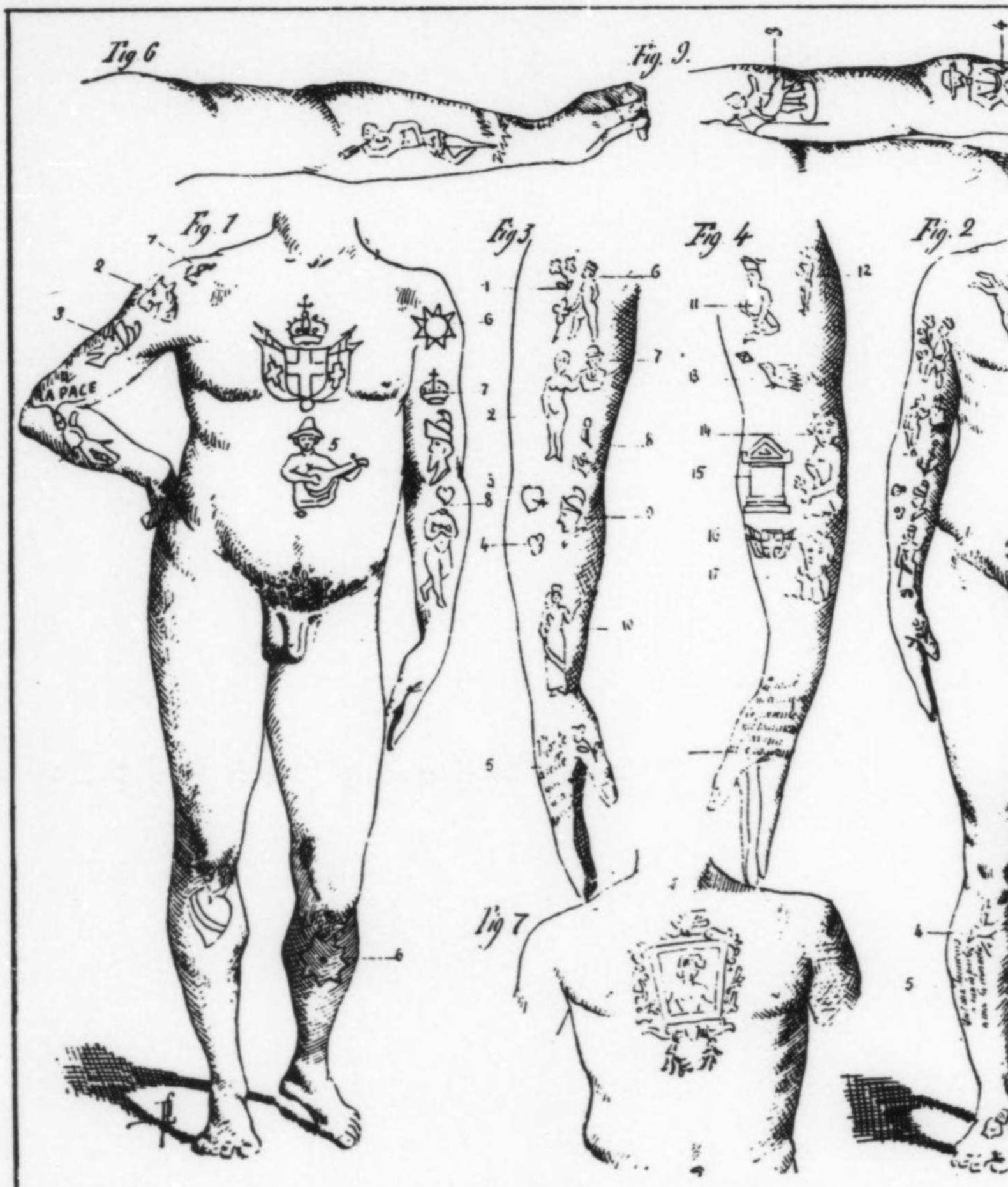
peared in France and Italy offering photographic evidence of basic criminal types. Although the authors were frequently at odds with one another over the "atavistic" or "degenerate" nature of the criminal, on a more fundamental level they shared a common battle. This was a war of representations. The photograph operated as the *image* of scientific truth, even in the face of Bertillon's demonstration of the inadequacies of the medium. Photographs and technical illustrations were deployed, not only against the body of the representative criminal, but also against that body as a bearer and producer of its own, inferior representations. These texts can be seen as a battle between the camera and the tattoo, the erotic drawing, and the graffiti of a prison subculture. For Lombroso, tattooing was a particular mark of atavism, since criminals shared the practice with presumably less evolved tribal peoples. But even works which sought to demolish Lombroso's dogmatic biologism established a similar hierarchy. Scientific rationalism *looked down* at the visual products of a *primitive* criminality. This was a quasi-ethnologic discourse. Consider, for example, a work which argued against atavism and for degeneracy, Charles Marie Debierre's typologically titled *Le crâne des criminels*. This book contained an illustrated chapter treating "les beaux-arts dans les prisons" as subject matter for the psychological study of the criminal. A subsequent chapter offered a set of photographs of the severed heads of convicts, "taken one quarter of an hour after decapitation." Faced with these specimens of degeneracy, this physiognomist of the guillotine remarked: "Degroote and Clayes . . . their dull faces and wild eyes reveal that beneath their skulls there is no place for pity." Works of this sort depended upon an extreme form of statistical inference: basing physiognomic generalizations on very limited samples.[60]

This brings us finally to Francis Galton, who attempted to overcome the limitations of this sort of inferential reading of individual case studies.

Where Bertillon was a compulsive systematizer, Galton was a compulsive quantifier. While Bertillon was concerned primarily with the triumph of social order over social disorder, Galton was concerned primarily with the triumph of established rank over the forces of social leveling and decline. Certainly these were not incompatible projects. On a theoretical plane, however, Galton can be linked more closely to the concerns of the Italian school of criminal anthropology and to biological determinism in general. Composite images based on Galton's procedure, first proposed in 1877, proliferated widely over the following three decades. A composite of criminal skulls appears in the albums of the

60. Charles Marie Debierre, *Le crâne des criminels*, Lyon and Paris, Storck and Masson, 1895, p. 274. The other important illustrated works are by members of the Italian school: Lombroso's revised French and Italian editions of his 1876 *L'uomo delinquente* included separate albums of illustrations (Paris, Alcan, 1895 and Turin, Fratelli Bocca, 1896–97). The plates of criminal types in these albums were taken from materials prepared for Enrico Ferri, *Atlante antropologico-statistico dell'omicidio,* Turin, Fratelli Bocca, 1895.

Plate XXXIX from Cesare Lombroso, L'homme criminel, *1895.*



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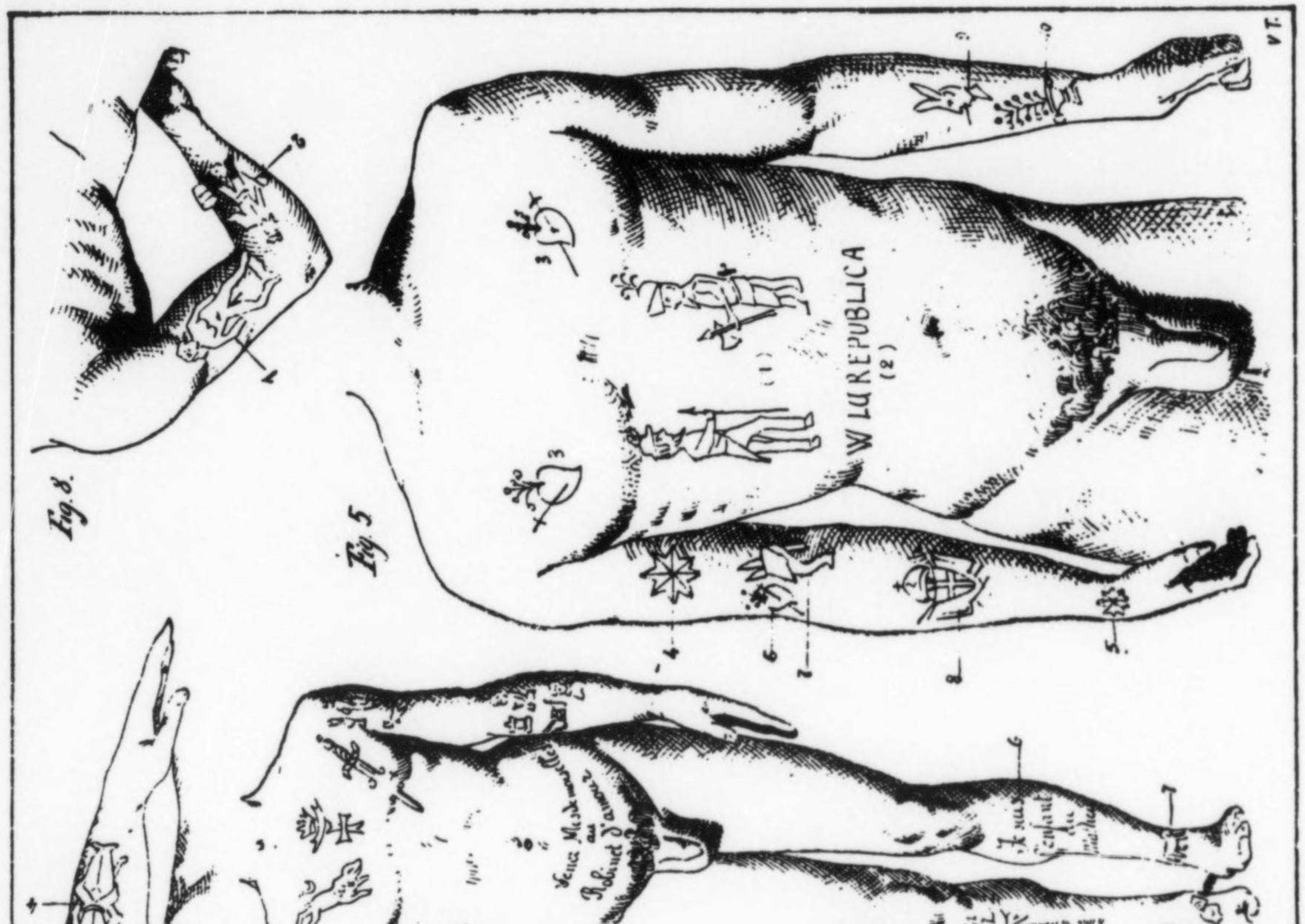


CRIMINELS.

Frontispiece.

THE CRIMINAL.

BY

HAVELOCK ELLIS.

ILLUSTRATED.

LONDON:
WALTER SCOTT, 24 WARWICK LANE,
PATERNOSTER ROW.
1890.

Galtonian composite.

1895 French edition and the 1896–97 Italian edition of Lombroso's *Criminal Man*. Likewise, Havelock Ellis's *The Criminal*, which adhered to the positions of the Italian school and marked the high tide of Lombrosoism in England, bore a Galtonian frontispiece in its first, 1890 edition.[61]

Both Galton and his quasi-official biographer, the statistician Karl Pearson, regarded the composite photograph as one of the central intellectual inventions of Galton's career. More recent studies of Galton have tended to neglect the importance attached to what now seems like an optical curiosity.[62]

Galton is significant in the history of science for developing the first statistical methods for studying heredity.[63] His career was suspended between the triumph of his cousin Charles Darwin's evolutionary paradigm in the late 1860s and the belated discovery in 1899 of Gregor Mendel's work on the genetic ratio underlying inheritance. Politically, Galton sought to construct a program of social betterment through breeding. This program pivoted on a profoundly ideological *biologization* of existing class relations in England. Eugenicists justified their program in utilitarian terms: by seeking to reduce the numbers of the

61. Havelock Ellis, *The Criminal*, London, Walter Scott, 1890.
62. The exception is David Green, "Veins of Resemblance: Photography and Eugenics," *The Oxford Art Journal*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1984), pp. 3–16.
63. See Ruth Schwartz Cowan, *Sir Francis Galton and the Study of Heredity in the Nineteenth Century*, New York, Garland, 1985.

1

2

a

Fotografie composite Galtoniane di crani di delinquenti.

III$_1$

I$_1$

I$_2$

II$_2$

II$_1$

III$_2$

b

Anomalie in tre crani di delinquenti.

Plate XXVII from Cesare Lombroso, L'uomo delinquente, *1896–97.*

"unfit" they claimed to be reducing the numbers of those predestined to unhappiness. But the eugenics movement Galton founded flourished in a historical context—similar in this respect to Third Republic France—of declining middle-class birthrates coupled with middle-class fears of a burgeoning residuum of degenerate urban poor.[64]

Galton's early, 1869 work *Hereditary Genius* was an attempt to demonstrate the priority, in his words, of "nature" over "nurture" in determining the quality of human intelligence. In a rather tautological fashion, Galton set out to demonstrate that a reputation for intelligence amounted to intelligence, and that men with (reputations for) intelligence begat offspring with (reputations for) intelligence. He appropriated Quetelet's binomial distribution, observing that the entrance examination scores of military cadets at Sandhurst fell into a bell-shaped pattern around a central mean. On the basis of this "naturalizing" evidence, he proposed a general quantitative hierarchy of intelligence, and applied it to racial groups. This hierarchy was characterized by a distinct classicist longing: "The average ability of the Athenian race is, on the lowest possible estimate, very nearly two grades higher than our own—that is, about as much as our race is above that of the African negro."[65] Eugenics can be seen as an attempt to push the English social average toward an imaginary, lost Athens, and away from an equally imaginary, threatening Africa.

Galton's passion for quantification and numerical ranking coexisted with a qualified faith in physiognomic description. His writings demonstrate a remarkable parallelism and tension between the desire to measure and the desire to look. His composites emerged from the attempt to merge optical and statistical procedures within a single "organic" operation. Galton's *Inquiries into Human Faculty* of 1883 began by suggesting some of the limitations of prior—and subsequent—attempts at physiognomic typing:

> The physiognomical difference between different men being so numerous and small, it is impossible to measure and compare them each to each, and to discover by ordinary statistical methods the true physiognomy of a race. The usual way is to select individuals who are judged to be representative of the prevalent type, and to photograph them; but this method is not trustworthy, because the judgment itself is fallacious. It is swayed by exceptional and grotesque features more than by ordinary ones, and the portraits supposed to be typical are likely to be caricatures.[66]

64. See Gareth Stedman Jones, *Outcast London: A Study in the Relationship between Classes in Victorian Society*, Oxford, Clarendon, 1971.
65. Francis Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, London, Friedman, 1978, p. 342.
66. Francis Galton, *Inquiries into Human Faculty and Its Development*, London, Macmillan, 1883, pp. 5–6.

Frontispiece from Francis Galton, Inquiries into Human Faculty, *1883.*

SPECIMENS OF COMPOSITE PORTRAITURE

PERSONAL AND FAMILY.

Alexander the Great
From 6 Different Medals.

Two Sisters.

From 6 Members of same Family Male & Female.

HEALTH.

23 Cases.
Royal Engineers.
12 Officers.
11 Privates

DISEASE.

6 Cases

9 Cases

Tubercular Disease

CRIMINALITY.

8 Cases

4 Cases

2 Of the many Criminal Types

CONSUMPTION AND OTHER MALADIES

I

20 Cases

II

36 Cases

56 Cases

Co-composite of I & II

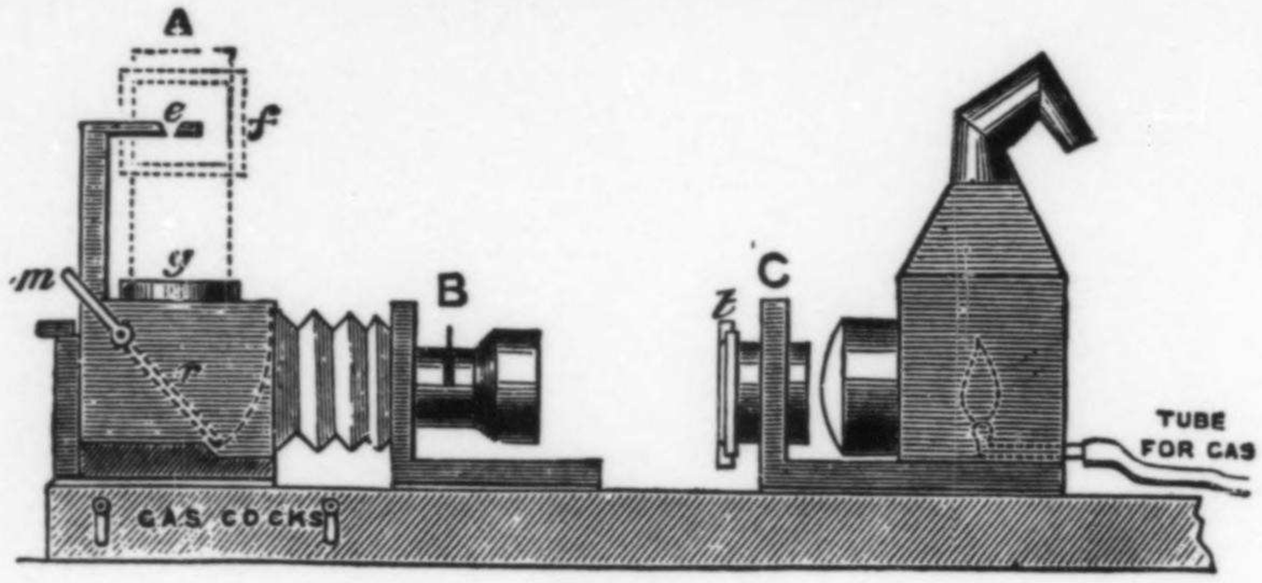
Consumptive Cases.

100 Cases

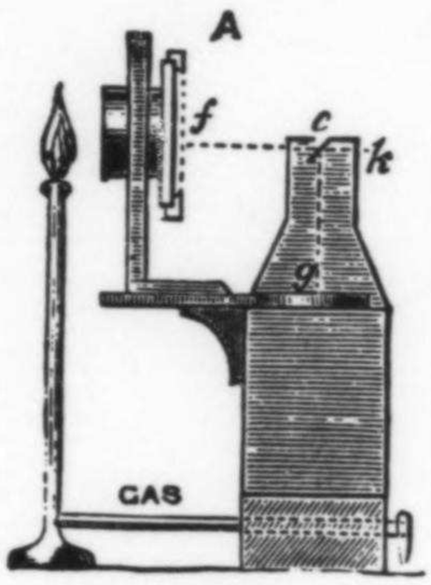
50 Cases

Not Consumptive.

DIAGRAM SHOWING THE ESSENTIAL PARTS.



Side View.



End View.

A The body of the camera, which is fixed.

B Lens on a carriage, which can be moved to and fro.

C Frame for the transparency, on a carriage that also supports the lantern; the whole can be moved to and fro.

r The reflector inside the camera.

m The arm outside the camera attached to the axis of the reflector; by moving it, the reflector can be moved up or down.

g A ground-glass screen on the roof, which receives the image when the reflector is turned down, as in the diagram.

e The eye-hole through which the image is viewed on *g*; a thin piece of glass immediately below *e*, reflects the illuminated fiducial lines in the transparency at *f*, and gives them the appearance of lying upon *g*,—the distances *f e* and *g e* being made equal, the angle *f e g* being made a right angle, and the plane of the thin piece of glass being made to bisect *f e g*.

f Framework, adjustable, holding the transparency with the fiducial lines on it.

t Framework, adjustable, holding the transparency of the portrait.

This book was a summary of Galton's researches over the preceding fifteen years. From this initial criticism of a more naive physiognomic stance, Galton moved directly to an outline of his composite method. The composite frontispiece and the recurrent references in various contexts throughout the book to lessons to be learned from the composites suggest that Galton believed that he had invented a prodigious epistemological tool. Accordingly, his interest in composite imagery should not be regarded as a transparent ideological stunt, but as an overdetermined instance of biopositivism.

How did Galton produce his blurred, fictitious apparitions? How did he understand them? He acknowledged at the outset of his experiments Herbert Spencer's prior proposal for a similar process of superimposition. Spencer's or-

The composite apparatus, from Francis Galton, Inquiries into Human Faculty, *1883.*

ganismic conception of society can be seen as fertile soil for the notion of a generalized body, although in this case Spencer seems to have been drawn to the notion of a composite through a youthful fascination with phrenology.[67] But Galton was concerned also with the psychology of the visual imagination, with the capacity of the mind to construct generic images from sense data. Here he found his inspiration in Thomas Huxley. He claimed in fact that the composite photographic apparatus shared, and ultimately surpassed, the capacity of artistic intelligence to generalize. Here, as with Quetelet, one witnesses the statistician as artist manqué.

Galton fabricated his composites by a process of successive registration and exposure of portraits in front of a copy camera holding a single plate. Each successive image was given a fractional exposure based on the inverse of the total number of images in the sample. That is, if a composite were to be made from a dozen originals, each would receive one-twelfth of the required total exposure. Thus, individual distinctive features, features that were unshared and idiosyncratic, faded away into the night of underexposure. What remained was the blurred, nervous configuration of those features that were held in common throughout the sample. Galton claimed that these images constituted legitimate averages, and he claimed further that one could infer larger generalities from the small sample that made up the composites. He proposed that "statistical constancy" was attained after "thirty haphazard pictures of the same class [had] been combined."[68]

Galton made more expansive claims for his process, which he has described as a form of "pictorial statistics":

> Composite pictures are . . . much more than averages; they are rather the equivalents of those large statistical tables whose totals, divided by the number of cases and entered on the bottom line, are the averages. They are real generalizations, because they include the whole of the material under consideration. The blur of their outlines, which is never great in truly generic composites, except in unimpor-

67. Galton acknowledged Spencer in an 1878 paper read before the Anthropological Institute, extracted in *ibid.*, p. 340. Spencer's previously unpublished 1846 proposal for producing and superimposing phrenological diagrams of the head, "On a Proposed Cephalograph," can be found as an appendix to his *An Autobiography*, vol. 1, New York, Appleton, 1904, pp. 634–638. Like Quetelet, Spencer appears not to have read Kant on the notion of an average type, or on any other topic for that matter (see David Wiltshire, *The Social and Political Thought of Herbert Spencer*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1978, p. 67). Spencer's organismic defense of a hierarchical social division of labor is articulated in a review of the collected works of Plato and Hobbes: "The Social Organism," *The Westminster Review*, New Series, vol. 17, no. 1 (January 1860), pp. 90–121. This extended metaphor goes so far as to compare the circulation of blood with that of money (p. 111). On the connections between Spencerian social Darwinism and eugenics, see Greta Jones, *Social Darwinism and English Thought*, Sussex, Harvester, 1980.

68. Galton, *Inquiries*, p. 17.

> tant details, measures the tendency of individuals to deviate from the central type.[69]

In this passage the tension between claims for empirical specificity and claims for generality reaches the point of logical rupture: what are we to make of this glib slide from "they include the whole" to "except unimportant details"? In his search for a type, Galton did not believe that anything *significant* was lost in underexposure. This required an unacknowledged presupposition: only the gross features of the head mattered. Ears, for example, which were highly marked as signs in other physiognomic systems, both as individuating *and* as typical features, were not registered at all by the composite process. (Later Galton sought to "recapture" small differences or "unimportant details" by means of a technique he called "analytical photography," which superimposed positive and negative images, thereby isolating their unshared elements.[70])

Just as he had acknowledged Quetelet as a source for his earlier ranking of intelligence, so Galton claimed that the composite photograph produced an improved impression of *l'homme moyen*:

> The process . . . of pictorial statistics [is] suitable to give us generic pictures of man, such as Quetelet obtained in outline by the ordinary numerical methods of statistics, as described in his work on *Anthropométrie* . . . . By the process of composites we obtain a picture and not a mere outline.[71]

In effect Galton believed that he had translated the Gaussian error curve into pictorial form. The symmetrical bell curve now wore a human face. This was an extraordinary hypostatization. Consider the way in which Galton conveniently exiled blurring to the *edges* of the composite, when in fact blurring would occur over the entire surface of the image, although less perceptibly. Only an imagination that wanted to *see* a visual analogue of the binomial curve would make this mistake, finding the type at the center and the idiosyncratic and individual at the outer periphery.

The frontispiece to *Inquiries into Human Faculty* consists of eight sets of composites. Galton describes these images as an integrated ensemble in his text, in what amounts to an illustrated lecture on eugenics. The first, upper left com-

69. Francis Galton, "On Generic Images," *Proceedings of the Royal Institution*, vol. 9 (1879), p. 166.
70. Francis Galton, "Analytical Photography," *Nature*, vol. 18 (August 2, 1890), p. 383.
71. Francis Galton, "Generic Images," *Nineteenth Century*, vol. 6, no. 29 (July 1879), p. 162. In the related, previously cited paper "On Generic Images," Galton stated that Quetelet was the first to give "the idea of type" a "rigorous interpretation" (p. 162). Ruth Schwartz Cowan has argued, following Karl Pearson, that Quetelet was of no particular import in Galton's development as a statistician; but Cowan is interested in Galton's position as a statistician in the lineage of hereditarian thought, and not in his attempt to negotiate the merger of optical and statistical methods. That is, Cowan prefers to define biostatistics as a science which began with Galton, a science having no prehereditarian precursor in Quetelet (see *Sir Francis Galton*, pp. 145–200).

Francis Galton. Criminal Composites. c. 1878.
Plate XXVII from Karl Pearson, The Life, Letters and Labours of Francis Galton, *vol. 2, 1924.*

Composites, made from Portraits of Criminals convicted of Murder, Manslaughter or Crimes of Violence.

posite of six portrait medallions of Alexander the Great serves Galton as an introductory, epistemological benchmark, not only to the series, but to the entire book. Oblivious to issues of style or artistic convention, Galton assumed that individual engravers had erred in various ways in their representations. The composite, according to a Gaussian logic of averaged measurements, would contain a "truer likeness." An unspoken desire, however, lurks, behind this construction. Galton made many composites of Greek and Roman portrait coins and medallions, seeking in the blurred "likenesses" the vanished physiognomy of a higher race.

Galton's next two sets of composites were made from members of the same family. With these he charged into the active terrain of eugenic research and manipulation. By exhibiting the blending of individual characteristics in a single composite image, Galton seems to have been searching for a ratio of hereditary influence. He extended these experiments to composites tracing the lineage of race horses.

The next composite was probably the most democratic construction of Galton's entire career: a combination of portraits of twelve officers and eleven enlisted men of the Royal Engineers. This was offered as a "clue to the direction in which the stock of the English race might most easily be improved."[72] This utopian image was paired with its dystopian counterparts, generic images of disease and criminality.

While tuberculosis seemed to produce a vaguely wan physiognomy, crime was less easy to type. Galton had obtained identification photographs of convicts from the Director of Prisons, Edmund Du Cane, and these were the source of his first composites in 1878. Despite this early start in the search for the biological criminal type, Galton came to a position that was less enthusiastic than that of Lombroso: "The individual faces are villainous enough, but they are villainous in different ways, and when they are combined, the individual peculiarities disappear, and the common humanity of a low type is all that is left."[73] Thus Galton seems to have dissolved the boundary between the criminal and the working-class poor, the residuum that so haunted the political imagination of the late-Victorian bourgeoisie. Given Galton's eugenic stance, this meant that he merely included the criminal in the general pool of the "unfit."

Later, following Charles Booth's sociological stratification of the London population, Galton classified "criminals, semi-criminals, and loafers" as the worst of the eugenically unfit: the bottom one percent of the urban hierarchy. On this basis, he supported long sentences for "habitual criminals," in hopes of "restricting their opportunities for producing low-class offspring."[74]

Galton concluded the introductory sample of composite portraits in his *In-*

72. Galton, *Inquiries*, p. 14.
73. *Ibid.*, p. 15.
74. Francis Galton, *Essays in Eugenics*, London, Eugenics Education Society, 1909, pp. 8–9, 62.

quiries with contrasted sets of composites made from very large samples: representing "consumptive" and "not consumptive" cases. With these he underlined both the *statistical* and the *social hygenic* ambitions behind his optical process and his political program.

Galton harbored other *psychological* and *philosophical* ambitions. In his earlier essays on "generic images" he examined "analogies" between mental images, which he claimed consisted of "blended memories," and the genera produced by his optical process. Citing the Weber-Fechner Law of psychophysics, which demonstrated that relative perceptual sensitivity decreased as the level of stimulus increased, Galton concluded that "the human mind is therefore a most imperfect apparatus for the elaboration of general ideas," when compared with the relentless and untiring quantitative consistency of "pictorial statistics."[75] In *Inquiries*, he returned to this theme: "The ideal faces obtained by the method of composite portraiture appear to have a great deal in common with . . . so-called abstract ideas." He wondered whether abstract ideas might not be more correctly termed "cumulative ideas."[76] Galton's rather reified notions of what constituted thought is perhaps most clearly, if unwittingly, expressed in his offhand definition of introspection: "taking stock of my own mental furniture."[77]

The composite apparatus provided Galton with a model of scientific intelligence, a mechanical model of intellectual labor. Furthermore, this intelligence answered to the logic of philosophical realism. Galton argued that his composites refuted nominalist approaches to the human sciences, demonstrating with certainty the reality of distinct racial types. This amounted to an essentialist physical anthropology of race.[78]

It is not surprising, then, that Galton would come to regard his most successful composite as that depicting "the Jewish type." In a historical context in which there was no clear anthropological consensus on the racial or ethnic character of modern Jews, Galton produced an image that was, according to Karl Pearson, "a landmark in composite photography": "We all know the Jewish boy, and Galton's portraiture brings him before us in a way that only a great work of art could equal—scarcely excel, for the artist would only idealise from *one* model."[79] This applause, ominous enough as it is, takes on an even more sinister tone in retrospect when one considers the line of influence which led from Anglo-American eugenics to National Socialist *Rassentheorie*.[80]

75. Galton, "Generic Images," p. 169.
76. Galton, *Inquiries*, p. 183.
77. *Ibid.*, p. 182.
78. Galton, "Generic Images," pp. 163–164.
79. Karl Pearson, *The Life, Letters and Labours of Francis Galton*, vol. 2, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1924, p. 293.
80. On the role played by eugenics in Nazi racial policy, see Allan Chase, *The Legacy of Malthus: The Social Costs of the New Scientific Racism*, Urbana, University of Illinois Press, 1980, pp. 342–360.

Galton was asked to make the composites in 1883 by Joseph Jacobs, who was attempting to

Francis Galton. The Jewish Type. *1883. Plate XXXV from Pearson.*

Galton's composite process enjoyed a wide prestige until about 1915. Despite its origins in a discourse of racial essentialism, the composite was used to make a variety of points, some of which favored "nurture" over "nature." For

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demonstrate the existence of a relatively pure racial type of modern Jew, intact despite the Diaspora. For the portraits, Jacobs recruited boy students from the Jews' Free School and from the Jewish Working Men's Club in London. Galton and Jacobs both agreed that a racial type had been produced, but they disagreed profoundly on the *moral essence* of that type. Galton, the great quantifier, met his imaginary Other: "The feature that struck me most, as I drove through the . . . Jewish quarter, was the cold scanning gaze of man, woman, and child. . . . I felt, rightly or wrongly, that every one of them was cooly appraising me at market value, without the slightest interest of any other kind" ("Photographic Composites," *The Photographic News*, vol. 29, no. 1389 [April 17, 1885]). Jacobs responded to Galton's anti-Semitism with a more honorific reading of the composites, suggesting that "here we have something . . . more spiritual than a spirit. . . . The composite face must represent this Jewish forefather. In these Jewish composites we have the nearest representation we can hope to possess of the lad Samuel as he ministered before the Ark, or the youthful David when he tended his father's sheep" ("The Jewish Type, and Galton's Composite Photographs," *The Photographic News*, vol. 29, no. 1390 [April 24, 1885]). Thus Jacobs counters Galton's myth of the Jew as the embodiment of capital with a proto-Zionist myth of origins. (On the medical and racial stereotyping of Jews in the late nineteenth century, and the Jewish reaction, see Sander Gilman, "The Madness of the Jews," in *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1935, pp. 150–162.)

Lewis Hine. Composite photograph of child laborers employed in cotton mill. 1913. (National Gallery of Canada, Ottawa.)

example, Lewis Hine made a number of crude composite prints of girl mill-workers in 1913, in what was evidently an attempt to trace the general effects of factory working conditions on young bodies. And, in a curious twist, the book which provided the conclusive refutation from within criminology of Lombroso's theory of the innate criminal with the telltale skull, Henry Goring's *The English Convict*, opened its attack with a comparison between composites of free-hand drawings and composites of tracings from photographs of criminal heads. The former had been used by Havelock Ellis to make his physiognomic case in *The Criminal.* The discrepancy between these and the tracings revealed a great degree of caricature in Ellis's pictures.[81] With both Hine and Goring, a faith in the objectivity of the camera persisted. However, with the general demise of an optical model of empiricism, Galton's hybridization of the camera and the statistical table approached extinction. Photography continued to serve the sci-

81. Henry Goring, *The English Convict: A Statistical Study*, London, H. M. Stationery Office, 1913. Lombroso's theoretical fixation with convict head size had already been undercut within physical anthropology by Franz Boas. See his 1910–1913 essay, "Changes in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants," in *Race, Language and Culture*, New York, Macmillan, 1949, pp. 60–75.

ences, but in a less grandiose and exalted fashion, and consequently with more modest—and frequently more casual—truth claims, especially on the periphery of the social sciences.

In retrospect, the Galtonian composite can be seen as the collapsed version of the archive. In this blurred configuration, the archive attempts to exist as a potent single image, and the single image attempts to achieve the authority of the archive, of the general, abstract proposition. Galton was certainly a vociferous ideologue for the extension and elaboration of archival methods. He actively promoted familial self-surveillance for hereditarian purposes, calling for his readers to "obtain photographs and ordinary measurements periodically of themselves and their children, making it a family custom to do so."[82] His model here was the British Admiralty's voluminous registry of sailors. Here again, eugenics modeled itself on the military. Galton founded an Anthropometrical Laboratory in 1884, situated first at the International Health Exposition, then moving to the Science Museum in South Kensington. Nine thousand visitors were measured, paying three or four pence each for the privilege of contributing to Galton's eugenic research.[83]

Although married for many years, Galton left no children. Instead, he left behind an immense archive of documents. One curious aspect of Karl Pearson's massive pharaonic biography of Galton is its profusion of photographic illustrations, including not only Galton's many photographic experiments, but also a kind of intermittent family album of more personal pictures.

Eugenics was a utopian ideology, but it was a utopianism inspired and haunted by a sense of social decline and exhaustion. Where Quetelet had approached the question of the average with optimism, finding in averages both a moral and an aesthetic ideal, Galton's eugenicist hope for an improved racial stock was always limited by his early discovery that successive generations of eugenically bred stock tended to regress back toward the mean, and "mediocrity."[84] Thus the fantasy of absolute racial betterment was haunted by what must have seemed a kind of biological entropy.[85] Later, in the twentieth century, eugenics would only operate with brutal certainty in its negative mode, through the sterilization and extermination of the Other.

What can we conclude, finally, about the photographic problems encountered and "solved" by Bertillon, the nominalist detective, and Galton, the essentialist biometrician? The American philosopher and semiotician Charles

82. Galton, *Inquiries*, p. 43.
83. Pearson, *Life, Letters and Labours*, vol. 2, p. 357.
84. Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, pp. xvii–xviii.
85. On the cultural resonance of the concept of entropy in the nineteenth century, see Anson Rabinbach, "The Body without Fatigue: A Nineteenth Century Utopia," in Seymour Drescher et al., eds., *Political Symbolism in Modern Europe: Essays in Honor of George Mosse*, New Brunswick, Transaction Books, 1982, pp. 42–62.

Sanders Peirce, their contemporary, made a useful distinction between signs that referred to their objects indexically, and those that operated symbolically. To the extent that photographs are "effects of the radiations from the object," they are indexical signs, as are all signs which register a physical trace. Symbols, on the other hand, signify by virtue of conventions or rules. Verbal language in general, and all conceptual thought, is symbolic in Peirce's system.[86] Paradoxically, Bertillon, in taming the photograph by subordinating it to the verbal text of the *portrait parlé*, remained wedded to an *indexical* order of meaning. The photograph was nothing more than the physical *trace* of its contingent instance. Galton, in seeking the apotheosis of the optical, attempted to elevate the indexical photographic composite to the level of the *symbolic*, thus expressing a *general law* through the accretion of contingent instances. In so doing, Galton produced an unwitting caricature of inductive reason. The composites signified, not by embodying the law of error, but by being rhetorically annexed to that law. Galton's ambition, although scientistic, was not unlike that of those other elevators of photography, the neosymbolists of the Photo Secession. Both Galton and Stieglitz wanted something more than a mere trace, something that would match or surpass the abstract capabilities of the imaginative or generalizing intellect. In both cases, meaning that was fervently believed to emerge from the "organic" character of the sign was in fact certified by a hidden framing convention. Bertillon, on the other hand, kept his (or at least his underlings') eye and nose to the ground. This made him, in the prejudiced and probably inconsequential opinion of one of his biographers, Henry Rhodes, "the most advanced photographer in Europe."[87] Despite their differences, both Bertillon and Galton were caught up in the attempt to preserve the value of an older, optical model of truth in a historical context in which abstract, statistical procedures seemed to offer the high road to social truth and social control.

III.

The first rigorous system of archival cataloguing and retrieval of photographs was that invented by Bertillon. Bertillon's nominalist system of identification and Galton's essentialist system of typology constitute not only the two poles of positivist attempts to regulate social deviance by means of photography, but also the two poles of these attempts to regulate the semantic traffic in photographs. Bertillon sought to embed the photograph in the archive. Galton sought to embed the archive in the photograph. While their projects were specialized and idiosyncratic, these pioneers of scientific policing and

86. Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Philosophical Writings of Peirce*, ed. Justus Buchler, New York, Dover, 1955, pp. 99–119.
87. Rhodes, p. 191.

eugenics mapped out general parameters for the bureaucratic handling of visual documents. It is quite extraordinary that histories of photography have been written thus far with little more than passing reference to their work. I suspect that this has something to do with a certain bourgeois scholarly discretion concerning the dirty work of modernization, especially when the status of photography as a fine art is at stake.[88] It is even more extraordinary that histories of social documentary photography have been written without taking the police into account. Here the issue is the maintenance of a certain liberal humanist myth of the wholly benign origins of socially concerned photography.[89]

Roughly between 1880 and 1910, the archive became the dominant institutional basis for photographic meaning. Increasingly, photographic archives were seen as central to a bewildering range of empirical disciplines, ranging from art history to military intelligence.[90] Bertillon had demonstrated the usefulness of his model for police purposes, but other disciplines faced significantly different problems of image cataloguing. An emergent *bibliographic science* provided the utopian model of classification for these expansive and unruly collections of photographs. Here again Bertillon was prescient in his effort to reduce the multiple signs of the criminal body to a textual shorthand and numerical series. At a variety of separate but related congresses on the internationalization and standardization of photographic and bibliographic methods, held between 1895 and 1910, it was recommended that photographs be catalogued topically according to the decimal system invented by the American librarian Melvil Dewey in 1876. The lingering prestige of optical empiricism was sufficiently strong to ensure that the terrain of the photographable was still regarded as roughly congruent with that of knowledge in general. The Institute for International Bibliography built on the universalist logic of the eighteenth-century encyclopedists. But appropriate to the triumphal years of an epoch of scientific

88. Compare Josef Maria Eder, *History of Photography*, trans. Edward Epstean, New York, Columbia University Press, 1945, with Beaumont Newhall, *Photography: A Short Critical History*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1938. Eder, very much part of the movement to rationalize photography during the first decade of this century, is quite willing to treat police photography as a proper object of his narrative. Eder in fact wrote an introduction to a German edition of Bertillon's manual (*Die gerichtliche Photographie*, Halle a. S., Knapp, 1895). Newhall, on the other hand, wrote a modernist history in 1938 that privileged technical photography, including First World War aerial reconnaissance work, without once mentioning the use of photography by the police. Clearly, Newhall found it easier to speak of the more glamorous, abstract, and chivalrous state violence of early air power than to dwell on the everyday state violence of the police.

89. An exception would be Sally Stein's revisionist account of Jacob Riis, "Making Connections with the Camera: Photography and Social Mobility in the Career of Jacob Riis," *Afterimage*, vol. 10, no. 10 (May 1983), pp. 9–16.

90. Compare Bernard Berenson, "Isochromatic Photography and Venetian Pictures," *The Nation*, vol. 57, no. 1480 (November 9, 1893), pp. 346–347, with Fred Jane, "Preface," *Fighting Ships*, London, Marsten, 1905–1906, p. 2. However different their objects, these texts share an enthusiasm for large quantities of well-defined photographs.

positivism and the early years of bureaucratic rationalization, a grandiose clerical mentality had now taken hold.[91]

The new scientific bibliographers articulated an operationalist model of knowledge, based on the "general equivalence" established by the numerical shorthand code. This was a system for regulating and accelerating the flow of texts, profoundly linked to the logic of Taylorism. Is it surprising that the main reading room of that American Beaux-Arts temple of democratic and imperial knowledge, the Library of Congress, built during this period of bibliographic rationalization, should so closely resemble the Panopticon, or that the outer perimeter of the building should bear thirty-three "ethnological heads" of various racial types?[92] Or is it any more surprising that the same American manufacturing company produced Bertillon cabinets, business files, and library card catalogue cabinets?[93]

Photography was to be both an *object* and *means* of bibliographic rationalization. The latter possibility emerged from the development of microfilm reproduction of documents. Just as photographs were to be incorporated into the realm of the text, so also the text could be incorporated into the realm of the photograph. If photography retained its prestige as a universal language, it increasingly did so in conjunction with a textual paradigm that was housed within the library.[94]

The grand ambitions of the new encyclopedists of photography were eventually realized but not in the grand encyclopedic fashion one might have expected. With the increasing specialization of intellectual disciplines, archives tended to remain segregated. Nonetheless, the dominant culture of photography did rely heavily on the archival model for its legitimacy. The shadowy presence of the archive authenticated the truth claims made for individual pho-

91. The Institut International de Bibliographie, founded in 1895 with headquarters in Brussels, campaigned for the establishment of a *bibliographia universalis* registered on standardized filing cards. Following Dewey, the Institute recommended that literature on photography be assigned the seventh position within the graphic arts, which were in turn assigned the seventh position within the categories of human knowledge. The last subcategory within the classification of photography was to hold photographic prints. See the Institute's following publications: *Manuel pour l'usage du répertoire bibliographique de la photographie établi d'après la classification décimale*, Brussels (copublished with the Société Française de la Photographie), 1900; *Code pour l'organisation de la documentation photographique*, Brussels, 1910.

92. I am grateful to Daniel Bluestone for pointing out this latter architectural detail. For a contemporary description of the heads, see Herbert Small, *Handbook of the New Library of Congress*, Boston, Curtis and Cameron, 1901, pp. 13–16.

93. See the following catalogues published by the Yawman and Erbe Mfg. Co.: *Card Ledger System and Cabinets*, Rochester, N.Y., 1904; *Criminal Identification by "Y and E": Bertillon and Finger Print Systems*, Rochester, 1913; and *"Y and E" Library Equipment*, Rochester, 192–?.

94. On early microfilm, see *Livre microphotographique: le bibliophoto ou livre à projection*, Brussels, Institut International de Bibliographie, 1911. On the more recent conversion of the photograph from library-document to museum-object, see Douglas Crimp, "The Museum's Old/The Library's New Subject," *Parachute*, no. 22 (Spring 1981), pp. 32–37.

tographs, especially within the emerging mass media. The authority of any particular syntagmatic configuration was underwritten by the encyclopedic authority of the archive. One example will suffice. Companies like Keystone Views or Underwood and Underwood serially published short pictorial groupings of stereograph cards. Although individual sequences of pictures were often organized according to a narrative logic, one sees clearly that the overall structure was informed not by a narrative paradigm, but by the paradigm of the archive. After all, the sequence could be rearranged; its temporality was indeterminate, its narrativity relatively weak. The pleasures of this discourse were grounded not in narrative necessarily, but in archival play, in substitution, and in a voracious optical encyclopedism. There were always more images to be acquired, obtainable at a price, from a relentlessly expanding, globally dispersed picture-gathering agency.[95]

Archival rationalization was most imperative for those modes of photographic realism that were instrumental, that were designed to contribute directly or indirectly to the practical transformation or manipulation of their referent. Can any connections be traced between the archival mode of photography and the emergence of photographic modernism? To what degree did self-conscious modernist practice accommodate itself to the model of the archive? To what degree did modernists consciously or unconsciously resist or subvert the model of the archive, which tended to relegate the individual photographer to the status of a detail worker, providing fragmentary images for an apparatus beyond his or her control? Detailed answers to this question are clearly beyond the scope of this essay. But a few provisional lines of investigation can be charted.

The protomodernism of the Photo Secession and its affiliated movements, extending roughly to 1916, can be seen as an attempt to resist the achival mode through a strategy of avoidance and denial based on craft production. The elegant *few* were opposed to the mechanized *many*, in terms both of images and authors. This strategy required the ostentatious display of the "honorific marks of hand labor," to borrow the phrase coined by the American sociologist Thorstein Veblen in 1899.[96] After 1916, however, aesthetically ambitious photographers abandoned the painterly and embraced pictorial rhetorics much closer to those already operative within the instrumental realist and archival paradigms. Understandably, a variety of contradictory attitudes to the archive emerge within photographic discourse in the 1920s. Some modernists em-

95. This suggests that the historiography of photography will have to approach the question of an "institutional mode" in different terms than those already developed for the historiography of cinema. See, for example, Noël Burch, "Film's Institutional Mode of Representation and the Soviet Response," *October*, no. 11 (Winter 1979), pp. 77–96.

96. Thorstein Veblen, *The Theory of the Leisure Class: An Economic Study of Institutions*, New York, Modern Library, 1934, pp. 163–164.

braced the archival paradigm: August Sander is a case in point. Others resisted through modernist reworkings of the antipositivism and antirationalism of the Photo Secession: the later Stieglitz and Edward Weston are obvious examples.

In many respects the most complicated and intellectually sophisticated response to the model of the archive was that of Walker Evans. Evans's book sequences, especially in his 1938 *American Photographs*, can be read as attempts to counterpose the "poetic" structure of the sequence to the model of the archive. Evans began the book with a prefatory note *reclaiming* his photographs from the various archival repositories which held copyright to or authority over his pictures.[97] Furthermore, the first photograph in the book describes a site of the archival and instrumental mode's proliferation into the spaces of metropolitan daily life in the 1930s: *License-Photo Studio, New York, 1943*. We now know that Evans was fascinated with police photographs during the period in which he made the photographs in this book. A terse topical list on "New York society in the 1930s" contains a central, telegraphic, underlined inscription: "*This project get police cards.*"[98] Certainly Evans's subway photographs of the late 1930s and early 1940s are evidence of a sophisticated dialogue with the empirical methods of the detective police. Evans styled himself as a flaneur, and late in life likened his sensibility to that of Baudelaire. Though Walter Benjamin had proposed that "no matter what trail the *flâneur* may follow, every one will lead him to a crime,"[99] Evans avoided his final rendezvous. This final detour was explicitly described in a 1971 interview in which he took care to distinguish between his own "documentary style" and a "literal document" such as "a police photograph of a murder scene."[100] He stressed the necessary element of poetic transcendence in any art photograph of consequence. The elderly Evans, transformed into the senior figure of modernist genius by a curatorial apparatus with its own archival imperative, could no longer recognize the combative and antiarchival stance of his earlier sequential work. Evans was forced to fall back on an organicist notion of style, searching for that refined surplus of stylistic meaning which would guarantee his authorship, and which in general served to distinguish the art photographer from a flunky in a hierarchy of flunkies.

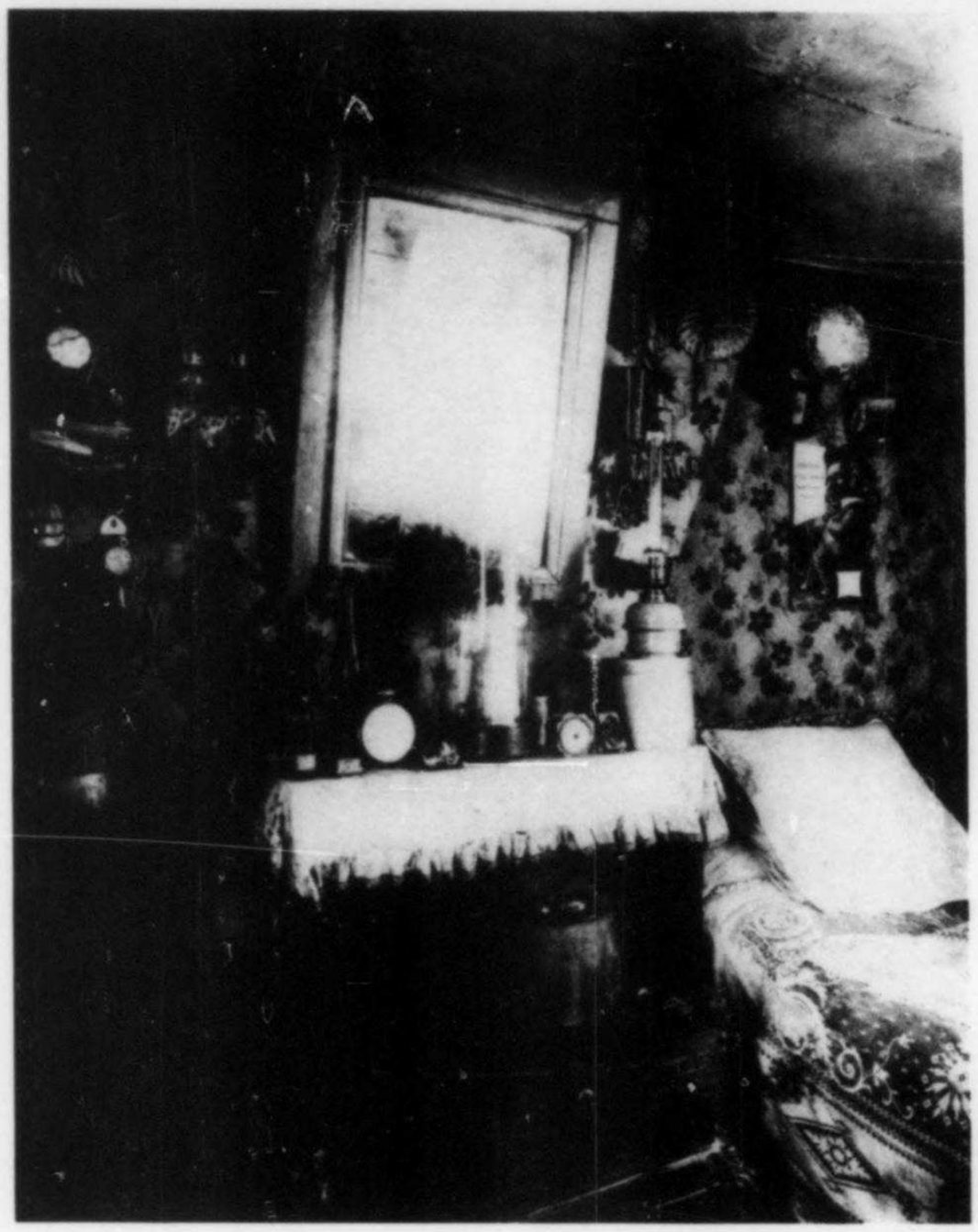
With the advent of postmodernism, many photographers have abandoned any serious commitment to stylistic transcendence, but they fail to recognize the degree to which they share Evans's social fatalism, his sense of the immutability of the existing social order. Modernism offers other models, however, in-

97. Walker Evans, *American Photographs*, New York, Museum of Modern Art, 1938.
98. Reproduced in Jerry Thompson, ed., *Walker Evans at Work*, New York, Harper and Row, 1982, p. 107.
99. Walter Benjamin, "The Paris of the Second Empire in Baudelaire," in *Charles Baudelaire*, p. 41.
100. Leslie Katz, "Interview with Walker Evans," *Art in America*, vol. 59, no. 2 (March–April 1971), p. 87.

Walker Evans. License-Photo Studio, New York, 1934. *Plate 1 from* American Photographs, *1938.*

cluding more militant and equally intelligent models of photographic practice. Consider Camille Recht's reading of the photographs of Eugène Atget, a photographer of acknowledged import in Evans's own development. Recht comments on interior views "which remind us of a police photograph of a crime scene" and then on "the photograph of a worker's dwelling which testifies to the housing problem." For Recht, the proximity of a "nuptial bed and an unavoidable chimney flue," provided grimly comic testimony of everyday life in an exploitative social formation.[101] This emphasis on the telling detail, the metonymic fragment that points to the systemic crimes of the powerful, would be repeated and refined in the writings of Walter Benjamin.[102] Our tendency to associate Benjamin with the theory and practice of montage tends to obscure the degree to which he built his modernism from an empiricist model, from a model of careful, idiosyncratic observation of detail. This model could argue both for the photographer as *monteur*, and for the photographer as revolutionary spy or detective, or, more "respectably," as critical journalist of the working class.

101. Camille Recht, introduction to Eugène Atget, *Lichtbilder*, Paris and Leipzig, Henri Jonquières, 1930, pp. 18–19 (my translation).
102. See Benjamin's 1931 essay "A Short History of Photography," trans. Stanley Mitchell, *Screen*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Spring 1972), p. 25.



Eugène Atget. Plate 12 from Lichtbilder, *1930.*

Metrical photograph and planimetric sketch. From A. Bertillon and A. Chervin, Anthropologie métrique, *1909.*

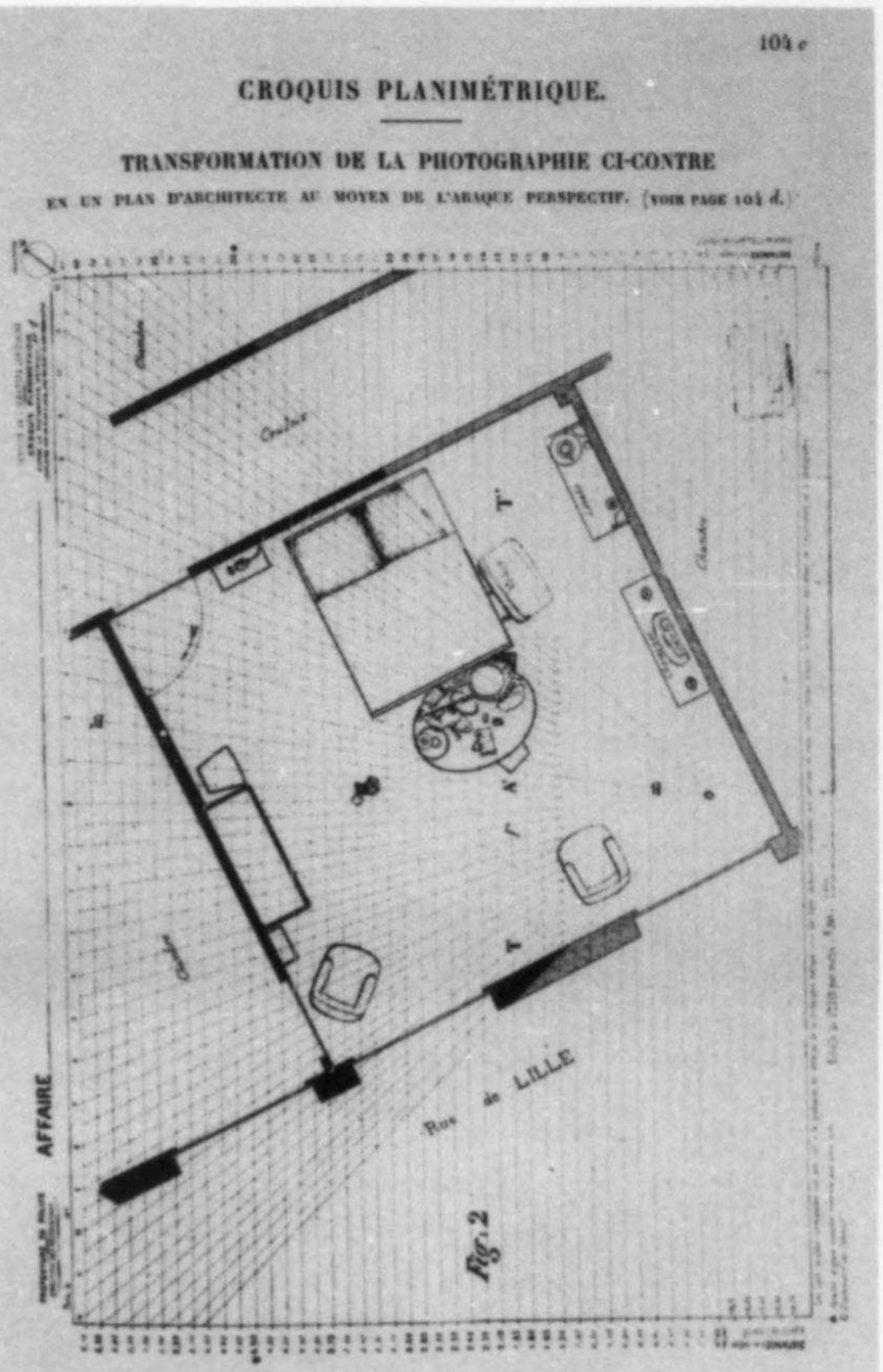
104 b

PHOTOGRAPHIE MÉTRIQUE D'UN INTÉRIEUR AVEC RÉTICULES

POUR LA TRANSFORMATION EN UN PLAN D'ARCHITECTE. (VOIR PAGES 103 ET SUIVANTES.)

Fig. 1

AFFAIRE



104 c

CROQUIS PLANIMÉTRIQUE.

TRANSFORMATION DE LA PHOTOGRAPHIE CI-CONTRE

EN UN PLAN D'ARCHITECTE AU MOYEN DE L'ABAQUE PERSPECTIF. (VOIR PAGE 104 d.)

Couloir

Couloir

Couloir

Rue de LILLE

Fig. 2

AFFAIRE

N. B. Les nécessités de la mise en pages nous ont contraint à réduire de moitié les deux planches ci-dessus. Les nombres de la graduation de droite représentant les *réductions* (ou les distances à l'objectif mesurées en *images* focales) doivent être doublés et le tirage focal considéré comme égal à 7 centim. 5 (moitié du tirage indiqué). Comme les distances à l'objectif (exprimées en centimètres) inscrites sur la graduation de gauche sont obtenues en multipliant les réductions par le tirage focal, on voit que les chiffres de cette graduation restent les mêmes; ce qui, *a priori*, était évident.

This essay could end with this sketch of modernist responses to the prior institutionalization of the instrumental realist archive. Social history would lead to art history, and we would arrive at a safe archival closure. Unfortunately, Bertillon and Galton are still with us. "Bertillon" survives in the operations of the national security state, in the condition of intensive and extensive surveillance that characterizes both everyday life and the geopolitical sphere. "Galton" lives in the renewed authority of biological determinism, founded in the increased hegemony of the political Right in the Western democracies. That is, Galton lives quite specifically in the neo-Spencerian pronouncements of Reaganism, Thatcherism, and the French National Front.[103] Galton's spirit also survives in the neoeugenicist implications of some of the new biotechnologies.

These are political issues. As such, their resonance can be heard in the aesthetic sphere. In the United States in the 1970s, a number of works, primarily in film and video, took an aggressive stance toward both biological determinism and the prerogatives of the police. Martha Rosler's video "opera" *The Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained* (1976) retains its force as an allegorical feminist attack on the normalizing legacy of Quetelet and Galton. Other, more nominalist works, took on the police at the level of counter-testimony and counter-surveillance. I am thinking here of a number of documentary films: Howard Gray's and Michael Alk's *The Murder of Fred Hampton* (1971), Cinda Firestone's *Attica* (1973), and the Pacific Street Film Collective's *Red Squad* (1972). These examples tend to be forgotten or overlooked in a contemporary art scene rife with a variety of what can be termed "neophysiognomic" concerns. The body has returned with a vengeance. The heavily expressionist character of this return makes the scientistic and racialist underpinnings of physiognomy seem rather remote. In photography, however, this lineage is harder to repress. In one particularly troubling instance, this returned body is specifically Galtonian in its configuration. I refer here to the computer generated composites of Nancy Burson, enveloped in a promotional discourse so appallingly stupid in its fetishistic belief in cybernetic truth and its desperate desire to remain grounded in the optical and organic that it would be dismissable were it not for its smug scientism. For an artist or critic to resurrect the methods of biosocial typology without once acknowledging the historical context and consequences of these procedures is naive at best and cynical at worst.[104]

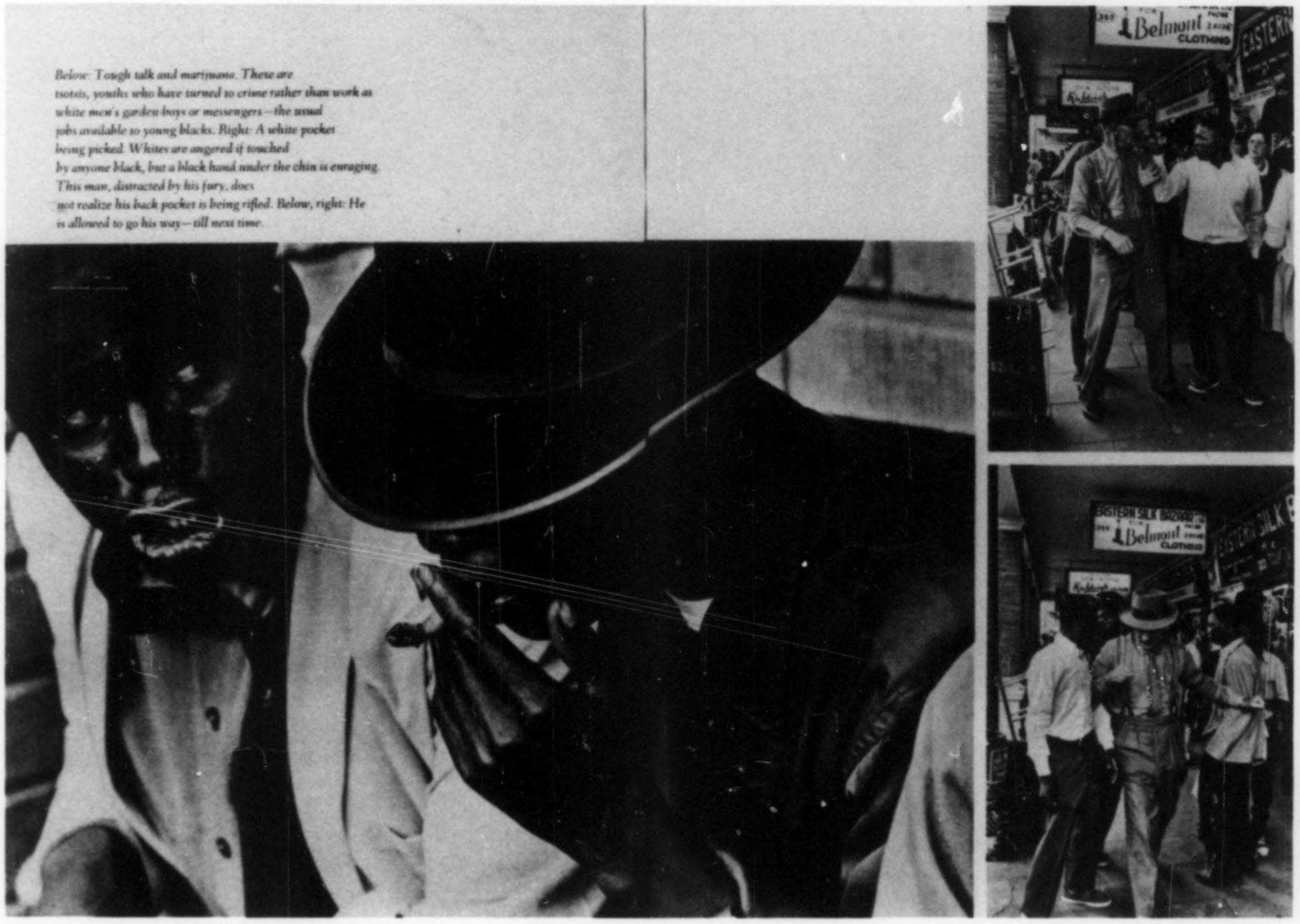
In the interests of a certain internationalism, however, I want to end with a story that takes us outside the contemporary art scene and away from the simultaneously inflated and deflated figure of the postmodernist author. This anecdote might suggest something of the hardships and dilemmas of a photo-

103. For an example of the high regard for Galton among contemporary hereditarians, see H. J. Eysenck's introduction to the 1978 edition of *Hereditary Genius* previously cited.
104. See Nancy Burson et al., *Composites: Computer Generated Portraits*, New York, William Morrow, 1986.

graphic practice engaged in from below, a photographic practice on ground patrolled by the police. In 1967, a young Black South African photographer named Ernest Cole published a book in the United States called *House of Bondage.* Cole's book and his story are remarkable. In order to photograph a broad range of South African society, Cole had first to change his racial classification from black to colored, no mean feat in a world of multiple bureaus of identity, staffed by officials who have mastered a subtle bureaucratic taxonomy of even the offhand gestures of the different racial and ethnic groups. He countered this apparatus, probably the last *physiognomic* system of domination in the world, with a descriptive strategy of his own, mapping out the various checkpoints in the multiple channels of apartheid.

Cole photographed during a period of relative political "calm" in South Africa, midway between the Sharpeville massacre of 1960 and the Soweto students' revolt of 1976. At a time when black resistance was fragmented and subterranean in the wake of the banning of the main opposition groups, he discovered a limited, and by his own account problematic, figure of resistance in young black toughs, or *tsotsis*, who lived lives of petty criminality. Cole photo-

Below: Tough talk and marijuana. These are tsotsis, youths who have turned to crime rather than work as white men's garden boys or messengers—the usual jobs available to young blacks. Right: A white pocket being picked. Whites are angered if touched by anyone black, but a black hand under the chin is enraging. This man, distracted by his fury, does not realize his back pocket is being rifled. Below, right: He is allowed to go his way—till next time.



From Ernest Cole, House of Bondage, *1967.*

graphed *tsotsis* mugging a white worker for his pay envelope, as well as a scene of a white man slapping a black beggar child. And he regularly photographed the routine passbook arrests of blacks who were caught outside the zones in which they were permitted to travel. As might be expected, Cole's documentation of the everyday flows of power, survival, and criminal resistance got him into trouble with the law. He was questioned repeatedly by police, who assumed he was carrying stolen camera equipment. Finally he was stopped after photographing passbook arrests. Asked to explain himself, he claimed to be making a documentary on juvenile delinquency. Sensing his criminological promise, the police, who then as now operated through a pervasive system of informers, invited him to join the ranks. At that point, Cole decided to leave the country while he still could. *House of Bondage* was assembled from the negatives he smuggled out of South Africa. Since publishing his book in exile, Cole has disappeared from the world of professional photojournalism.[105]

The example of Cole's work suggests that we would be wise to avoid an overly monolithic conception of realism. Not all realisms necessarily play into the hands of the police, despite Theodor Adorno's remark, designed to lampoon a Leninist epistemology once and for all, that "knowledge has not, like the state police, a rogues' gallery of its objects."[106] If we are to listen to, and act in solidarity with, the polyphonic testimony of the oppressed and exploited, we should recognize that some of this testimony, like Cole's, will take the ambiguous form of visual documents, documents of the "microphysics" of barbarism. These documents can easily fall into the hands of the police or their intellectual apologists. Our problem, as artists and intellectuals living near but not at the center of a global system of power, will be to help prevent the cancellation of that testimony by more authoritative and official texts.

105. Ernest Cole (with Thomas Flaherty), *House of Bondage*, New York, Random House, 1967. For the account of Cole's own struggle to produce the pictures in the book, I have relied upon Joseph Lelyveld's introduction, "One of the Least-Known Countries in the World," pp. 7–24.
106. Theodor Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton, New York, Seabury, 1973, p. 206.

The Legs of the Countess

ABIGAIL SOLOMON-GODEAU

> *Subjectivity denied to woman: indisputably this provides the financial backing for every irreducible constitution [of her] as an object: of representation, of discourse, of desire.*
>
> —Luce Irigaray, "Any Theory of the 'Subject' Has Always Been Appropriated by the 'Masculine'"

Historians of photography tend to divide the staggering number of images that constitute their object of study into two separate but hardly equal realms: that of the typical and that of the anomalous. The photographs of the Countess de Castiglione fall within both. On the one hand, the countess was merely one of thousands of well-to-do clients who passed through the doors of the fashionable Second Empire photographic firm of Mayer & Pierson, official photographers to the emperor and his court.[1] The majority of photographs made of

1. Louis Pierson, who began his professional career as a daguerreotypist, joined the firm of Mayer Frères sometime before 1854. The Mayers' commercial success was based on the invention, patent, and sale of various photographic supplies, including fully equipped darkrooms, and the sale of already prepared paints and tints for handcoloring photographs, a speciality of the firm. Their first commissioned portrait of Napoleon III in 1853, followed by a number of portraits of Eugénie, established their commercial success and social cachet. By 1855 the firm had an address on the Boulevard des Capucines and branches in London and Brussels.

In 1862, Ernest Mayer, the remaining brother in the firm, withdrew from the business, leaving Pierson as sole owner, although the original name was retained. In that year the firm could boast a collection of 1,000 to 1,500 celebrity *cartes-de-visite*. The same year saw the precedent-setting lawsuit (Mayer and Pierson were the plaintiffs) establishing the copyright protection of photography under the law of July 19, 1793.

In 1873, Pierson's daughter married Gaston Braun, son of Adolph Braun, whose photographic firm, based in Dornach, specialized in industrial photography. The following year Gaston Braun purchased the entire contents of the Mayer & Pierson studio, which was then consolidated into the firm of Braun & Cie. Pierson continued to administer the affairs of the company until his retirement in 1909. Many of the photographs of the Countess de Castiglione have

Mayer & Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1856–60.
(Musée d'Unterlinden, photo Christian Kempf.)

the countess by Louis Pierson are thus neither technically nor formally dissimilar to those of any other aristocratic and elegant woman who engaged his services. But the frequency with which the countess presented herself to the camera, and in a certain number of startling instances the *ways* in which she did this, are exceptional. What are we to make of the countess's having herself photographed in her chemise? Or exposing her legs? With some justice, one could dispense with these anomalies as the whims of an eccentric, if not deranged, woman. But when considered in the context of her culture and milieu, the very nature of her eccentricity seems remarkable only in degree, and in relation to the fact that she herself was the architect of her own representations. Indeed, much of the significance of these photographs, initially so unclassifiable, resides in their homology with other kinds of photographs, their contiguity with other images, both licensed and illicit. For, as I shall argue, the logic of these images is not only that of a unique expression of the countess's obsessions, but that of a talisman of the culture that produced her.

Accordingly, the photographs of the countess require a contextual examination as much as they do a biographical one. However bizarre or idiosyncratic the appearance of these images, the elements of their construction are to be located in various representational sites whose common denominator could be termed the semiotics of the feminine. Their reading thus needs to be both symptomatic and dialectical: symptomatic in that they are the personal expression of an individual woman's investment in her image—in herself *as* image; dialectical in that this individual act of expression is underwritten by conventions that make her less an author than a scribe. Such a reading raises the photographs from the trivial status of historical curios to significant testimonials of the power of patriarchy to register its desire within the designated space of the feminine. This latter reading devolves on the confluence of three fetishisms, a confluence which can also be observed in other social and cultural phenomena of the period: the psychic fetishism of patriarchy, grounded in the specificity of the corporeal body; the commodity fetishism of capitalism, shrouded in what Marx termed the "veil of reification," and grounded in the means of production and the social relations they engender; and the fetishizing properties of the photograph—a commemorative trace of an absent

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thus been erroneously attributed to Adolph Braun, and the ones taken in her old age to Gaston Braun, because of the studio stamp they bear. I am convinced that all the photographs of the countess that I have seen were taken by Pierson.

The number of extant plates from the firm of Mayer & Pierson now in the collection of the Musée d'Unterlinden, but housed in the Archives du Haut Rhin in Colmar, number 10,000. See Pierre Tyl, "Mayer et Pierson (1)," in *Prestige de la photographie*, no. 6, Paris, Editions e.p.a., 1979, pp. 5–30; Pierre Tyl, "Mayer et Pierson (2)," in *Prestige de la Photographie*, no. 7, Paris, Editions e.p.a., 1979, pp. 36–63; and the unsigned article, "Pierson's portretten van 'La Castiglione,'" *Foto*, December 1974, pp. 36–39. For the implications of the Mayer & Pierson lawsuit, see Giselle Freund, *Photography and Society*, Boston, David Godine, 1983.

object, the still picture of a frozen look, a screen for the projective play of the spectator's consciousness. That Marx wrote "The Fetishism of Commodities" at the very moment when the countess photographically documented her toilettes and body parts, and also when the photographic industry experienced its own massive commercial expansion suggests not only the temporal proximity of the three forms of fetishism but the site on which they come together.[2]

That site is, of course, woman, and the confluence of these fetishisms on the body of woman is everywhere to be found in the Second Empire and Third Republic. But it is above all found within the representations of three types of women: in the image (both textual and iconic) of the prostitute, who unites in her person both seller and commodity; in the dancer or actress—the spectacle within the spectacle—who is perceived as a type of circulating goods; and in the notion of the beautiful, worldly woman, endlessly hypostatized, scrutinized, and dissected. That these three fetishisms converge in and around the representation of the feminine is surely not fortuitous. Luce Irigaray contends that Marx's analysis of commodities as the elementary form of capitalist wealth may be applied to an understanding of women's status in patriarchy. Irigaray's attempt to integrate Marxist and psychoanalytic approaches illuminates one of the problems in much recent literary criticism concerned with the mechanisms and consequences of sexual positioning. In focusing on only the first of the three fetishisms, such an approach tends to de-historicize the phenomenon. The structures of fetishism, like the Oedipal scenario which is its source, are presented as transhistorical, transcultural, and immutable givens, hermetically distinct from changing material determinations. Granted that the nineteenth century culturally manifests a heightened fetishization of the woman's body, it is equally important to acknowledge that it is also the period that witnesses the penetration of the commodity into all spheres of life, experience, and consciousness. Is it not possible to see in the emerging reign of the commodity a correspondence to new forms of the commodification of the feminine?

Examined in this perspective, photography appears to function as a crucial agent in the articulation and dissemination of both forms of commodification. Moreover, insofar as the camera fragments and abstracts its living subject, its mechanisms optically parallel those of reification. In producing and reproducing the image-world of capitalism, photography is simultaneously a commodity and an instrument of commodification.[3] Such mid-nineteenth-century cultural developments as an expanded conception of celebrity, with its

2. The structural homologies between the commodity fetish and the woman in partriarchy is the subject of Luce Irigaray's extraordinary essay "Women on the Market." My own essay is to a great extent indebted to her analysis. See Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter, with Carolyn Burke, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985.

3. A thorough discussion of this double role of photography may be found in Judith Williamson, *Decoding Advertisements*, London, Marian Boyars, 1985.

auxiliary discourses of fashion and publicity, are inseparable from the rise of camera culture. Furthermore, photography plays a critically important role in fostering that condition of modern life which the Situationists have dubbed spectacle. Finally, photography brings into being new configurations and articulations of the body, new images of masculinity and femininity—especially the latter—which intersect with older modes of representation to produce their own potent and transfiguring admixtures of modernity. It is within this dense matrix of sexual ideology, economic and social transformation, and the inexorable expansion of commodity culture that the historical significance of the countess's photographs may be glimpsed. To the extent that they also raise questions about the nature of feminine self-representation, they are somber reminders that the psychic determinations of patriarchy and the material ones of capitalism are as inescapable for us as they were for the countess.

1. The Image of Desire

Writing in her journal near the age of sixty, the Countess de Castiglione considered her youthful beauty: "The Eternal Father did not realize what He had created the day he brought her into the world; He formed her so superbly that when it was done He lost His head at the contemplation of this marvelous work."[4] The extravagant narcissism of the countess's self-appraisal is somewhat startling, but less so than the objectification to which it attests, evidenced both by the use of the third-person singular and by her designation of herself as a work ("maravigliosa opera").

This hyperbolic praise was echoed by other commentators during the period of the countess's prominence as a Second Empire court celebrity from 1854 until the early 1860s. "There has never been another woman," wrote Gaston Jollivet, "at least not in my lifetime, in whom immortal Venus, as deified by the brushstrokes and chisels of the great masters, was more perfectly incarnate."[5] Even Princess Pauline de Metternich, who thoroughly disliked the countess, admitted, "I have never in my life seen such beauty and I do not expect to see its like again."[6]

Virginia Verasis, née Oldoini, Countess de Castiglione, has been the subject of two kinds of posthumous acknowledgment, succeeding those contemporary descriptions of her that appeared in the memoirs and diaries produced during the Second Empire and the Third Republic.[7] In the standard political

4. Cited in Frédéric Loliée, *Les femmes du second empire*, Paris, Talladier, 1954, p. 48.
5. Cited in Alain Decaux, *La Castiglione: dame de coeur de l'Europe*, Paris, Le Livre Contemporain, 1959, p. 151.
6. Cited in Robert de Montesquiou, *La divine comtesse: étude d'après Mme de Castiglione*, Paris, Goupil & Cie., 1913, p. 26.
7. These include the memoirs of Count Horace de Viel-Castel, Countess Stéphanie Tascher de la Pagerie's *Mon séjour aux Tuileries*, and the memoirs of the Count de Maugny.

Mayer & Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1856–60. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of George Davis.)

histories of the period, she figures only as a footnote in the annals of the empire. Briefly the mistress of Napoleon III, she appears to have acted as an agent of Camillo Cavour, to whom she was distantly related, in order to help ensure the emperor's cooperation in King Victor Emmanuel's designs for the unification under his crown of the kingdoms of Piedmont, Lombardy-Venetia, and the two Sicilies. The countess's second discursive afterlife was a function of her fabled beauty and her brief notoriety as the emperor's mistress. In this guise, the countess was the subject of Second Empire republican propaganda (Benjamin Gastineau's *Sottises et scandales du temps présent*), Third Republic potboilers (Frédéric Loliée's *Le roman d'une favorite*), modern historical romances (Jacques Chabannes's *Le poison sous le crinoline*), and, perhaps most interestingly, a hysterical panegyric by the self-styled "sovereign of the transitory," the epicure and dandy Comte Robert de Montesquiou (*La divine comtesse*).

One of the pretexts of de Montesquiou's curious book is the collection of photographs of the countess, along with many of her personal effects, letters, jewelry, and memorabilia, which he had purchased at auction after her death in 1899. It is this collection of over 400 photographs that more than anything else suggests the countess's singularity.[8] For while many of the female celebrities of the Second Empire and Third Republic were frequently photographed, their images reproduced, commercially sold, and widely circulated, the countess's photographs, though *taken* by a professional photographer, could with some justice be perceived as having been *authored* by her. Such an attribution would be predicated on the fact that the countess, far from passively following the directives of the photographer, substantially determined her own presentation to the camera, dictating the pose, costume, props, and accessories, and occasionally decided upon the coloring and/or retouching of the photographs. Alternatively, we might consider the hundreds of photographs taken of her by Louis Pierson as a working collaboration—one, moreover, that extended over thirty years.

In whatever proportion we wish to mete out credit for these images, however, what concerns me here are the problematic and contradictory aspects of the countess's attempt at photographic self-creation. Most suggestively, it is the apparent imbrication of narcissism and fetishism, and the subject's collusion in her own objectification, that transform these idiosyncratic artifacts into disturbing emblems of the aporia of women and their representations. For what is repetitively played out in the countess's choreography of the self—a choreography she attempts to appropriate for her own ambiguous ends—is the difficulty, if not the impossibility, of the attempt to represent herself. Thus, in venturing to raise the issue of authorship in relation to these photographs, my

8. These photographs, assembled by Robert de Montesquiou, are now in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.

intention is not to wrest the honors from Pierson and give them to the countess, or even to demonstrate the complex nature of the issues pertaining to photographic authorship, but rather to emphasize that the singularity of the countess's photographs intersects with the problem of feminine self-representation.

There is little need to underscore the fact that, historically, women have rarely been the authors of their own representations, either as makers or as models. Prior to the twentieth century there are a few exceptions in literature and letters, fewer in the visual arts, and virtually none in photography. Indeed, even the most cursory consideration of the photographic representation of women reveals that they are typically constructed in photographs in ways scarcely less coded, hardly less "already-written," than they are in other representational systems. Marx's description of the politically and socially disenfranchised—"they do not represent themselves; they must be represented"—is surely as applicable to women as to the proletariat or the colonial subject. But the countess did, in a quite literal sense, produce herself for the camera, and in a manner she alone determined. When a nineteenth-century woman provides us with an example of self-representation we do well to attend to the terms of its articulation.

In addition to the 434 photographs assembled by the Count de Montesquiou, there exist between 250 and 350 negatives of the countess from the photographic firm of Mayer & Pierson, incorporated into the collection of Maison Adolph Braun in 1873, and now in the photographic archives of the city of Colmar.[9] The great majority of the photographs were made between 1856 and 1865 at the height of their subject's fame and beauty. However, a few years before her death in 1899, the countess commissioned Pierson to make another series of photographs, one set of which is now in the collection of the Gilman Paper Corporation, and another, larger group in Colmar.[10]

These photographs—running the gamut from entirely conventional studio portraits, either *carte-de-visite* or cabinet format, to theatricalized or narrativized tableaux, to stunning and formally unusual full-figure portraits and odd, crudely hand-colored images[11]—are exceptional for a number of reasons.

9. Many, but not all, of the prints in the Montesquiou collection exist in the Colmar archives, which in turn contains prints not represented in the Montesquiou collection. The lack of precision in giving the number of photographs of the countess is due to the fact that there are often several exposures on the same plate, with only slight variations.

10. The photographs in the Gilman Paper Corporation are attributed to Gaston Braun; see footnote 1. Quite possibly there exist other photographs of the countess, but these are the collections I have worked from and are the only ones with which I am familiar.

11. Mayer & Pierson were well known for the quality of their hand-coloring. A number of the countess's biographers claim that she particularly valued the hand-coloring of her photographs by M. Gustave Schad, one of their employees. However, many of the colored photographs in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum are crude almost to the point of defacement. Moreover, the paint applied to them looks more like tempera, or occasionally india ink, rather than the

Mayer & Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1856–60. Album page from the Count de Montesquiou's collection. (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, David Hunter McAlpin Fund.)

First, there is the sheer quantity. Surely no woman of the mid-nineteenth century, irrespective of fame or notoriety, was photographed so extensively, within so short a time span, as was the countess. Moreover, where individual women were much-photographed (for example, Queen Victoria or the courtesan Cleo de Merode), their images were intended for commercial consumption, whereas the bulk of the countess's photographs appear to have been commissioned for herself. We must also bear in mind that in this period the photographic portrait, made principally within a specialized photographic atelier, was by no means cheap, involving as it did the skills of a number of professionals and technicians; it was, in short, anything but a casual and impromptu affair.[12] The countess's photographs, in which she appears, variously, in extravagant court dress, in masquerade, in narrative tableaux enacting such roles as drunken soubrette, Breton peasant, or cloistered nun, were necessarily elaborate productions.

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specially manufactured tints used for coloring photographs. Since a number of these photographs are annotated in the countess's hand (usually specifying the colors, accessories, and jewelry she wore with the depicted outfit), it seems reasonable to suppose that it was she who painted them.

12. See in this regard Jean Sagne, *L'atelier du photographe: 1840–1940*, Paris, Presses de la Renaissance, 1984.

Mayer & Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1856–60. (Musée d'Unterlinden, photo Christian Kempf.)

No less remarkable are the photographs she commissioned of herself *en déshabillé*—in chemise or nightgown—or the closeups of her feet in the sandals she wore for the costume of the Queen of Etruria, or the pictures of herself feigning sleep and awakening, terror and rage, or even a photograph where she weeps within the rectangle of an empty picture frame, propped on a table. The genre of still life was also conscripted to the ends of self-portraiture. There are two prints that depict a profusion of her personal effects—photographs of herself shown *en abyme*, along with shawls, keepsakes, and dried flowers, and half-buried in their midst, one of her lapdogs together with his leashes, collars, and dog clothes. That it was the countess, however, who directed the camera is nowhere more evident than in the extraordinary group of photographs in which she removed her shoes and stockings, raised her petticoats and crinoline, and had her naked legs photographed from several viewpoints.

The shocking impropriety of this gesture, despite the fact that these photographs were in no sense intended to circulate, becomes even clearer when we note that in those contemporary photographs of dancers, actresses, and demimondaines produced for public consumption, legs are always sheathed in tights. Tights were virtually the prerequisite for the transformation of carnal flesh into the sublimated, sculptural form of aesthetic, albeit eroticized, delectation. For Baudelaire, the work of the tights was analogous to that of cosmetics:

> Anyone can see that the use of rice-powder, so stupidly anathemized by our Arcadian philosophers, is successfully designed to rid the complexion of those blemishes that Nature has outrageously strewn

there, and thus to create an abstract unity in color and texture of the skin, a unity, which, like that produced by the legs of the dancer, immediately approximates the human being to the statue, that is, to something superior and divine.[13]

This conception was so prevalent that the naked leg appears only in the context of the nude or in the specifically erotic gesture of removing or putting on stockings. In the latter case, it is, of course, the stocking that constitutes the supplementary sign that codes the woman's body erotically, whether in eighteenth-century pornographic imagery or in the current *Playboy*.

That an aristocratic woman, however notorious, would so display her legs to the official photographer of the court breached one of the several boundaries of what was normatively representable in Second Empire photography. This fact alone establishes these photographs' oddity. But the images are neither coded for the erotic (as are the commercially produced erotic or pornographic images in which the fetishistic display of the leg mandates particular modes of presentation) nor purely clinical and evidentiary, although they resemble the latter genre far more than the former. Rather, the countess's desire was to image parts of her body and to reserve those images for her own gaze, an enterprise that suggests the activities of the fetishist.

Freudian theory, however, insists on the impossibility of female fetishism.[14] The fetish is clinically defined as a substitute object, simultaneously disavowing and commemorating the penis perceived as missing from the maternal body. Accordingly, the significance of the theory lies in its value as a model for simultaneously sustaining two mutually contradictory beliefs. But insofar as it hinges on the threat of castration, the definition effectively forecloses a structural model of female fetishism. Indeed, clinical instances of fetishism (defined as a libidinal investment in an object indispensable for sexual gratification) appear not to exist. Thus, within the terms of psychoanalytic theory, it is not pos-

13. Charles Baudelaire, "The Painter of Modern Life," in *The Painter of Modern Life and Other Essays*, trans. and ed. Jonathan Mayne, London, Phaidon, 1964, p. 33.

14. That Freud's theory of fetishism is fundamentally predicated on the male subject accounts for at least some of the lacunae and inconsistencies in the theory (for example, the different correlation between vision and significance attributed to boys and girls); see Sarah Kofman, *The Enigma of Woman: Woman in Freud's Writing*, trans. Catherine Porter, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1985. Recently, attempts have been made to theorize female fetishism. See, for example, Mary Kelly's artwork and book *Port-Partum Document*, London, Routledge, Kegan Paul, 1983. In this work, Kelly formulates a woman's fetishism in terms of the mother's relation to her (male) child. See also Naomi Schor, "Female Fetishism," in Susan Rubin Sulieman, ed., *The Female Body in Western Culture: Contemporary Perspectives*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1986. Theories of the fetish character of the photograph, on the other hand, do not distinguish between male and female spectators, which tends to beg the issue of how women could have a fetishistic relation to them. See Christian Metz, "Photography and Fetish," *October*, no. 34 (Fall 1985), pp. 81–90; and Victor Burgin, "Photography, Phantasy, Function," in Victor Burgin, ed., *Thinking Photography*, London, Macmillan, 1982, pp. 177–216.

sible to describe the countess's relation to her photographs, at least in a clinical sense, as fetishistic. Symptomatically, one is on more solid ground in describing the countess's captivation with her photographic image as a classic instance of narcissism or, as it would have been understood in her own time, a familiar, if excessive, expression of feminine vanity. But thinking back to her characterization of herself as a "work," it is more suggestive to consider the countess's narcissism within the problematics of feminine subjectivity. For with whose eyes does the countess gaze at images of her face? her legs? her body? Having no culturally privileged organ of narcissistic identification and being positioned outside the symbolic order of patriarchy, defined only as other in relation to the masculine one, the feminine position, it is argued, precludes an achieved subjectivity—subjectivity here understood as a positively, rather than differentially, defined identity. Consequently, the woman, whose self-worth and social value is contingent on her status as object of desire, has so internalized the male gaze as to produce a near-total identification with it. In this sense, the commonplace desire to see oneself as one is seen—from outside the confines of subjectivity—is complicated by the concept of sexual difference. Because for woman, to see oneself as one is seen is not a supplement to subjectivity, but its very condition. But the conditions that inform the subjectivity of women, including the internalization of the male gaze, are hardly the symmetrical complement of those informing the subjectivity of men. In this light, the countess's obsessive self-representations are less an index of narcissism—although they are that too—than a demonstration of a radical alienation that collapses the distinction between subjecthood and objecthood.

Despite the countess's authorship of her own presentation, then, we confront in these photographs a fundamental contradiction. In the very act of authoring her image—a position that implies individuality and a unique subjectivity—the countess can only reproduce herself as a work of elaborately coded femininity, a femininity which, as always, derives from elsewhere. "The life of this woman," wrote Robert de Montesquiou, "was nothing but a lengthy *tableau vivant*, a perpetual *tableau vivant*."[15]

Contemporary descriptions of the countess emphasize the sculptural, marmoreal aspect of her beauty, a quality doubtless heightened by her habitual hauteur. Princess de Metternich, for example, describing the countess's scandalous ball costume as Salammbô, with arms and legs bare and no corset, concludes, "Despite our indignation, I must swear that the sculptural beauty she revealed was so complete that there was nothing indecent about it. One could call her a statue come to life."[16] And the Marshal Canrobert agrees, "Mme de Castiglione was of an incomparable beauty. She resembled at one and the same

15. Montesquiou, p. 81.
16. Cited in Pierre Labrachérie, *Napoléon III et son temps*, Paris, Julliard, 1976, p. 49.

time a Virgin of Perugino and an antique Venus; but she remained always in a state akin to marble or painting, without animation and without life. . . ."[17]

This totemic and reified conception of feminine beauty is a leitmotif in French nineteenth-century culture, changing very little between Balzac and Zola. The highly conventionalized language in the descriptions of feminine beauty may be more specific and detailed in the later period, but what remains the same is their status as already-written texts.[18] Consequently, the discursive formulae employed in conveying the beautiful woman are not only quite generalized, but usually have little to do with the specific attributes of the individual on whom they are inscribed. This accounts for the frequent dissonance between the written accounts and the visual record of famous nineteenth-century courtesans and beauties. For the most part, the faces and bodies of women such as Cora Pearl, La Paiva, Liane de Pougy, Anna Deslions (the first two were the composite models for Zola's Nana) seem wholly ordinary. Similarly, looking at the plump and rather flaccid legs of the countess, it is difficult to understand what the fuss was about. To be sure, standards of feminine beauty change constantly; Second Empire canons encompassed both the plump and the slender. Moreover, the importance of various body parts waxes and wanes. In her youthful glory, even the countess's elbows were eulogized, were compared to ripe peaches. According to de Montesquiou and several other biographers, molds were made of her feet and arms.

Of course, the terms according to which the countess was perceived, and those through which she came to perceive herself, were so mediated as to make any reference to her corporeal reality almost beside the point. A historical and feminist examination of her photographs must therefore shift to a consideration of the stereotypical aspect of their construction. In this respect, one of their most striking qualities is their theatricality. In substituting performance for any attempt at presence, the countess may be said to provide a series of representations of the feminine as a form of theater, of masquerade. The impassive face she offers to the camera, the utter formality and iconicity of her self-presentation, refuses the viewer any psychological access, whether real or imagined. We are here far from any conventional notion of bourgeois portraiture, and further still from the interest in physiognomy. By her own estimation and that of others, the countess is equivalent to her beauty, and her beauty is itself a form of mask, of disguise. The extravagance of her toilette—extravagant even

17. Labrachérie, p. 48.

18. "Beauty (unlike ugliness) cannot really be explained: in each part of the body it stands out, repeats itself, but it does not describe itself. Like a god (and as empty), it can only say: *I am what I am.* The discourse, then, can do no more than assert the perfection of each detail and refer "the remainder" to the code underlying all beauty: Art. In other words, beauty cannot assert itself save in the form of a citation . . ." (Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller, New York, Hill and Wang, 1974, p. 33).

by the bloated and parvenu standards of the Second Empire court—is the incarnation of a femininity that has become wholly theatrical and impersonal, a tribal mask of idealized display. If the photographs of the countess often suggest the stylized exaggerations of a female impersonator, it is because the spectacle of this elaborated femininity is so overweening as to abolish any impulse in the spectator to imagine a character, a personality, a psychology, behind the mask.

In this regard it is important to recall that femininity has been theorized as an operation of masquerade. Initially formulated by the French psychoanalyst Joan Rivière, this concept has been revived by contemporary feminist psychoanalytic theorists (Luce Irigaray) and feminist film theorists (Claire Johnston, Mary Ann Doane) for its relevance to the project of defining the conditions of feminine subjectivity (or its lack).[19] "Masquerade," as Doane writes, "is not as recuperable as transvestism precisely because it constitutes an acknowledgment that it is femininity itself which is constructed as a mask—the decorative layer then conceals a non-identity. . . . The masquerade, in flaunting femininity, holds it at a distance."[20] Doane's formulation departs somewhat from Rivière's, who had argued that femininity, in a fundamental way, *was* masquerade. Doane inflects the concept differently, enabling her to argue for the de-stabilizing and de-familiarizing aspects of the feminine as masquerade and thereby imputing to its operations a subversive, or at least disruptive, charge. But taking the case of the countess as a (once) living instance of the mechanisms of feminine masquerade, one perceives less a refusal of patriarchal positioning than a total capitulation to its terms.

Nevertheless, in this psychoanalytic sense of masquerade, the fact that many of the photographs of the countess depict her in actual fancy-dress costumes—the Queen of Etruria, the Lady of Hearts, the Hermit of Passy, the Breton peasant, the geisha—is less significant than the more profound sense in which the feminine itself is constituted as an elaborate construction of pose, gesture, dress, or undress. Femininity is not a costume that a woman might remove at will, but a role that she lives. Still, there was something about the

19. "Masquerade (la mascarade): An alienated or false version of femininity arising from the woman's awareness of the man's desire for her to be his other, the masquerade permits woman to experience desire not in her own right but as the man situates her" (Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, p. 220). The problem with such a formulation lies in its presumption of an at least hypothetically "authentic" femininity. For a different interpretation of the concept see, Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator," *Screen*, vol. 23, nos. 3–4 (September–October 1982), pp. 74–87.

20. Doane, p. 81. Doane's consideration of masquerade within the problematics of feminine self-representation draws on the work of the French psychoanalyst Michèle Montrelay, who argues that, since women lack the means to represent lack and can never wholly lose or repress the maternal body, they manifest an excessive proximity to their own bodies that precludes representation. "Woman," writes Montrelay, "is the ruin of representation." See Michèle Montrelay, "Inquiry into Femininity," *m/f*, no. 1 (1978), pp, 83–101.

Mayer & Pierson. Georges de Castiglione. ca. 1862.
(Musée d'Unterlinden, photo Christian Kempf.)

rituals of masquerade to which the countess was profoundly responsive. This fascination with willful transformation was extended to, imposed upon, her only child, her son Georges. In a number of photographs the little boy is sometimes dressed as a girl, sometimes as an eighteenth-century cavalier out of Reynolds or Gainsborough, or, in one startling suite of images, as a little-girl version of his mother: hair identically coiffed and ornamented with flowers, neck and shoulders bare. There are also photographs in which he is cast as his mother's page, facing the camera while the countess poses in imperious profile.[21]

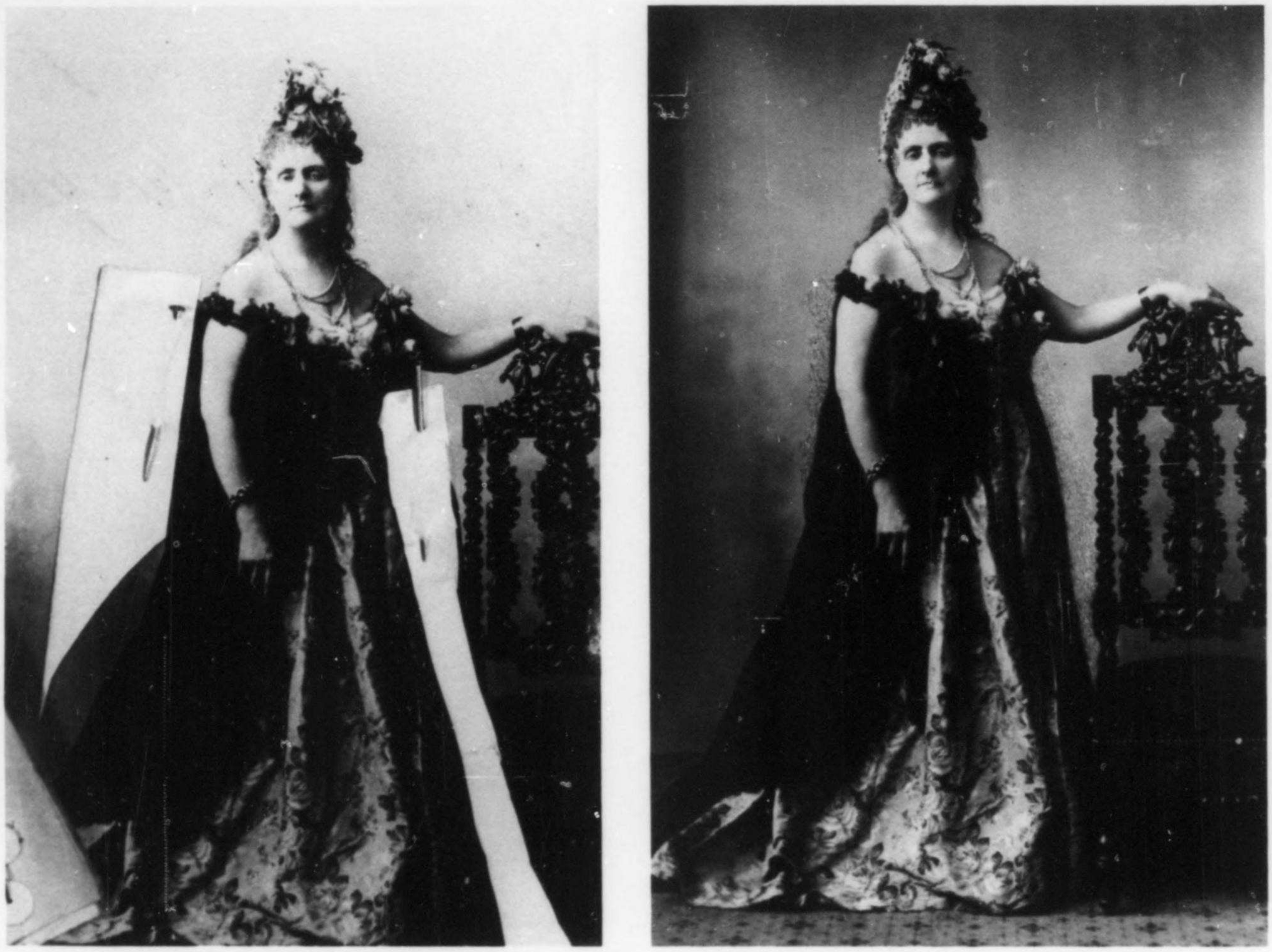
21. Not surprisingly, relations between the countess and her son were deeply troubled from Georges's adolescence on. The countess was perceived, even by her admirers, as a negligent and indifferent mother. This was, in fact, one of the charges made by the Count Verasis when, at one point, he contemplated divorce proceedings. Georges died at the age of twenty-four from scarlet fever.

The countess's enthusiasm for acting out roles, even to the extent of casting her child as supernumerary in her photographic mise-en-scènes, can perhaps be read as a synecdoche for the role of court beauty, a role fully determined before she ever came to occupy it. In other words, the terms of this part, like the standardized and formulaic descriptions of her beauty, were in every sense given in advance. The babble of the popular press, the gushing of her admirers, the ritualistic tributes to feminine beauty are not only overdetermined, but serve, crucially, to mask the nonidentity of the feminine position, its nullity in relation to an acknowledged subjectivity. Many of the anecdotes attached to the countess (that she immured herself behind closed doors and shutters, mirrors veiled, to avoid seeing the fading of her beauty; that as she aged she went out only at night) bear witness above all to her textual construction, just as the photographs reveal a persona rather than a person. But the awe, admiration, even panegyrics that La Castiglione inspired in her brief celebrity in the glitter of the Tuileries should not distract us from the material facts that determined her life as a woman. Her relative freedom was a function less of her station and her income than her widowhood, the Count Verasis having died at the age of twenty-eight, five years after their marriage. Moreover, the countess, whose face was truly her fortune, came from a noble but not especially solvent family. The count was wealthy, and she was given in marriage—the terminology is significant—at the age of fifteen. Neither rank nor beauty exempted the countess from her woman's fate as object of exchange.

In her old age, the countess returned to the studio of Louis Pierson. She had known him by then for more than three decades, and for a number of years they had been neighbors. Given the difference in class and circumstance, it is unlikely that they were friends, but there must have existed the kind of peculiar intimacy that artistocratic women would sustain with their servants, physicians, or corsetieres. She had, after all, exposed her legs to him. By the time these photographs were taken in the 1890s, the countess had become stout and possibly toothless. She seems, as well, to have lost much of her hair. Nonetheless, her face appears unlined (it was probably retouched on the negative), her eyebrows are penciled, her eyelids shadowed. She had Pierson photograph her in a number of ensembles: in a ballgown she had worn in her youth; in street costume, in what looks like mourning attire. Again, she had her legs photographed, this time from an odd angle. Her legs extended on a chair or hassock, the camera must have been directed down towards her lap from over her shoulder. The dead whiteness of these limbs, along with the shape and blackness of the hassock that supports them, suggest nothing so much as a corpse in a coffin. In one photograph she opened the bodice of her dress, revealing not the lace underwear of an artistocrat, but a poor-looking undershirt, an undergarment that might be worn by a beggar woman. Her expression here is hard to pin down, hovering as it does between grimace and smile. Her hands are strangely posed; consciously placed or not, they point to her sex.

Louis Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1895–98.
(The Gilman Paper Company.)

Louis Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1895–98.
(Musée d'Unterlinden, photo Christian Kempf.)



Louis Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1895–98. (Left: The Gilman Paper Company; right: Musée d'Unterlinden, photo Christian Kempf.)

From this photographic session the countess selected a group of prints and sewed the images together with a few stitches. On a slip of paper, in her large sweeping hand, under the heading "Série des Roses," she listed the places she had worn the ballgown between 1856 and 1895 (Tuileries, Compiègne, etc.). With straight pins, she attached slivers of paper to the surface of several of the photographs, as though to whittle down her girth. But in certain of these the pieces of paper are applied with seeming randomness, precluding the possibility that in every instance this was a crude attempt to mask the image for rephotographing.

These last photographs are a somber coda to the several hundred images of the countess. For an old woman to restage the postures, costumes, and attitudes of her youth is a staple of the gothic, the grotesque, or the comedic. This too is a text that is already written. Old and fat, forgotten by almost everyone, annotating references to herself in the memoirs of the Second Empire as they appeared in print, the countess looked to the photographer not only to stop time, but to undo it. That she went so far as to tamper with the images suggests

the depth of her identification with them. *They* were herself as much as she was herself, perhaps more so. Having lived her life effectively as a representation, it is not so surprising that identity came to be located in the image perhaps even more than in the flesh.

If we are willing to see the countess's investment in her image as pathological only in degree, then her photographic legacy can be read as a melancholy excursis on the conundrum of feminine self-representation. The lack of any clear boundary between self and image, the collapse of distinctions between interiority and specularity, are familiar, if extreme manifestations of the cultural construction of femininity. In this sense, it is tempting to see her relation to photography as a bleak parable of femininity attempting its own representation. Mirror of male desire, a role, an image, a value, the fetishized woman attempts to locate herself, to affirm her subjectivity within the rectangular space of another fetish—ironically enough, the "mirror of nature."

2. *The Bazaar of Legs*

> *The commodity, like the sign, suffers from metaphysical dichotomies. Its value, like its truth, lies in the social element. But the social element is added on to its nature, to its matter, and the social subordinates it as a lesser value, indeed as a nonvalue. Participation in society requires that the body submit itself to a specularization, a speculation, that transforms it into a value-bearing object, a standardized sign, an exchangeable signifier, a "likeness" with reference to an authoritative model.* A commodity—a woman—is divided into two irreconcilable "bodies": *her "natural" body and her socially valued, exchangeable body, which is a particularly mimetic expression of masculine values.*
>
> —Luce Irigaray,
> "Women on the Market"

The photographs of the countess suggest that she is less the incarnation of a reified femininity than a particularly adept medium of it. In this interpretation, the grotesquerie of the countess's narcissism moves beyond the individual case history to find its constituent terms in the cultural construction of femininity. Accordingly, if the countess can be understood as actively involved

in fetishizing parts of her own body—in this instance, her legs—it makes sense to examine this impulse in its historical specificity. Insofar as femininity (the cultural) is never simply a given, as is femaleness (the natural), the countess's staging of herself may be seen as an extreme and immensely stylized recapitulation of fetishistic mechanisms dispersed throughout the culture that produced her.[22]

It is with respect to the specific fetishism of legs and the more generalized fetishism informing the construction of femininity that I want to consider aspects of the social history of ballet from the romantic period through the Second Empire. My purpose is twofold. On the one hand, the development of the ballet permits us to see sexual ideology in the making: the cult of the ballerina and the corresponding eclipse of the *danseur noble* are indices of new concepts of masculinity and femininity. On the other hand, the history of ballet provides a particularly clear case of the imbrication of fetishism and commodification on the bodies of women. It is one thing to acknowledge the metastasizing properties of capital as it transforms everything into its own image, quite another to demonstrate its concrete ramifications, particularly in the inchoate realm of cultural production. The ballet is significant in this regard; it provides the elements of a case study of social, sexual, and economic transformations, insofar as it illustrates the relations between the fetishizing of the feminine, the prostitutionalization of the women workers who represent that femininity, and the imperatives of the market which underpin both developments.

My information on the social history of nineteenth-century ballet is drawn almost entirely from the works of Ivor Guest—the standard references in the field. But the information I have culled from his book and essays, and the emphases I have given it, is in every sense partial. In producing his detailed and indispensable accounts of the French and English ballet, Guest himself appears to be oblivious to the sexual politics enacted not only on the level of ideology but also on the material circumstances of the dancers who literally embody that ideology. Feminist dance historians such as Lynn Garafola, however, have been able to reread Guest's histories with a clear grasp of the hitherto unacknowledged factors of sexual ideology that operated reciprocally both inside and outside the institutional parameters of dance. The importance of both

22. In the nineteenth century the opposition female-nature/feminine-culture is heavily inflected in terms of class. Femininity or womanliness is the purview of the lady, in contrast to the animal femaleness of working-class or peasant women. "Woman," state the Goncourt brothers, "is an evil, stupid animal unless she is educated and civilized to a high degree. . . . Poetry in a woman is never natural but always the product of education. Only the woman of the world is a woman; the rest are females [femelles]" (Entry dated 13 October, 1855, *Pages from the Goncourt Journal*, ed. and trans. Robert Baldick, London, Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 18). This discursive opposition is reflected in the Goncourts' literary production as well; on the one hand, the historical studies of eighteenth-century aristocratic women, and on the other, the realist novels featuring working-class heroines.

sources for this essay lies in their examinations of a cultural phenomenon from which the countess assimilated the generalized fetishism of legs, as well as the more dispersed mythology of the feminine.

All considerations of the nineteenth-century ballet stress that it produced the most highly articulated and aestheticized expression of idealized femininity. With the development of *pointe* in the second decade of the century, the ballerina became an etherealized vision of sublimity. Her airy weightlessness, embodied in the darting, floating movement of her body *en pointe*, is the emblem of a femininity purged of earthly dross and carnality. Like the fairy spirits, ghosts, and apparitions that populate the libretti of romantic ballet, the ballerina is a figure of another, more rarefied world. At the same time, this new primacy of the ballerina signals, in Lynn Garafola's description, the historical moment in which "femininity itself becomes the ideology of the ballet, indeed the very definition of the art."[23]

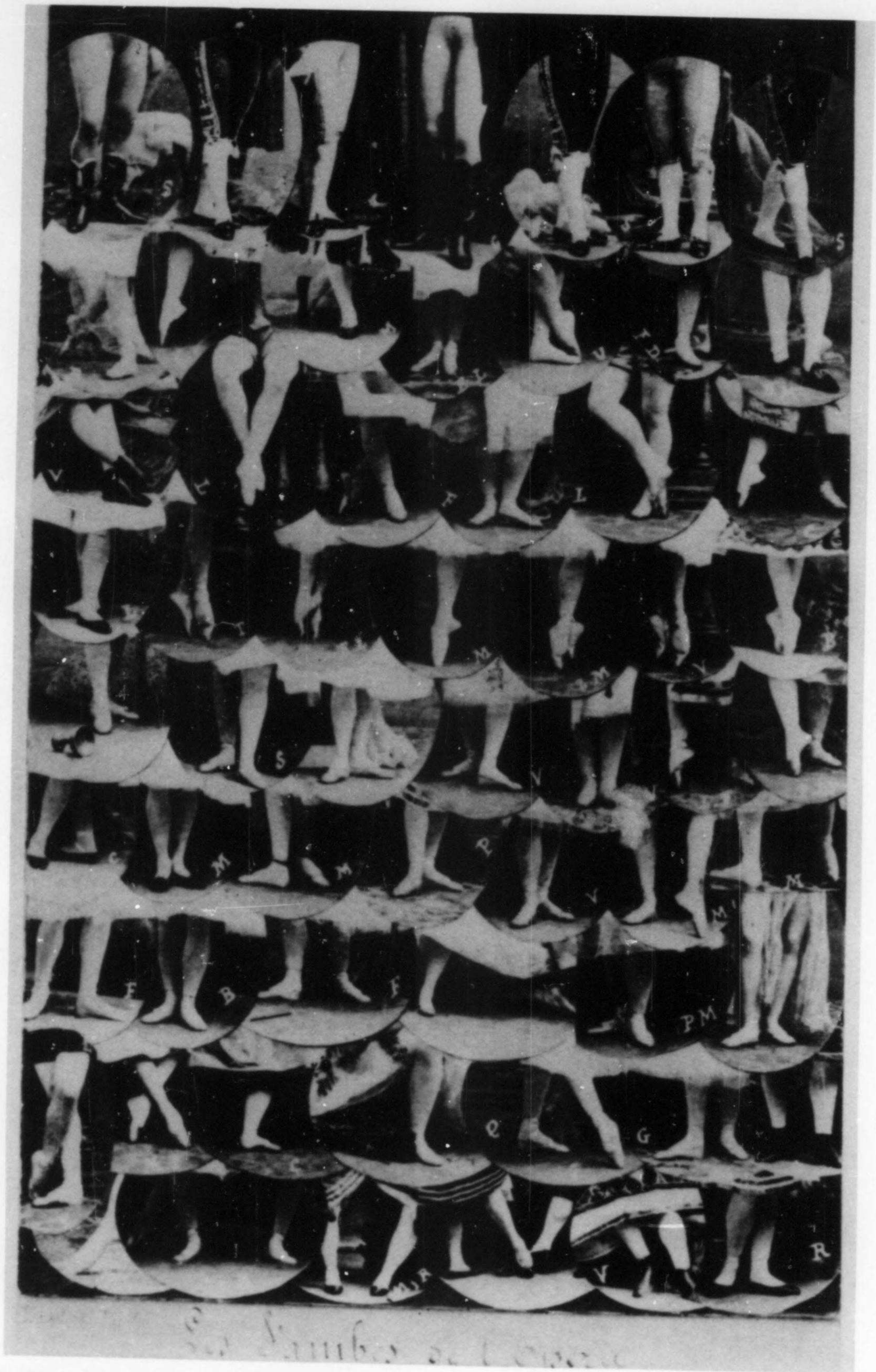
This spiritualized representation of the ballerina as the incarnation of an idealized femininity is, of course, ballet's own representation to itself and of itself; this is the language and perception of choreographers, librettists, and dancers, of dance critics, afficionados, belletrists, and those for whom the beauty and pleasure of the ballet lay first and foremost in its status as an expressive and rigorous art. But while the internal development of the ballet in London and Paris from the 1820s through the Second Empire hinges on the new primacy of the ballerina, on a range of technical refinements and elaborations in the dance vocabulary, on the abolition of genres,[24] and on the assimilation of romanticism into dance libretti, music, and narrative, what mattered for the new enlarged dance public was legs.

Here, for example, is a wholly unexceptional excerpt from an unsigned article of 1843, a moment considered by dance historians as a benchmark in the artistic and technical evolution of ballet:

> When ever we hear that a *danseuse* is coming out we white-waistcoat, pantaloon, and double-opera ourselves up to the hilt . . . so that nothing may interrupt our study and deep contemplation of the "new gal's legs." The stage, particularly the stage of Her Majesty's Theatre, is a kind of gallery of sculpture, a studio in which Phidias might have revelled, and the conceptions of Canova have been enslaved. The

23. Lynn Garafola, "The Travesty Dancer in Nineteenth-Century Ballet," *Dance Research Journal*, vol. 17, no. 2/vol. 18, no. 1 (Fall 1985/Spring 1986) pp. 35–40. The ideological structuring of the feminine mystique of the ballerina was further implemented by the division of ballerinas into two categories, an ethereal (Taglioni's legendary quality), and an earthly (Elssler's speciality). This binary opposition was codified by Theophile Gautier in his distinction between ballerinas as "Christians" and "Pagans." See Ivor Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in Paris*, London, Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1966.

24. The three traditional genres were the *noble* (in which the male dancer was of special importance), *demi-caractère*, and *comique*. See Ivor Guest, *ibid.*



A. A. E. Disdéri. Les jambes de l'Opéra *(carte-de-visite). 1856. (International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House.)*

> legs at the opera are reflections from the best masters—we beg pardon—we mean *mistresses*, yes *mistresses* is precisely what we mean. We have seen gentlemen, even old gentlemen, deeply affected by this glorious display. . . . Oh! the legs of Fanny [Elssler] displayed a vast deal of propriety and frightened sober men from their prescribed complacency. Taglioni's legs encompassed a great deal of attention; Cerrito's leg magnified excitement; Duvernay possessed a magic leg, but to dilate is useless—the Opera is a bazaar of legs, and a stall costs ten and sixpence.[25]

That a significant proportion of the audiences that thronged the ballet in London and Paris were there to ogle the dancers' bodies—and particularly their legs—was a fact of ballet life that varied only in the outrageousness of its expression. By the 1830s the pit of the Covent Garden Opera House, the part of the house that was popularly referred to as "Fop's Alley," became an unruly debauch in which the dandies from White's and Crockford's loudly commented upon the physical merits and deficiencies of the dancer's bodies, regularly interrupting the ballet with catcalls, obscenities, or the equal furor of their approbation. The salaciousness of the aristocratic male spectators was often baldly repeated in the written accounts and commentaries on various performances.

Thus, from the privileged vantage of the omnibus box, one writer described the ballet in terms of an erotic locus, "drawing innumerable glasses to a common centre, decked in flowers and a confusion of folds of gauze scarcely secreting that particular part of the leg whereon the fastening of the stocking is generally clasped and smiling and making others smile to see her *pirouette* as the star of the *ballet*."[26]

That the legs of the dancers are the focus of the fetishizing gaze of the male spectator is only the reflection of a far more generalized phenomenon which superimposes a map of (erotic) significance on the woman's body. In Western culture, women's legs had been covered by robes, skirts, or dresses until after the First World War. Although hemlines historically migrated from the arch of the foot to several inches above the ankle, no expanse of leg was ever normally exposed, a protocol as applicable to women agricultural laborers as to aristocrats and bourgeoises. Still, that women's legs were not normally seen is a necessary but not sufficient argument for the erotic significance accorded them at least from the eighteenth century on. Certainly, the fact that European women did not routinely wear drawers until well after the mid-nineteenth century is relevant. Above the stocking, the leg was bare; under the skirts, under-

25. *Illustrated London Life*, April 16, 1843. Cited in Ivor Guest, "Dandies and Dancers," in *Dance Perspectives*, no. 37 (Spring 1969), p. 4. The leering quality of this quotation is particularly striking in that Taglioni was popularly perceived as the incarnation of virginal spirituality.
26. Cited in Guest, *ibid.*, p. 12.

skirts, and petticoats, the woman's body—her sex—was exposed. Yet the persistence of the fetishism of legs as, in Kleinian terms, a part object is such as to trivialize attempts at an empirical understanding. The legs of Betty Grable or Marlene Dietrich, or the prominence of legs in modern advertising, are evidence of the enduring potency of this particular mapping of the erotic. Within the historical period under discussion here, however, the salient fact is that until the twentieth century it was only the legs of dancers or entertainers that were publicly on display.

We confront here the first of the cultural contradictions of the mystique of the feminine inscribed in the dance. Discursively constructed to represent a purified essence of femininity, enacting the body's transformation into art, the dancers themselves are simultaneously erotic spectacle, bazaar of legs, panoply of potential mistresses.

In this regard, there are two crucial and interrelated phenomena which accompany the ballet's evolution from a courtly art, wholly supported by royal patronage, to a public, increasingly bourgeois spectacle, dependent on sales and subscriptions. First and foremost, there was the prostitutionalization of the dancer; second, there was the eclipse, if not banishment, of the male dancer and his replacement by the female travesty dancer. That these developments are the direct outcome of the ballet's new economic exigencies and its consequent reliance on a free market economy is further substantiated by comparison with conditions of the Royal Ballet in Copenhagen and the Mariinsky Theater in St. Petersburg. Licensed and subsidized by crown and czar, patronized by the court, the ballet in both countries retained its aristocratic status. Consequently, the *danseur noble*, although certainly rivaled by the ballerina, never lost his position. And the female corps de ballet, underpaid and overworked as were their sisters in France and England, were employees of the court and thus legally protected by it. But in both England and France the privatization of the ballet led inexorably to the debasement of the female corps and eventually to the trivialization of the ballet itself.

One of the immediate results of privatization was the need for advance subscriptions and private subsidies. This meant that the finances of the ballet were contingent upon the largesse of wealthy men. One of the first acts of John Ebers, appointed director of the Covent Garden Opera Ballet after its bankruptcy in 1820, was to open the passages to the stage to gentlemen and to construct a Green Room where they could mix with the dancers. Almost as soon as it was completed, it became a cruising ground for the members of the private clubs, whose patronage was so crucial to the economics of the ballet. Contemporary accounts make very clear the extent of sexual trafficking within the dancers' world, including the presence of procuresses as go-betweens and erstwhile managers. This is not to say that dancers had not sold themselves prior to the adaptation of the ballet to a market economy. Rather, the new arrangements tended to encourage and institutionalize a situation in which wealthy and

powerful men could regard the corps de ballet as a sanctioned flesh market.[27]

The sexual commodification of the dancer was further facilitated by the disintegration and eventual disappearance of a guild and clan system that had traditionally provided both training, social identity, and protection. While many of the greatest ballerinas of the romantic era were the offspring of theatrical clans, in increasing numbers the girls entering the profession were products of urban slums.[28]

In Paris, the sexual economy of the ballet, which was privatized in the wake of the 1830 revolution, mirrored that of London. In the same way that the Green Room was made into a site of sexual commerce, so was the Foyer de la Danse under the directorship of Dr. Venon. Albéric Second's description of this development is worth quoting at length:

> Before the Revolution of 1830, when few strangers were admitted backstage and guards and lacqueys in royal livery were stationed to warn off intruders, the Foyer de la Danse served merely as a room for the dancers to gather and limber up before going on to the stage. But all that was changed by Dr. Vernon, who transformed the bare working room into a glittering centre of social life. This was an adroit move, which made the Opera fashionable overnight. The dancers were then joined by a select band, consisting of the *corps diplomatique*, the more important *abonnés*, and other distinguished men, who found in this hour an added source of pleasure in the evening's entertainment. Many of these men, young men-about-town who were for the most part members of the Jockey Club, acquired the habit of looking on the *coulisses* of the Opera as their private seraglio. The most fashionable of them watched the performances from the proscenium boxes which abutted on the stage itself and were known as the *loges infernales*. "The Opera," it was explained, "provides them with their amorous pleasures, just as the Pompadour

27. "Poverty, naturally, invites sexual exploitation, especially in a profession of flexible morals. . . . In the 1830s, however, the backstage of the Paris Opera became a privileged venue of sexual assignation, officially countenanced and abetted. Eliminating older forms of 'caste' separation, the theater's enterprising management dangled before the select of its paying public a commodity of indisputable rarety and cachet—its female corps of dancers" (Garafola, p. 36). To this recipe for exploitation must be added the straitened economic circumstances of most dancers after the loss of royal subsidy. New budgetary restrictions in the wake of privatization diminished pensions (when they were not altogether eliminated) and curtailed other benefits. In 1848, with the Paris Opera confronting enormous deficits, the corps's salaries were reduced. With the exception of the immense salaries drawn by the ballet stars, salaries were extremely low. Opera dancers had to pay out of pocket for extra classes and *classes de perfectionnement*. That so many dancers sold themselves has to do as much with poverty as with the freer sexual mores among professional entertainers.

28. See Garafola, p. 36.

> stud-farm provides them with their equestrian pleasures; they consider it as a storehouse for remounts, no more." The real nature of the *coulisses*, in the words of an intelligent dancer, was "bourgeois, which is the worst of natures. No one is too virtuous, because that would be stupid, but no one is too sinful, because that becomes fatiguing. The *coulisses* of the Opera have, above all, an air of boredom. They have the spleen, like a fat English millionaire, and it would be difficult for it to be otherwise. A large proportion of the *abonnés* have frequented the Opera for years. For them, the *coulisses* no longer have any mystery, savour, novelty or poetry. The others, the newcomers, do nothing but look on, being not rich enough to touch."[29]

But if the bourgeois spectator could only afford to look, he was given more to look at. In the 1840s the ballet skirt was shortened from mid-calf to knee length, although the longer skirt was retained for certain roles. Of much greater significance, however, was the disappearance of the *danseur noble* and the rise of the travesty dancer as partner to the ballerina.

In large part, this disappearance is a consequence of altered definitions of masculinity engendered by bourgeois culture. An aristocratic, courtly ideal of masculine grace and elegance was incommensurate with a new ideology of gender in which concepts of beauty and grace were coming increasingly to be identified exclusively with the feminine. The stately adagios of the *danseur noble*, the gravity and poise of his partnering, were far less appealing to an increasingly bourgeois audience than the athleticism of the leaps and spins performed by the *danseur de demi-caractère*. Associated with the ancien regime, the art of the *danseur noble* was politically suspect as well.[30]

By 1840, these attitudes had solidified to such an extent that even a critic as knowledgeable and sophisticated about dance as Jules Janin professed to find male dancers ridiculous:

> You know perhaps that we are hardly a supporter of what are called *grands danseurs*. The *grand danseur* appears to us so sad and heavy! He is so unhappy and self-satisfied! He responds to nothing, he represents nothing, he is nothing. Speak to us of a pretty dancing girl who displays the grace of her features and the elegance of her figure, who reveals so fleetingly all the treasures of her beauty. Thank God, I understand that perfectly. . . . But a man, a frightful man, as ugly as you and I, a wretched fellow who leaps about without knowing why, a creature specially made to carry a musket and a sword and to wear a uniform. That this fellow should dance as a woman does—

29. Albéric Second, *Les petits mystères de l'Opéra*, Paris, 1844; cited in Guest, *The Romantic Ballet in Paris*, p. 28.
30. See Garafola, pp. 35–36.

> impossible! That this bewhiskered individual who is a pillar of the community, an elector, a municipal councillor, a man whose business is to make and unmake laws, should come before us in a tunic of sky-blue satin, his head covered with a hat with a waving plume amorously caressing his cheek, a frightful *danseuse* of the male sex, come to pirouette in the best place while the pretty ballet girls stand respectfully at a distance—this is surely impossible and intolerable.[31]

The rise of the travesty dancer, from the 1820s on, represented more than a technical solution to the problem posed by the shift in the ideology of gender. The thinly veiled prurience in the descriptions of the ballerinas who specialized in travesty roles indicates the extent to which her popularity was inseparable from the spectacle of her body. Her corseted midriff emphasized bosom and hips, the skintight breeches displayed buttocks, hips, and legs. Thus, everything in the costume of the travesty dancer proclaimed her womanliness even as the choreography positioned her as the lover/partner of the ballerina. Accordingly, a pas de deux between ballerina and travesty dancer produced its own, distinctive eroticism, subtly evoking a lesbian pairing that the libretto disavowed.[32]

During the Second Empire, as the ballet became diminished as art, it became ever more elaborate as spectacle, with great attention paid to lighting, decor, special effects, and an accompanying increase in corps dancers. The number of venues for dance, both popular and balletic, increased; for the period 1847 and 1870, Guest lists seventeen theaters, vaudevilles, and *bals* where dance could regularly be viewed. This proliferation produced an expansion in the number of dancers who obtained, however precariously, a living from the dance. The introduction of new popular forms (the cancan, for example, which, although invented in 1832, swept through Paris as a craze in the 1860s) produced a new crop of celebrity dancers, such as the notorious Mlle Rigolboche.[33] The proletarian background of the majority of these women, combined with the now fully sexualized associations of the dance, guaranteed

31. Jules Janin, *Journal des Débats*, March 2, 1840; cited in Guest, *The Ballet of the Second Empire*, Middletown, Wesleyan University Press, 1974, p. 21.

32. "In the formalized mating game of the travesty *pas de deux*, two women touching and moving in harmony conveyed an eroticism perhaps even more compelling than their individual physical charms. The fantasy of females at play for the male eye is a staple of erotic literature, a kind of travesty performance enacted in the privacy of the imagination. Ballet's travesty *pas de deux* gave public form to this private fantasy, whetting audience desire, while keeping safely within the bounds of decorum" (Garafola, p. 39).

33. Ephemeral celebrities at the intersection between popular dance and the demimonde, women such as Rigolboche at the height of her fame, inspired books (e.g., *Rigolbochemanie*, *Mémoirs de Rigolboche*), numerous caricatures in the popular press, and, of course, photographs. See Ivor Guest, "Queens of the Cancan," *Dance and Dancers*, December 1952, pp. 14–16; and Francis Gribble, "The Origin of the Cancan," *The Dancing Times*, April 1933, pp. 19–21.

that the dancer was perceived a priori as a sexual commodity. Her lower-class origins presumed, her legs exposed, her favors for sale, the equivalency of the dancer with prostitution had by mid-century become fully acknowledged. The virtuous exceptions, such as the tragic Emma Livry, function dialectically as the necessary virgins in a discourse of whores. In a figure such as Lola Montes (who in the 1840s and '50s was the subject of a number of scandalous or moralizing books, much space in the popular press, and innumerable lithographs and wood engravings), the mythology of the dancer and that of the courtesan are fully united.

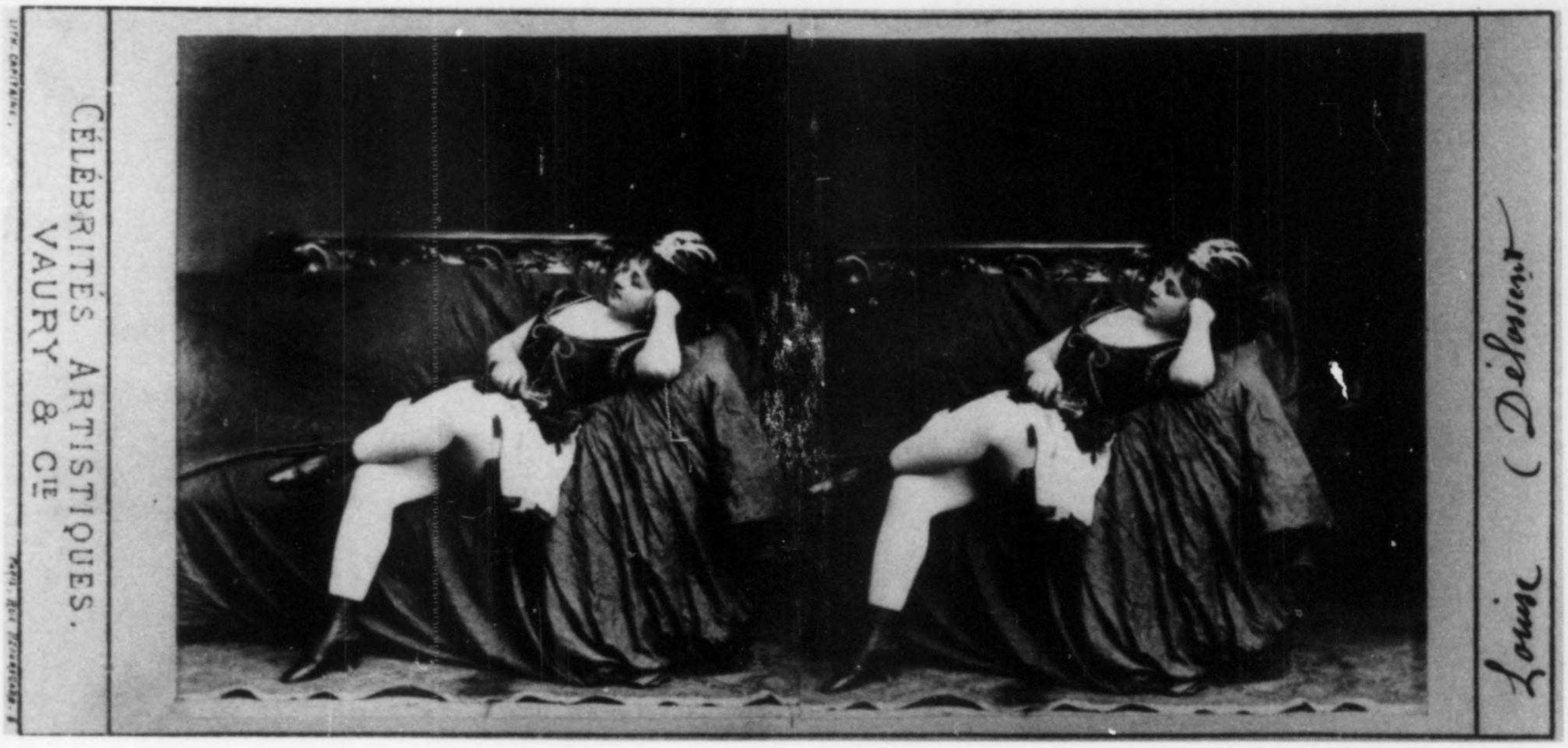
To an already substantial market for lithographs and wood engravings of ballet dancers, the advent of the photographic *carte-de-visite*, by virtue of its relative cheapness, quasi-industrial means of production, and indexical status, guaranteed a second life and even greater dissemination. In her book on *carte-de-visite* portrait photography, Elizabeth Ann McCauley stresses the technical determinations governing subject and pose (e.g., exposure time, studio location, etc.) which effectively precluded conveying any real impression of dance choreography or movement.[34] If we accept the formulation, however, that the dancer had become, virtually by definition, an icon of the erotic, the massive production of photographs of dancers need not attest to any particular interest in ballet per se. Additionally, the fact that so many of the dance photographs of the Second Empire are of travesty dancers would tend further to substantiate the perception that these were, in some sense, fetish objects.

The traffic in (dance) photographs, like the traffic in (dance) women, is charged in this period with another discursive current: namely, an intensified and expanded notion of celebrity, a phenomenon reciprocally fueled and in part constructed precisely by that traffic in images, particularly *carte-de-visite* and stereopticon photographs. McCauley indicates that by 1860, the first, second, third, and ninth arrondissements (the center of the photographic industry) included 207 photographic establishments of which sixteen employed more than ten workers. Although the commissioned portrait was the staple service of all such businesses, celebrity *cartes* represented a significant part of the sales of the larger firms.[35] Similarly, celebrity stereos were marketed either in-

34. Elizabeth Ann McCauley, *A. A. E. Disdéri and the Carte-de-Visite*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1985.

35. The vogue for assembling celebrity *cartes-de-visite* into bound albums was widespread, indulged in as much by the aristocracy as by the bourgeoisie. What is particularly striking about these albums is the promiscuous mix of images of the powerful, the royal, the fashionable, the notorious, and the ephemeral. For example, an album in the collection of the Museum of Modern Art (Accession #42.135), assembled 1865–75, brings together in its pages the following: victims of the Commune, the British Royal Family, generals of the Second Empire, various crowned heads of Europe, artists (Edwin Landseer, Adolph Menzel, Horace Vernet, Ary Scheffer, Courbet, Corot, Meissonier), actresses (Rachel, Ristori), and, finally, freaks (General Mite, Tom Thumb's wedding). Such an ensemble is by no means exceptional.

Vaury & Cie. Celebrity stereoscopic carte-de-visite of Louise Délossert. ca. 1860–65. (Collection William L. Schaeffer.)



dividually or in thematic ensembles. McCauley indicates that thirty-seven percent of Disdéri's published *Galerie des contemporains* was devoted to theatrical personalities and entertainers; fifty-three percent of the celebrity *cartes* advertised in an 1861 issue of the *Journal Amusant* were likewise of entertainers. While the top of the photographic pyramid was occupied by esteemed tragediennes such as the Rachels, Ristoris, or, for ballet, the Muravievas and Merantes, the bottom was made up of the *figurantes*, dance-hall girls, café-concert singers, and the troupes of the popular theaters and *bals*. Somewhere between the two were the *cartes* of the famous courtesans La Paiva, Cora Pearl, Anna Deslions, and so forth.

Accompanying the circulation of these images were hastily run-off books produced by journalists, books with such titles as *Ces dames*, *Les jolies actrices de Paris, Les cocottes, Rigolbochemanie.* These were themselves supplements to the extensive coverage of entertainers and demimondaines churned out by the illustrated press, publications such as *Le Boulevard* (established 1862), *La Lune* (1866), *Journal Amusant* (1856), *La Vie Parisienne* (1863).

While it is indisputable that the development of the illustrated press and the celebrity gossip/scandal/fashion ephemera it purveyed were among the results of the draconian press laws imposed after Napoleon III's 1851 coup d'etat, this new construction of celebrity in the Second Empire has broader ramifications. For, insofar as this expanded notion of celebrity is predicated on an economy of the spectacle (an image of Ada Isaacs Mencken in tights is not to be

understood in the same terms as one of the Duc de Morny with accompanying biography), we are witnessing a shift from an older conception of celebrity defined through power or exemplarity to one of consumable—constantly replenished—evanescence. And insofar as a major part of this spectacular realm is populated by more or less eroticized images of women, the attraction of this new image world is underwritten by fantasies of imaginary possession. Although the image of the woman is not yet conscripted to the marketing of commodities (this would be the accomplishment of the Third Republic), the erotic allure of the commodity and the woman herself as erotic commodity are inexorably moving into a shared orbit. For the bourgeois men at the opera who could not afford to touch, but only to look, the diminutive image of the living woman—sexualized, compliant, immobilized—is the token of their power.

3. The Legs of the Prostitute

> *The economy of exchange—of desire—is man's business.*
>
> —Luce Irigaray,
> "Women on the Market"

The nude, the prostitute, pornography—what kinds of relations on the register of representation obtain between these three avatars of femininity? The first, legacy of classical antiquity, had by the nineteenth century all but excluded the male, whose idealized body had originally provided the conceptual model for its expression. The second, the prostitute, whether in the glamorized incarnation of the *grande courtisane* or the debased and sordid image of the *fille publique*, is one of the most pervasive and allusive motifs of the Second Empire and Third Republic. The third term of this set, pornography, intersects with and upsets the first category, particularly to the extent that it incorporates certain elements of it within its own conventions.[36] And insofar as it is assumed that the women depicted in pornographic and erotic photography are prostitutes, the artistocratic *hôtel*, the bourgeois interior, can be said to have been in

36. The distinction I am implicitly drawing between erotic and pornographic photographic imagery is neither systematic nor theoretical. I would categorize as erotic a frontal photograph of a female nude, more or less artfully posed. If, however, she were masturbating, or exposing her genitals, I would consider it to be (within the terms of this discussion) pornographic. From the coup d'etat of 1851 through the 1860s, censorship of photography was fairly stringent. *Académies* were legal, but could be sold only within the walls of the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Soft-core erotica, which was openly sold, was subject to the vagaries of the government censors; one man's art was often another's indecency.

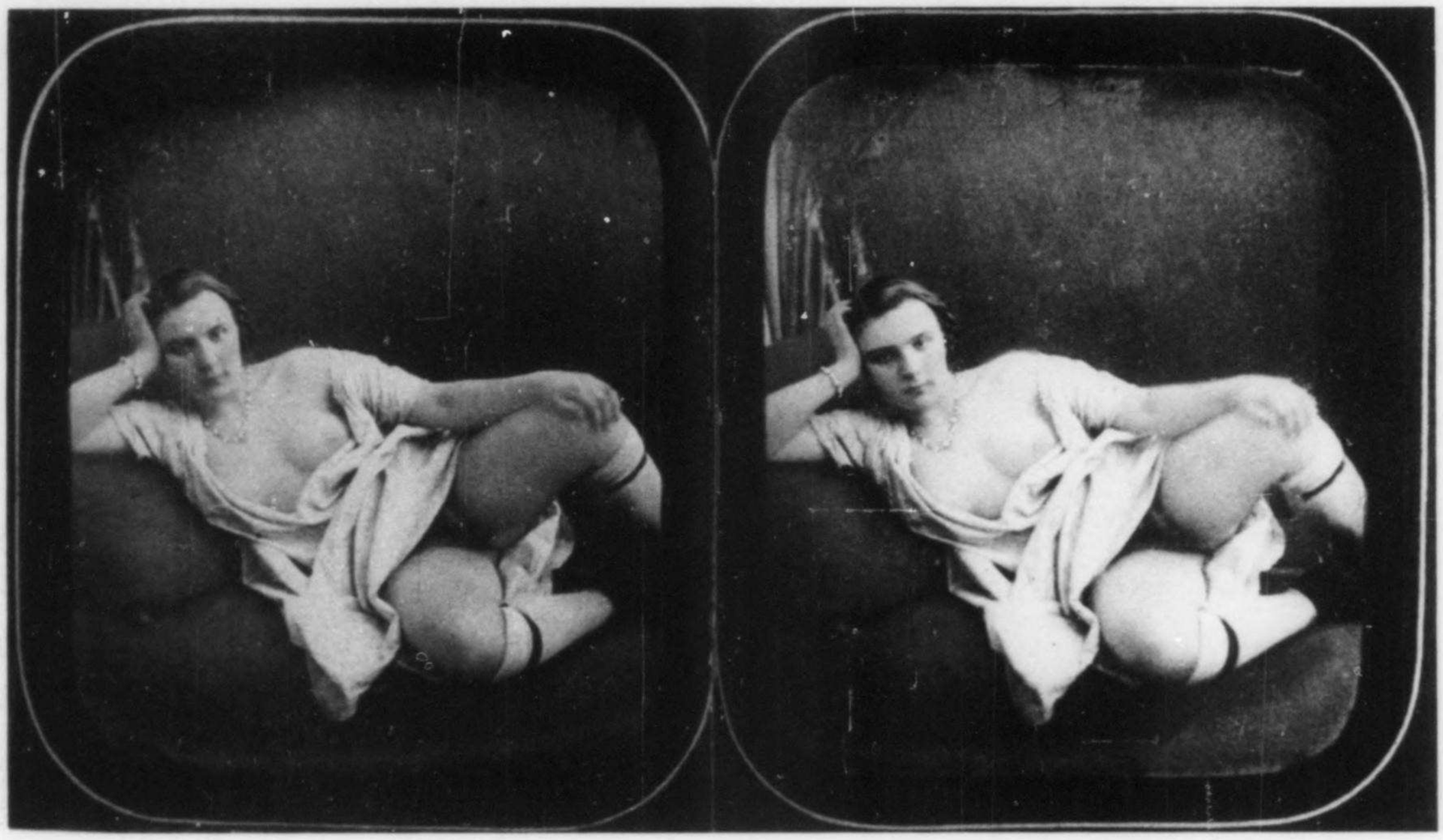
some sense penetrated by that which the entire reglementary system was designed to sequester and contain.

In placing these three terms in relation, what I hope to suggest is the failure of a discursive *cordon sanitaire*: an attempt at segregating the licit from the illicit that constantly founders, not simply because the various boundaries prove permeable, but because the mechanisms (psychic, social, economic) that underwrite them are ultimately the same. The evidence of this failure of containment shows itself in various guises in the Second Empire. The anxiety cathected onto the image and body of the prostitute is one symptom. The "crisis of the nude"—so termed by T. J. Clark—is its manifestation in the framework of aesthetic discourse. And, finally, the apparently enormous production of pornographic imagery attests to the impulse to master and possess the object of desire, while simultaneously debasing it and neutralizing its power and threat.

Of the three terms I am treating, photographic pornography is the most empirically elusive.[37] Then, as now, it represented an underground aspect of photographic production, and as such it figures not at all in the standard photography histories. Collectors of pornographic photography tend not to publicize their holdings, a reticence paralleled by libraries, museums, and other public institutions. Nonetheless, a few generalizations can be made with certainty.

First, almost as soon as there were viable daguerreotypes, there were pornographic ones. Until the early 1850s, that is to say, until the industrialization of photography, photographic pornography appears to have been a luxury item. Daguerreotypes are, of course, unique images; calotype technologies were not employed much in France until after 1850, and the collodion process, which also produces unlimited prints, was not invented until 1851. Daguerreotype pornography is often exquisitely hand-colored, the models are carefully posed and lighted, and the trappings are often luxurious. Grant Romer of Eastman House describes pornographic daguerreotypes concealed inside watch covers opened by hidden springs, or lining the interior covers of snuff boxes, or made into jewelry. By the early years of the Second Empire, much daguerreotype pornography was stereoscopic.[38] Possessing a compelling illusion of three-dimensionality and preternatural detail, painstakingly tinted, entirely grainless, the visual effect of the hand-colored daguerreotype stereo is the acme of verisimilitude. Moreover, viewing an image through a stereopticon masks out everything but the image; the illusion of being *in* the picture is extremely powerful. The finesse of detail is often striking; in a number of daguerreotypes in the Cromer Collection at Eastman House the necklace and earrings of the model

37. For most of my information on Second Empire pornography, I am indebted to Grant Romer, of Eastman House, who has generously shared his substantial, and unfortunately unpublished, research with me.
38. See Uwe Scheid, *Das erotische Imago*, Dortmund, Die bibliophilen Taschenbücher, 1984.



are picked out with a needle on the surface of the plate. Viewed through a stereopticon, they glitter and shine.

Romer suggests that the production of these deluxe examples of the pornographer's art crested at the time of the 1855 and 1867 universal exhibitions, when Paris was packed with wealthy foreigners. By the mid-50's, though, the production of pornography for the discriminating connoisseur was joined by a mass-produced form, with an accompanying decline in quality and craftsmanship.[39]

What did these images depict? Here is an instance of the ways in which photography either draws on existing representational conventions and alters them or invents its own. Of the former, images of coitus, oral sex, lesbians, and masturbation all have graphic-arts precedents—in many cases, immediate ones, such as in the pornographic lithography of the July Monarchy. These, however, undergo modification. On the level of technique, the intractability of the tripod-mounted camera, the relative slowness of exposure, and the resistance of real bodies to positions possible for the graphic artist all tend to enforce a repertory of pose and display in one sense more limited, in another more expansive, than existed previously. For example, traditionally pornography had

39. Some notion of the scale of the photographic pornography industry of the nineteenth century may be obtained from the following: "The *Times* of 20 April 1874 reports a police raid on a London shop in which 130,248 obscene photographs were seized, plus 5,000 stereoscopic slides" (Stephen Heath, *The Sexual Fix*, New York, Schocken Books, 1984, p. 110).

Anonymous. Hand colored stereoscopic daguerreotype. ca. 1855.

Anonymous. Albumen print. ca. 1865.

privileged sexual activity; with photography, the emphasis came more and more to be on the presentation of the woman or of parts of her body, a spectacular display for scopic consumption. With the leg as a locus of erotic interest, poses were invented to provide new arrangements for its delectation. Dancers and demimondaines were frequently shown with their legs straddling the backs of chairs. And photography can be credited with the invention of the beaver shot, an image so constructed that its sole purpose is the exposure of the female genitalia.[40] Within this genre neither a surrogate for the male viewer nor a simulation of the woman's pleasure—indeed very little of the woman at all—is necessary for the image to do its work. In fact, one of the suggestive tropes of this kind of representation is the disappearance of the woman's face, covered by her thrown-back petticoats or shrouded in veils.

But if one representational pole concerns the elimination of everything but the woman's sex, another privileges the specificity of her gaze. It is these photographs—in which the woman model looks directly into the lens of the

40. A conspicuous exception to this is Gustave Courbet's notorious painting "L'origine du monde," recently discussed in Linda Nochlin, "The Origin without an Original," *October*, no. 37 (Summer 1986), pp. 76–86; Neil Hertz, "Medusa's Head: Male Hysteria under Political Pressure," *Representations*, no. 4 (Fall 1983), pp. 27–54; and Denis Hollier, "How to Not Take Pleasure in Talking about Sex," *Enclitic*, vol. VIII, nos. 1–2 (Spring–Fall 1984), pp. 84–93.

camera, thus meeting the gaze of the spectator—that depart so emphatically from traditional modes of pornography. Inasmuch as it is a real woman so deployed, a real woman who receives and returns the look, pornographic photography detaches itself from an image-world of fantasy and comes to occupy an ambiguous realm between the real and the imagined.

It was around this problem of the indexical property of the photograph that the debate on the acceptability of the photographic nude unfolded. For members of the prestigious Société Française de la Photographie, who actively debated the issue in the 1850s, the photographic nude, almost by definition, could not accede to the aesthetic. Photographic nudes were therefore formally banned from the Société's competitions and exhibitions. This exclusion had two components, one explicitly articulated, the other implicit within the larger framework of the debate. The former hinged on the purported lack of mediation between living model and photographic image; the generalizing, idealizing, and abstracting operations of the artist were voided by the very nature of mechanical reproduction. The absence of these mediations—so the argument went—precluded the metamorphosis from naked to nude. The second, implicit aspect of the debate turned on what could not be said about either category.

Primarily, this devolved on the nature of the conventions that confirm the attributes of the nude as, on the one hand, a sublimation of the erotic, and as, on the other hand, a fetish. In its sublimatory capacity, the nude functions both formally and discursively as an aesthetic grid on which is figured the representation of a woman's body. A field for pleasurable looking, for the free play of desire and imaginary possession, it must nonetheless distinguish itself from the real world of individualized, corporeal bodies. As fetish, the nude must deny or allay the fear that the real female body always risks producing—hence such conventions as the suppression of the vagina and the elimination of body hair, as well as a prescribed repertory of acceptable poses.

The photographic nude inevitably disrupts these structures of containment and idealization, disrupts, in short, the propriety of the nude. What the painter elided, the photographer showed: not just pubic hair, but dirty feet, and, perhaps most disturbingly, the face of the real woman, often including her direct and charmless gaze. The look of these women is rarely the inviting, compliant expression that signals complicity between the desiring subject and the object of desire. On the contrary, the look is often utterly straightforward, unflinching, devoid of seduction. Occasionally it is challenging. This is, in fact, the look of Manet's *Olympia*, and part of the scandal the painting provoked undoubtedly lay in the widespread recognition, albeit unacknowledged, of the covert and illicit imagery that paralleled her representation.[41]

41. Gerald Needham's essay "Manet, *Olympia*, and Pornographic Photography" made this claim in 1972. Needham reproduced a number of photographs in support of the argument that

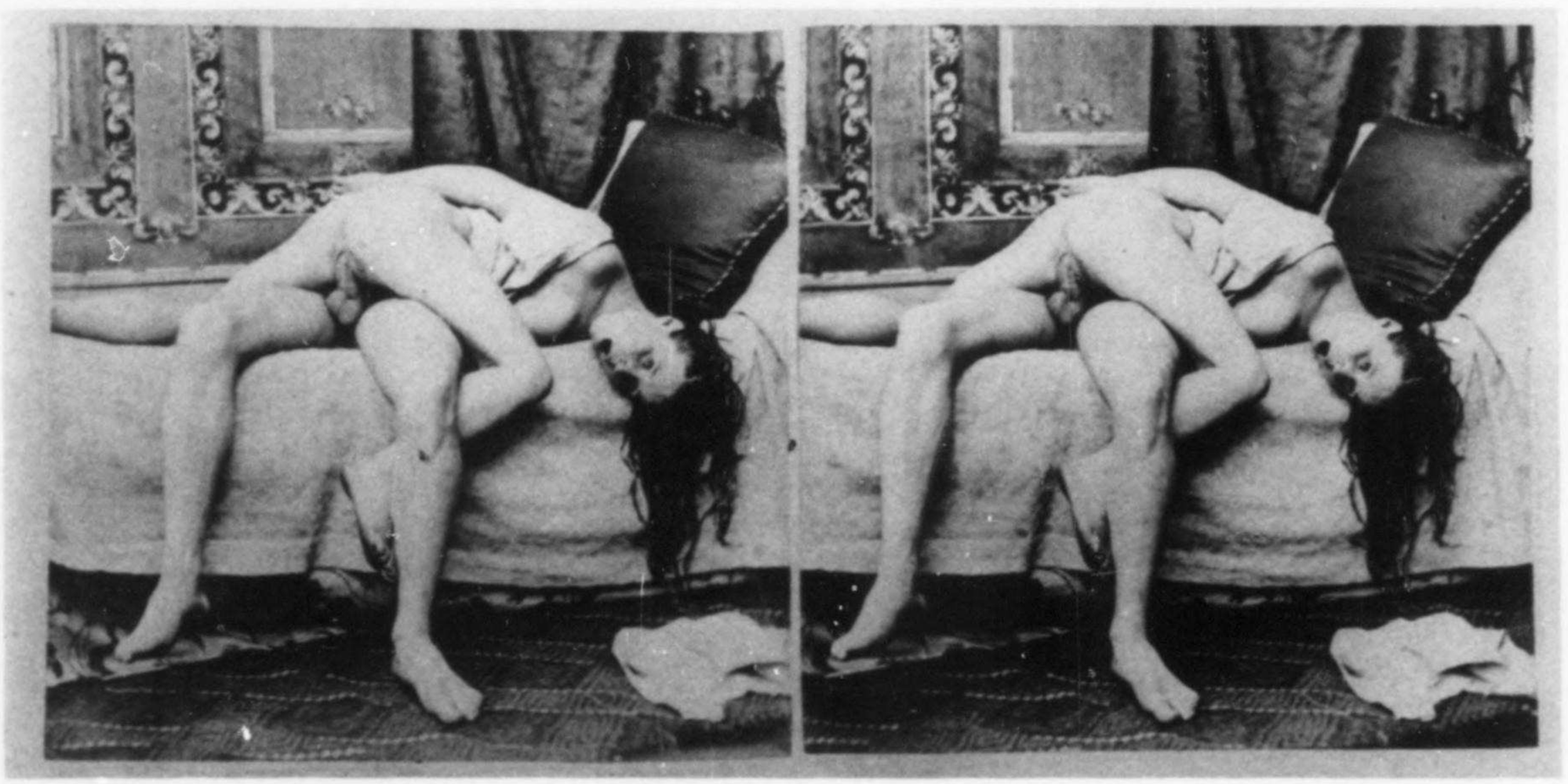
In this context, T. J. Clark's discussion of *Olympia*'s reception in 1865, which in most respects is so inclusive, entirely neglects the ways in which the crisis of the nude, the scandal of *Olympia*, and the intensifying fetishism of women's bodies, were integrally related to the proliferation and dissemination of pornographic and erotic photography. Clark's discussion hinges on the notion that the courtesan—the mythologized, expensive, and publically acknowledged manifestation of commercial sexuality—constituted the horizon of iconographic representability for the Second Empire.[42] To the extent that *Olympia* violated that boundary, to the extent that she was anxiously recognized as a denizen of the lower ranks of prostitution—"woman of the night from Paul Niquet's" as she is designated in one of Clark's critical citations—she wrought havoc on the discursive limits within which prostitution could be imaged. The problem with this formulation is that it ignores the extent to which images of prostitutes (or women imagined to be prostitutes) of all ranks and levels actually circulated. While the courtesan may have been the only prostitutional representative appropriate for salon walls, an iconographic tradition depicting the less privileged members of the profession had produced its own mythologies, conventions, modes of representation. Moreover, the women who posed for the pornographic images (whether the deluxe or mass-market versions), the women who spread their legs, feigned masturbation, engaged in lesbian or heterosexual sex, were surely assumed to be prostitutes—*filles publiques*—not artist's models. In fact, a broad spectrum of sexualized and more or less venal feminine identities—the *grisette*, *lorette*, *lionne*, *biche*, *cocotte*, *grande cocotte*, *grande horizontale*—were imaged initially in the lithographic production of the 1830s and '40s and later in photographs.[43]

Manet had been strongly influenced by what Needham terms "pornographic" photographs (I would consider them to fall within the category of erotic imagery). Needham's essay is reprinted in Thomas B. Hess and Linda Nochlin, eds., *Woman as Sex Object: Studies in Erotic Art 1730–1970*, New York, Newsweek Books, 1972, pp. 80–89. The essay appears to have had little influence in the field; T. J. Clark, for example, neither cites it nor lists it in the bibliography of *The Painting of Modern Life*.

42. "The category *courtisane* was what could be *represented* of prostitution, and for this to take place at all, she had to be extracted from the swarm of mere sexual commodities that could be seen making use of the streets" (T. J. Clark, *The Painting of Modern Life*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf Inc., 1984, p. 109). On this point, I disagree with Clark, although I would wish to add that his chapter on *Olympia* is brilliant and illuminating. In arguing for the courtesan as representational limit, Clark needs to collapse all sorts of categories of the sexualized and/or venal woman under the sign of the courtesan, whom he characterized as floating either above or below fixed class determinations. However, the *grisette* of the romantic period and the *lorette* of the Second Empire (so named by Nestor Roqueplan, director of the Paris Opera), to cite two examples, were associated with bohemia, not with the flashy world of courtesans and financiers. Further, in numerous texts, including *Nana*, the courtesan is very explicitly linked to commerce and commodification; her glamor and costliness in no way detached her from her position as goods on the market.

43. See in this regard Beatrice Farwell, *The Cult of Images: Baudelaire and the 19th-Century Media Explosion*, Santa Barbara, University of California at Santa Barbara Art Museum, 1977.

Braquehais. Reclining Nude. ca. 1856.



Anonymous. Stereographic pornography. ca. 1860.
(Collection William L. Schaeffer.)

These various lexical distinctions in the vocabulary of gallantry warrant discussion, particularly insofar as their variety and ambiguity have some bearing on the iconographic sphere. To begin with the obvious, such a rich and nuanced lexicon for sexually active and/or venal women, like the Eskimo's reputed twenty-seven words for snow, attests to the central importance of women defined by their sexual activity. How that importance was articulated, and what kind of significance was attributed to it, could, however, be inflected in different ways. Within the framework of the juridical, legislative, medical, or sociological coordinates of prostitution, the crucial issues were surveillance, control, and confinement. The terms of this *discours prostitutionelle*, laid down in encyclopedic detail by the "Newton of Harlotry," A. J. B. Parent-Duchâtelet, were largely instrumental.[44] If the public prostitute could be identified, registered, and confined to certain areas; her activity limited to certain hours, her person segregated in a licensed brothel; if she could be monitored by the madame, the police, the gynecologist, then prostitution, considered by Parent-Duchâtelet and his heirs as a necessary evil (which, like the sewer system, was indispensable for public health), could be managed and contained.[45] The threat to this rationalized system lay in the growing ranks of clandestine, that is to say, nonregistered prostitutes.

But the alarm produced by the increase in clandestine prostitution (reflected in the corresponding decrease in the number of licensed houses both in Paris and London) as well as what was widely perceived as its increasingly "public" manifestations, masked a more fundamental anxiety. For what is ultimately at stake in the effort to define the prostitute—whether through demographic and sociological analysis, as in the work of Parent-Duchâtelet and the British Blue Books of the 1840s, or in the numerous works in the popular press on the subject of the demimonde—is the uncertainty of differentiation. How does one distinguish between the honest woman and the prostitute? Or, as Alain Corbin asks: "But is it not precisely the goal of this discourse to create a difference and thus finally to marginalize the registered prostitute as a counter-ideal in order to permit the honest woman to be better defined?"[46] The

44. Alexandre Parent-Duchâtelet's *De la prostitution dans la ville de Paris*, a demographic study of 12,000 prostitutes who had been registered during the period 1816–31, was published in 1836. Its influence cannot be overemphasized. It provided the model not only for fifty years of French reglementary systems, but also for British laws and investigations. See Alain Corbin's seminal work *Les filles de noce: misère sexuelle et prostitution aux 19ième et 20ième siècles*, Paris, 1978. In his chapter on *Olympia*, T. J. Clark provides an excellent account of the legacy of Parent-Duchâtelet.

45. Parent-Duchâtelet was additionally a specialist in sewers, drains, and cesspools. For a discussion of the linkage between prostitution, sewage, putrification, and death, see Alain Corbin, "Commercial Sexuality in Nineteenth Century France," *Representations*, no. 14 (Spring 1986), pp. 209–219.

46. This was taken to its logical conclusion in the substance of the Contagious Diseases Acts, passed in Great Britain in 1864, 1866, and 1869 (the acts were not repealed until 1886). In the interest of controlling venereal disease in garrison cities and ports, any woman could be accosted by

urgency of the need to define the nature of the prostitute was further heightened because the work of Parent-Duchâtelet and the British researchers had indicated that women frequently moved in and out of prostitution with some fluidity; the loss of employment or other economic factors could propel a woman temporarily into prostitution, but she could leave it just as abruptly.[47] Thus the encrustation of folklore, legend, and myth that functioned to fix the definition of the prostitute (she was frigid, lazy, improvident, liked sweets, and so forth) was undercut by a body of empirical documentation that put in question the very terms of the discourse itself.

All the more reason, no doubt, that Zola's Nana, the Golden Fly, the Goncourts' Elisa, Huysmans's Marthe, or Balzac's Esther should possess the hard and brilliant clarity of archetypes, whether as representatives of the heights of prostitution or of its depths. Not only do they all come to suitably bad ends, but their sexuality is described as deficient or deformed. In this way, the etiology of venal sexuality could be fully explained, either in terms of heredity, malign influence, or moral corruption. Such explanations, like the archetypal cast of the descriptions of the prostitute, provided reassurance; they are apotropaic devices against uncertainty.

This uncertainty is fully built into the language of feminine sexuality and identity. Even as the words proliferate, the slippery, protean reality that the words attempt to govern constantly threatens to overcome them. The word *demimonde*, which from the very outset referred to a specifically feminine condition, was invented by Alexandre Dumas *fils* in the 1840s. In the play in which it originally appeared, it referred to those women "become free" (widows, wives separated from their husbands, and foreigners), who, though respectable, were nonetheless "marginal" insofar as their marital status was perceived as ambiguous.[48]

The suggestive vagueness of the term is characteristic of the shifting, unsecured meaning of the sexualized woman drifting between the sturdy fixities of *femme honnête* and *fille publique*. Consequently, gray areas in this topography of the sexualized feminine—the kept woman (of high or low station), the *lorette*, the *grisette*, the occasional prostitute, the dancer, the actress—

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a special plainclothes policeman and accused of being a "common prostitute." If she could not prove otherwise, she could be subjected to an internal examination, and, if found to be carrying a venereal disease, interned for up to nine months in a certified lock hospital. Needless to say, men (who were known also to be carriers of venereal diseases) were exempt from medical or judicial control and examination. See Judith Walkowitz, *Prostitution and Victorian Society: Women, Class and the State*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1980.

47. Clark cites a forthcoming book by Jill Harsin entitled *Crime, Poverty, and Prostitution in Paris 1815–1848*, which he says refutes the idea that prostitution was in many cases occasional and temporary.

48. See Novelene Sue Ross's excellent discussion in *Manet's Bar at the Folies-Bergères and the Myths of Popular Illustration*, Ann Arbor, UMI Press, 1982.

all confound the social need to define that is an inseparable component of the power to name, regulate, survey, and control. But the real question underlying the specific debates between prostitutional regulationists and abolitionists, or between the celebrators of the demimonde and its Jeremiahs, is perhaps more fundamental than the stated problem of prostitution as such. Rather, the question is the culturally—and temporally—overarching one of femininity, the enigma of woman, the sphinx without a riddle, the mystery without a solution. Who is she? What is she? How can she be known? What does she want?

Predictably, these are the rhetorical questions asked about the Countess de Castiglione in the popular press. The tone is bantering, sly, insinuating—the cheap sophistication of the journalist/*boulevardier*. "Paris at this moment possesses a *lion* and a *lionne*," wrote a journalist for *L'Indépendance Belge* in 1856.[49] The countess is a "mysterious stranger" destined to sow heartbreak and discord in the fashionable salons. Who is she? What does she want? The lion is the aged Prince Orloff, emissary of the czar, present in Paris for the peace negotiations following the conclusion of the Crimean War. The lioness is the countess, not yet a widow, and in no way associated with the demimonde. Nonetheless, the Count Orloff is described as a lion, that is to say, prominent and powerful (the term is still current, both in English and French) and the countess is described as a lioness, that is to say, a sexual predator—a courtesan.[50] That the countess was not protected by her marital status, her title, her reception at court, from being publicly labeled as a courtesan indicates the extreme instability of the epistemological system that attempted to secure the meanings of feminine virtue and vice. The nefarious power of the woman perceived as sexually active was such as perpetually to subvert the taxonomies constructed to label and contain her. The cultural hysteria produced by the courtesan and the prostitute (Zola's notes for *Nana* or Maxime du Camp's wildly inflated descriptions of the numbers and influence of prostitutes are prime examples) exceeds the conventional categories in which the sexual activity of women is circumscribed. For the anxiety that attaches to the figure of woman is that of a difference that escapes the discourses of containment.

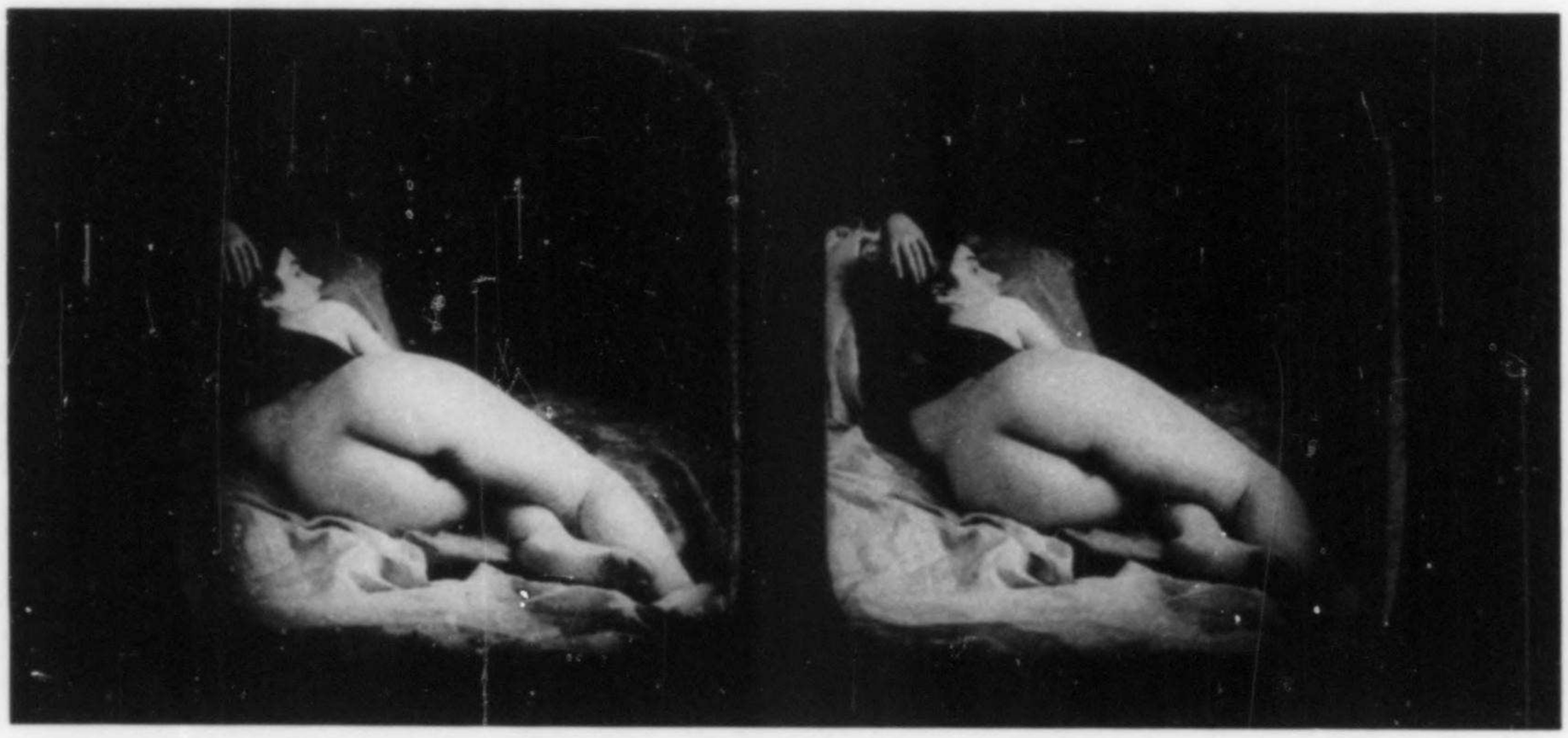
To a certain extent, the nude, erotic and pornographic imagery, and the discourse of prostitution all propose various responses to this threat. In the female nude of Western culture, patriarchy produces a representation of its desire; sexual difference, like the structure of fetishism, is both there and not there. Nothing to see and nothing to hide. Pornography emphatically exhibits the physical sign of that difference, even to the extent of making the woman's

49. Jules Lecompte, in the "Courrier de Paris" in *L'Indépendance Belge*, quoted in Loliée, p. 226.
50. The lithographer Eugène Guérard, for example, produced a suite of twelve plates entitled *Les Lionnes* between 1845–48. "This series of lithographs . . . depicts the activities of the *grandes courtisanes* who, from frequent association with the dandies, or *lions*, derived their appellation *lionnes* (Farwell, p. 123).

genitals the subject of the image. But any potential threat is neutralized by the debased situation of the woman thus portrayed and the miniaturization and immobilization inherent in photographic representation. The mastery and possession accorded the spectator's look, a mastery doubled in the structure of the photograph itself, dispels whatever menace or unpleasure the sight of the woman might provoke. Lastly, the discourse of prostitution, in its epistemological rigor and exhaustive typologies, attempts to provide the reassuring edifice of knowledge and power, which, despite its lacunae, is nonetheless, a monument to the possibility of total control and domination.

The failure of the *cordon sanitaire* to which I earlier referred has implications more far-reaching than the disruption of academic painting conventions or the perceived failure to contain and control prostitution. Moreover, to the degree that this latter cultural anxiety confuses effect with cause and imputes to the prostitute those destructive and corrosive powers that are everywhere at work in society, it produces a symbolization of social crisis in which woman becomes the figure of guilt, corruption, and decomposition. The barriers between what is deemed licit and illicit, acceptably seductive or wantonly salacious, aesthetic or prurient, are never solid because contingent, never steadfast because they traffic with each other—are indeed dependent upon each another. Hence, an entire system of distinctions, elaborations, signs, and codes—a system that pretends to be founded on differences—is in reality a tendentious elaboration of the same. To the patriarchal norms that govern this wonderland of sexual economics, the court beauty, proletarian dancer, courtesan, or streetwalker are equally subject, if not equally abject.

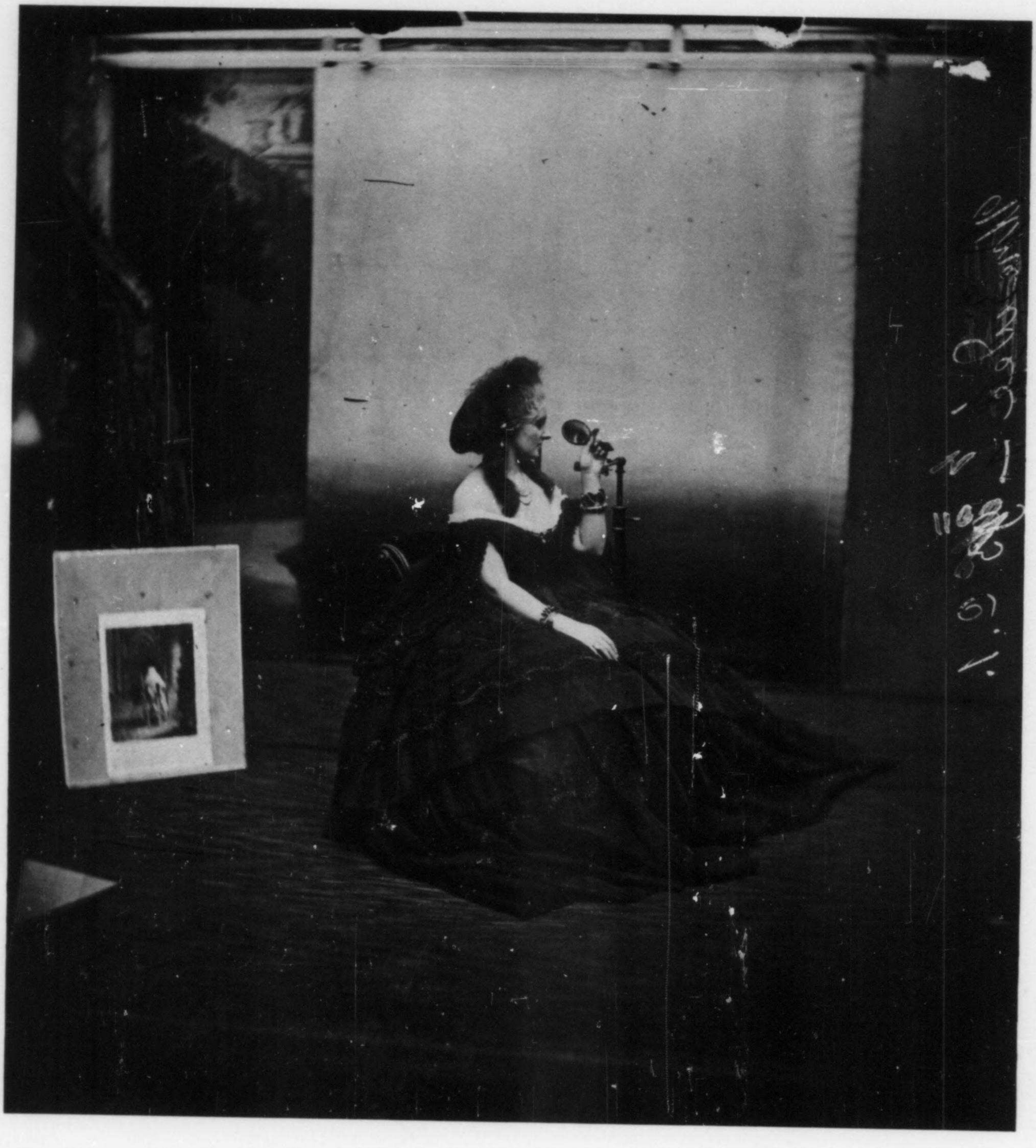
Anonymous. Hand colored stereoscopic daguerreotype.
ca. 1855.



Mayer & Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1856–60.
(The Metropolitan Museum of Art, gift of George Davis.)

> *In other words, for the commodity, there is no mirror that copies it so that it may be at once itself and its "own" reflection.*
>
> —Luce Irigaray,
> *This Sex Which is Not One*

Considering the hundreds of photographs that the countess commissioned of herself, particularly those that feature the use of mirrors, the hollowness of the attempt to claim the countess as author is apparent. Like the conventionalized femininity she was believed to incarnate, the edges of the photographic frame are a Procrustean bed to which body and soul must accommodate themselves. The masks, the disguises, the postures, the poses, the ballgowns, the display of the body—what is the countess but a tabula rasa on whom is reflected a predetermined and delimited range of representations? And of what does her subjectivity consist if not her total absorption of them, her obedience to a scopic regime which inevitably undercuts her pretended authority as orchestrator of the look? It is in this sense that the photographs of the Countess de Castiglione are finally so troubling.



Mayer & Pierson. Countess de Castiglione. ca. 1856–60.

Both photographs collection Musée d'Unterlinden, photos Christian Kempf.

In a number of photographs she included within the stagelike space of the studio a similar photograph of herself, doubling her own image *en abyme*. Image within image, it is as though the countess were providing a commentary on her own specularization. In another series of photographs—the best-known ones of her—she frames her eye within the oval space of a black passe-partout frame. In another, she doubles her gaze in a small hand mirror, deflecting it outward toward the spectator in a manner that permits her to be at once subject and object of the gaze. For whom does the countess effect this framing of the look? Knowing that these images of her were only for her, to what purpose this isolation and emphasis of her gaze?

The profound ambiguity of this gesture, the confusion of subject- and object-positions it occasions, might be said to expose the very reification it enacts. The appeal of such an interpretation lies in its presumption of a critical space, however minimal or problematic, from which the woman can speak herself. But the images of the countess in their entirety do not suggest her occupancy of such a space, nor anything but a total embrace and identification with the look of the other. Consequently, the look with which she fixes herself, and the fixing of herself for the reception of the look, cannot be understood as a disappropriation—a theft—of the masculine prerogative. Nor can it be understood as an act of intentional mimicry, an act which potentially subverts the authority it apes. Rather, a living artifact, the countess has so fully assimilated the desire of others that there is no space, language, or means of representation for any desire that might be termed her own. In its broadest implications, the photographic legacy of the Countess de Castiglione—image and object of desire—confronts us with the question whose urgency is a function of whatever empowerment women can thus far claim: whose desire?

This essay, a short version of which was presented at the College Art Association in February 1986, is part of a work in progress; a study of femininity, sexuality, and photography in nineteenth-century France. I would like to acknowledge the assistance and advice of the following people: Jean Sagne, who first told me about the photographs of the Countess de Castiglione; Maria Morris Hambourg, who led me to the de Montesquiou text and facilitated my research in every way; Grant Romer and Lynn Garafola, who generously shared their research with me; and especially Joanne Seador, who helped me at every stage of the work.

The Freudian Subject, From Politics to Ethics*

MIKKEL BORCH-JACOBSEN

translated by RICHARD MILLER

I have no conscience. The Führer is my conscience.

—Hermann Goering

When one has a sense of guilt after having committed a misdeed, and because of it, the feeling should more properly be called remorse. *It relates only to a deed that has been done, and of course, it presupposes that a* conscience—*the readiness to feel guilty*—*was already in existence before the deed took place. . . . But if the human sense of guilt goes back to the killing of the primal father, that was after all a case of "remorse." Are we to assume that at that time a sense of guilt was not, as we have presupposed, in existence before the deed? If not, where, in this case, did the remorse come from?*

—Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*

It might seem strange that I should approach the notion of "the subject in psychoanalysis" from the angle of politics and Freudian ethics. After all, isn't the subject with which psychoanalysis deals—and treats—first and foremost the individual, in all his remarkable resistance to the ethical and political prescriptions of society? Why then, you may well ask, should we consider this implacably singular subjectivity from the point of view of what—as political power or moral taboo—most often oppresses it, shackles it, or censures it? And

* Lecture delivered in June 1986 at the Psychoanalytic Institute in Paris as part of a seminar conducted by Drs. Wilgowicz and Gillibert.

is it not a fact that the most intractable feature of the desiring subject is precisely its tendency to balk at being reduced to what Freud named the social "ego," the political "ego ideal," the moral "superego"? Perhaps. We may still wonder, however, why Freud himself, after having set up this immense antagonism between desiring subjectivity and the various "egoist" forms of repression, then kept on trying to reduce it, either by rooting the ego in the id, by analyzing the libidinal structure of the linkage of political submission to the Ego-Ideal-Father-Leader, or even by revealing the Oedipal origin of the moral superego. The question remains, in other words, whether what we stubbornly persist in calling the *subject* of desire or the *subject* of the unconscious can really be so easily distinguished from what we no less stubbornly persist in thinking of as its *Other*—that is, in no particular order, the symbolic Father, Law, prohibition, society, power. . . .

It it just as well to state at the outset that nothing seems more fragile than such a distinction. Indeed, everything in the Freudian text conspires to suggest the identity—the identification—of the desiring subject and this "Other" which would at first glance seem to be opposed to it, to alienate it, divide it, or separate it from itself. In short, and to anticipate the ultimate goal of my text, I might say that the Freudian subject *is* the other, that it is *the same as* the other. The formulation is obviously ambiguous, and we must therefore employ it prudently, "literally and in all its senses." For, as must be clear by now, it involves two very different notions or "versions" of the subject, depending upon the emphasis put upon it. Thus, either we understand that the Other is *the same as the subject*, in which case the latter, always identical to itself, triumphantly assimilates or absorbs into itself that otherness—this is the dialectical and, in Freud, the *political*, version of our formula. Or, on the contrary, we understand the subject to be the *same as the Other*—and at once the formula becomes more difficult to understand, at once we no longer know who or what this subject is that had just seemed so obvious, nor do we know if we are still dealing with a subject. I am not sure that we should, if we want to be rigorous, even contrast this second "version" with the first. To do so is to force it into a dialectical mold, whereas actually we need only put a different emphasis on what is the *same* notion. And it does indeed exist in Freud, in which it serves to indicate what I call, for want of a better term, an *ethical* beyond of the subject. At least, that is what I should like to demonstrate here, convinced as I am that it is here, in this infinitesimal, imperceptible difference of emphasis, that Freud's notion of the subject is ultimately played out. For me, it also affords an opportunity to extend, while reorienting them somewhat, certain analyses I have previously published on this question of the "Freudian subject."

Before we turn to the Freudian hesitation between a "politics" and an "ethics" of the subject, however, we ought to achieve some agreement on the significance and implications of this little—and apparently so obvious, so transparent—word: *subject*. Nowadays—I've just been doing it myself with

comparative ease—we seem to have no difficulty with terms like *subject of desire*, *subject of the subconscious*, *subject of fantasy*. And yet, are we really sure that we always know what we mean by the word in such contexts? For example, do we know the history, the origin, the genealogy of the term? In this connection it might be useful to recall that it occurs fairly infrequently in Freud, who preferred to speak of the "ego," the "id," the "superego," or even of the "conscious" and the "unconscious." So we ought perhaps to begin by recognizing at the outset that the "subject" comes down to us, not from Freud himself, but from a certain interpretation of his work: it is from Lacan and his "return to Freud," begun in the early 1950s, that we must date the intemperate use of the word *subject* by French psychoanalysts.

Now, this word, as Lacan was well aware, is taken over from philosophy. We might even designate it as the key term of Western metaphysics. For the subject is not, first, the individual, and it is even less the psychological ego to which we nowadays so often find it reduced. Above all, it designates the *hypokeimenon*, the "underlying" or "subjacent" goal of basic, founding philosophical inquiry, the quest for which is posed, supposed, and presupposed in Book VII of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*: *ti to on*, "What is being as being?" And, as Heidegger has demonstrated, it is only to the extent that it is the heir, in the form of the Cartesian *Cogito*, to this ultimate basic position, the *ultimum subjectum*, that the *ego* becomes a "subject" in the word's properly modern sense. Nor should this be understood in the sense of an *egoist* or *subjectivist* determination of being, but, rather, in the sense that being *qua* being is henceforth to be conceived of according to the initially Cartesian notion of the auto-foundation or auto-positioning of a subject presenting itself to itself as consciousness, in the representation or in the will, in labor or in desire, in the State or in the work of art.

Thus, it is this modern (and indeed, as can be precisely shown, actually Cartesian) concept of subject that Lacan has imported into psychoanalysis—with the success of which we are all aware. Since others have already done so, I shall not dwell here on the theoretical and institutional stakes involved in that operation, nor on the complex conceptual "corruptions"[1] to which it has given rise. I should merely like in a very preliminary way to draw attention to its fundamentally equivocal character. For obviously this appeal to the philosopheme of the subject (as well as to that of other concepts: "truth," "desire," "intersubjectivity," "dialectics," "alienation," etc.) should enable us to restore the trenchant quality of the Freudian text by ridding it of all psychologism or biologism. But why, in the end, has the word—and hence the concept—*subject* been retained, particularly when it was simultaneously being invested with all the Heideggerian de(con)struction of the "metaphysics of subjectivity"? Wasn't it rather more, as Lacan indicated in "The mirror stage as formative of the function of

1. The phrase is taken from Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe and J. L. Nancy, *Le Titre de la lettre*, Paris, Galilée, 1973.

the I," a question of abstracting the psychoanalytic experience of the I "from any philosophy directly descendant from the *Cogito*"?[2] And indeed, would Freud have been given a second's philosophical attention had he not precisely contributed, more than anyone else, to a requestioning of the notion of subject *qua Ego*, subject present to itself in consciousness, in the representation, or in the wish? Nor is it a question of overlooking the fact that the Lacanian subject is the originally divided, split subject of desire, the profoundly subjected subject of the signifier and of language—nothing, we can therefore say, like the transcendental and absolute subject of the philosophers or like its pale successor, the strong and autonomous ego of the ego psychologists. However, this infinitely decentred subject, reduced to only the desire for that part of itself that language simultaneously arouses and forbids it from rejoining, this subject is still a subject. For Lacan, very enigmatically, still retains the *word*—that is, at least the pure position of the subject. That such a position, from the very fact of its being linguistic, is tantamount to a de-position or dis-appearance does not apparently make much difference—a fortiori if the subject's *fading* or *aphanisis* occurs through what we persist in describing as an auto-utterance. Emptied of any substance, in all rigor null, the subject continues to subsist in the *representation* of its lack, in the closed combinative of signifiers in which it stubbornly continues to self-represent itself, always vanishing but always reemerging upon its disappearance.

It is not my intention here, however, to analyze in any detail this powerful entology of the subject, the more powerful in that it is advanced in the guise of a kind of negative ego-logy avid to assail the "imaginary ego" and the "subject supposed to know." I have nevertheless made brief reference to it, first, in anticipation of further analyses because today it represents both the horizon and the condition of the possibility of any investigation of the "subject in psychoanalysis." Secondly, and above all, I have referred to it because it seems to me that it functions as a real *symptom*. For, if we really think about it, how are we to interpret this unexpected resurfacing of the subject smack in the middle of a discourse devoted to a critique of the authority of the consciousness and the illusions of the ego? Once the many conceptual "corruptions" Lacan has made of the Freudian text are taken into account, ought we not ask what, even in Freud himself, has brought about this surreptitious restoration of the subject? Must we not finally suspect the radicality and the depth of the break Freud made on behalf of the unconscious? In short, ought we not return to Freud, yes, but, with Freud, to his philosophical underpinnings, which alone can provide us with a key to the confused fate of psychoanalysis in France?

It is useless to conceal the fact that that is what I attempted to do in *Le sujet freudien*. I thought it might be timely, that it was even urgent, to wonder if,

2. Jacques Lacan, *Ecrits*, Paris, Seuil, 1966, p. 93.

behind the apparently radical contestation of conscience and ego, the schema of the subject was not continuing silently to command the theory and practice—and even the politics—of psychoanalysis. In short, I wanted to know the extent to which the "fundamental concepts" of psychoanalysis were still prisoners of or, contrariwise, might have escaped the appeal of foundation—for that is always, in fact, what is at stake in the "subject."

And, indeed, once the question has been couched in those terms, is it not obvious that, in providing himself with an unconscious made up of "representations," "thoughts," "fantasies," "memory traces," Freud had at the same time provided himself with a subject of representation, imagination, memory—in short, with the material for a new *Cogito*, but merely conceived as being more basic and more subjectival than the conscious ego? For let us not forget that the subject of the moderns is first and foremost the subject of representation—we can even go so far as to say: the subject *as* representation and the representation *as* subject. I would recall that it is by representing itself, by posing itself, in the mode of the *cogito me cogitare*, "with" all the representation it poses before itself, that the Cartesian ego establishes itself as the basis of all possible truth, i.e., as *subjectum* of the total being. Thus, we must take care not to reduce the subject to the ego. In reality, the latter is nothing outside the *cogitatio* within which it presents itself, conscientiously, con-scientifically, to itself, so that it is really rather the structure of representation as auto-representation that should be dubbed the true and ultimate subject. In this sense, in attempting to qualify this radical nonpresence to the self he dubbed "unconscious," Freud could scarcely have chosen a more unfortunate term than *representation* (*Vorstellung*).[3] For to speak of unconscious "representations" was obviously to signal the existence of something beyond the subject, since I—I, the ego—was thus supposed to have thoughts (*Gedanken*) that could think without me. But, too, it had the inevitable consequence of reinstating in that beyond another ego (always, of course, the same one), since there must necessarily be a spectator of that "other scene"—for such representations require a subject that represents them to itself as well as representing itself in them. This is the powerful constraint that brought Lacan to write, apropos the linguistic "other scene," that "the signifier is what represents the subject for another signifier." And it is also what obliged Freud to substantize—in other words, to *subjectivize*—the unconscious with which he was dealing in an "unconscious," or an "id." The various topographies erected since the *Project* are testimony to this constant substratification of the psychoanalytic subject, always more fragmented, more broken down, and yet always more deeply led down to its own prebeginnings. The multiplication of topographic agencies and "personages" in this sense contravenes the subject's unity

3. As Michel Henry has recently noted in *Généalogie de la psychanalyse*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1985; I shall have more to say elsewhere on this admirable and highly important book ("L'inconscient revisité," in preparation).

and identity much less than it supposes it: the subject can be divided only because it is *one* subject. Finally, neither the notion of some primary repression nor even of some "after-shock" would have caused Freud to question his stubbornly held notion of a subject already given, already present (underlying) in its representations. And, in this connection, we can be sure that he would have found devoid of any meaning at all the notion so dear to Emmanuel Levinas of some "trauma" having affected the subjectivity anterior to itself, prior to any representation, to any memory, and, therefore, to any repression. According to Freud, the unconscious is memory, a storehouse of traces, inscriptions, remembrances, fantasies. And this memory must be underlaid, traumatic and fracturing as it may be, by a subject to which and in which it represents itself—the subject of fantasy, the backing for the inscription or the substance hospitable to nervous "facilitations."

Does calling this eternal representational subject "desire" change anything at all? Probably not. Desire, understood as libido, drive, or fantasmatic wish, is always a subject, at least insofar as it is described as desire for an object. Let such an object, indeed, be described as fantasmatic and even as "basically lost," it cannot be prevented from emerging, without mystery, as the object for a subject, before a subject. For us other moderns, the object is always the object of a representing (i.e., as the German so descriptively puts it, as a setting-before, a *Vor-stellen*), and this evidence continues to be valid when we understand it as the object of some desire, some libido, some drive. We may only wonder why, in Freud, the "drive" is only accessible through its objects: it is because he only conceives it as represented to or before the psyche—or: the subject. This latter must thus be presupposed to underlie the object in which it sets before itself its pleasure or its enjoyment and in which, simultaneously, it sets *itself* before itself, represents itself. From this viewpoint, by conceiving the object of desire as that "part" that language and representation deduct or remove from the subject, Lacan only confirms this basically auto-representative structure of desire. Object "small *a*" eludes the subject so totally only because the latter has first represented itself in it: thus, it subsists—breast or feces, gaze or voice—in the representation of its absence, its lack-of-being-itself.

I do not, therefore, believe that it is in the direction of this objectival conception of desire that we should seek, in Freud, material for an in-depth solicitation of the schema of the subject. On the other hand, the same does not quite hold true if we turn to some other, much more problematic, aspect of Freud's theory of desire. This is the aspect that deals with desire of the ego, an expression we must here consider in all its genitive implications, subjective and objective. Indeed, we know that very early on Freud felt constrained to make room alongside the desire for the object which he discerned in sexuality for an "egoist" desire, a desire to be oneself or to be-an-ego, which he began by calling "egoistic" and then "narcissistic," and which he ended up by attaching closely to the identification process. I shall not go into the details—they are well known to

all—of the various stages of this clarifying process, via the themes of the "egoism" of dreams, and fantasies, homosexuality, paranoia, or passionate love. Yet I must emphasize here the importance of that process, for we often really fail to appreciate in Freud the implications of this shifting and displacement of interest. Indeed, his emphasis on the violent passion the ego conceives for (or devotes to) itself was not only to overturn the initially objectival definition of desire, and henceforth affect all the investigations into the repressing "ego" to which Freud, in a letter to Jung, confessed he had not paid sufficient attention.[4] It also—obscurely, problematically—called into question the subject of desire, the subject of the desiring representation, which he had so tenaciously posited hitherto.

Now, with what are we dealing here vis-à-vis this desire Freud described as "egoist" or "narcissistic"? First and foremost, with being an "I," a "self"—in other words, a subject: shut within itself, freed from all bonds, in this sense absolute. But if I *desire* to be (an) I, if I *desire* myself, it must, following elementary logic, be because I am not it. Thus, this singular desire, by and large, is the desire of no subject. When, for example, Freud wrote that the ideal of the narcissistic ego is "what we would like to be"[5] or, with regard to identification, that that is an "emotional tie with another person" who one desires *to be* (in contrast to the object one desires *to have*),[6] he was clearly emphasizing the abyssal nature of narcissistic passion. For that ego-being (ego-ness, we might say, the essence and foundation of identity as *ego*), that being does not exist within me: it is elsewhere *ego*, in this other—always *alter*—Ego who fascinates me, in whom I love myself, in whom I kill myself. *Thus* I am that other; *ego sum alter huic*. Or, better, a more Freudian version of this other, very different, *Cogito*: "I am the breast."[7]

By the strangest and yet the most logical of paradoxes, with Freud the attention devoted to the ego's narcissism led to the question of the Other, of others. The question was to haunt him from then on, the more so in that this "other"—model or rival, homosexual figure or persecutor—always appeared to be becoming more and more like the ego, to the point of shattering the very opposition separating them. This is obviously why the great texts on the second topography are an inextricable mix of "ego analysis" and analysis of the culture or social tie: the other is no longer an object, an *Objekt*, whence the need to pay attention to nonerotic, "social" relationships, to others; and, inversely, the ego is no longer a subject, whence the need to inscribe this "sociality" in the ego itself, in the form of identification, superego, etc. Thus, since the ego was originally

4. Sigmund Freud, C. G. Jung, *The Freud/Jung Letters*, ed. William McGuire, trans. Ralph Manheim, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1974.
5. Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey, London, Hogarth Press and the Institute for Psycho-Analysis, XIV, p. 90.
6. Freud, *SE*, XVIII. p. 105.
7. Freud, *SE*, XXIII, p. 299.

identified with others or the other principally assimilated to the ego, everything played a part, in a multiplicity of ways, in weakening the joint mutual position of subject and object, or, put another way, the position of the subject of the representation. For that is, in the end, the ultimate implication of the entire discourse on narcissism, the primary identification, and incorporation: if I am the other, then *I no longer represent him to myself*, since the exteriority in which he might have pro-posed himself to me—either as model or as object, *Vor-bild* or *Ob-jekt*—has faded away. And, at the same time, I have become unable to represent *me*, to present myself to myself in my presence: this other that I am no longer is and never was *before* me, because I have straightaway identified myself with him, because I have from the outset assimilated him, eaten him, incorporated him.

True, this That, this *Id*, which is nothing other than the ex- "subject of desire," is difficult to envisage, and in any event impossible to *represent*. But is it not toward that, that unrepresentable "point of the other" to which Freud was tending when he stated, for example, that the ego emerges through a "primary identification," adding that that primitive relationship to the object immediately amounts to its destroying incorporation? Or elsewhere, when he attempted to describe, under various names, such as "primary narcissism," "animism," "the omnipotence of thoughts," "magic," a type of mental operation that ignores the distinction between ego and others, between subject and object, between desire and its fulfillment? And is it not after all in the direction of this basically unrepresentable thought, thought of no subject at all, that we should be seeking the ever-elusive "unconscious"?

I have just noted, however, that all this is difficult to think. I should quickly add that Freud himself had enormous trouble in dealing with this problem. For Freud also most frequently interpreted this narcissism, this desire-to-be-oneself that so radically disrupts any notion of a "self," as a desire of oneself *by oneself*—in short, as a subject's auto-affirmation, its auto-position, or its circular auto-conception. We need only recall, in "On Narcissism: An Introduction," the fascinating figures, totally enclosed within themselves, of narcissistic Child and Woman. Or the theory of primary narcissism secondarily "granted" and "withdrawn" vis-à-vis objects: everything begins with and returns to Narcissus, who never loses himself in objects other than to find himself in them and represent himself in them mirrorwise, in *specula*-tion, *specula*-tively. It is this retrieval of the narcissistic ego in the speculary other that Lacan has described by using the term *Imaginary*—but, of course, in order virulently to denounce the deception, the illusion. Yet by retaining, if not the ego, at least its *image*, he too has evidently allowed himself to be won over, in an apparent reversal, by the auto-representative structure of narcissistic desire. That the ego can imagine itself outside itself, imagine itself before itself in the mirror the other holds up to it, in no way, in fact, contravenes its auto-position, since it is precisely the principle of this auto-*ob*-position . . . As for stigmatizing the "alienation" of the narcissistic

ego within the imaginary "other self," that only serves to give some additional confirmation to the profoundly dialectic character of the process being described. For the Lacan of "The Mirror Phase," as for the Freud of "On Narcissism: An Introduction," the ego continues to *represent* itself -- and thus, inevitably, to represent *itself* — in the specular mirror-image reflection in which it loves and desires itself.

It is my belief, therefore, that such Freudian or Lacanian interpretations of narcissism also require interpretation. They interpret narcissistic desire in the line of desire they subscribe to a certain auto-interpretation of desire, whereas this latter is, clearly, a *desire to be a subject*, a desire to be oneself to oneself within an inalienated identity and autonomy. In this sense, the narcissism thesis does more than manifest, sometimes crudely and sometimes with more subtlety, the fascinated submission of psychoanalysis to the paradigm of the "subject." It also attests, in a turnaround, to the narcissistic character of that paradigm. Thus, as I have tried to indicate here or there, when we say that psychoanalysis is in its essence deeply narcissistic and that, in a sometimes caricatural way, it reinstates the ancient and always new problematic of the "subject," we are saying one and the same thing.

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Now, to get to the point, it is obviously in Freud's so-called "political" or "sociological" texts that this reinstatement is most flagrant, most massive. This is all the more striking in that the Freudian examination of culture and social tie corresponds in the first instance, as I have said, to the constraining movement that has tilted the question of the narcissistic ego towards that of the other who inwardly haunts and obsesses it. And indeed, it was under the title of *Andere* (the *Other*) that the great 1921 political text *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* opened: "In the individual's mental life the other is invariably involved," Freud began, "as a model, . . . as a helper, as an opponent; and from the very first, individual psychology . . . is at the same time social psychology as well."[8] An admirable statement, and one that does, by thus inscribing the other *in* the ego, appear to contain in embryo a whole nonsubjectival theory of the "subject" and "social relationship." Yet one need only read the text of *Group Psychology* to realize that the embryo does not develop and remains stillborn, stifled as it is by a problematic of the political Subject.

In short — since we do not have space to describe here in any detail the extraordinarily complex course of this essay — Freud, when it comes down to it, continually presupposes, in his attempt to explain the social relationship, a *subject* of the relationship, whether as an "individual" subject or as a supra-

8. Freud, *SE*, XVIII, p. 69.

individual, political subjectivity. On the one hand, indeed, his analysis begins with the desire, the love, or the libido of individuals, who are consequently posited as preexistent to the various erotico-objectival relationships that link them together. And, on the other hand, once we recognize the fundamental fact that, in crowds, all subjectivity and all individual desire disappears, the analysis comes up with a kind of political super-Subject in the dual shape of a narcissistic chief and of the mass, the latter welded together by love to their Chief. We all recall the famous conclusion: society, Freud informs us, is a unanimous "mass" whose members have set up the same "object" (the "leader" or "*Führer*") in place of their ego ideal and who, as a result of so doing, identify, reciprocally and among themselves, with each other.

Having said that, we have first said that society—any society—is in essence *political*, because it depends totally upon the figure of a Chief, a sovereign head in which it represents itself and without which it would purely and simply fall apart. Yet we are also saying that society—any society—is fundamentally, basically, *totalitarian*. Not, I hasten to add, because State coercion or tyrannical violence would be essential to it. That trait is not confined to totalitarian societies, and Freud is clear that the reign of the *Führer* depends above all on the fiction of his love. No, if Freud's society is totalitarian in a strict and rigorous sense, it is because it is posited as an integrally political totality, as a *totale Staat* knowing no division, unless it be minimal and intended solely to relate the social body to itself between the beloved Chief and his loving subjects. This is further borne out by the speculative biology underlying the description in *Group Psychology*, because that tends, on the grounds of "union" and erotic *Bindung*, to turn society into an actual organism, a real body politic. As Claude Lefort has shown in his expansion on Kantorowicz's work,[9] this is the totalitarian fantasy *par excellence*. It is the profoundly narcissistic fantasy of a single, homogeneous body proper recognizing no exteriority or otherness vis-à-vis itself other than in relation to itself. And it is thus the fantasy, the auto-representation of a subject: for Freud, society is a compact group, a mass, and that mass makes a single *body* with the Chief-Subject that embodies, *incarnates* it.

Of course, it is not a matter of declaring that that description is false. Too many examples in recent history confirm it for us to doubt its exactness and precision. From this viewpoint, I too am prepared to recognize, with Serge Moscovici,[10] the exceptional importance of Freudian "group psychology" for any understanding of the political and social facts of our time. But we must also recognize that Freud did not so much analyze this totalitarian fantasy as subscribe to it. For, contrary to what he is purported to have said here or there (and this was, inter alia, Lacan's thesis, or myth[11]), Freud never *criticized*

9. Claude Lefort, "*L'image du corps et le totalitarisme*," in *L'invention démocratique*, Paris, Fayard, 1981; E. Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1959.
10. Serge Moscovici, *L'age des foules*, Paris, Fayard, 1981.
11. Lacan, *Ecrits*, pp. 474–475: "For our purposes we must begin with the remark, never to

"group psychology," convinced as he was, on the contrary, that it represented the very essence of society. Thus, he never questioned the primacy of the Chief, going so far as to write (to Einstein) the following terrifying sentence: "One instance of the innate and ineradicable inequality of men is their tendency to fall into the two classes of leaders (*Führer*) and followers. The latter constitute the vast majority; they stand in need of an authority which will make decisions for them and to which they for the most part offer an unqualified submission."[12]

We must look carefully at the historical and theoretical justification for this exacerbation of the role of "leader" of the masses. In the case of Freud, as in that of Le Bon or Tarde, in that of fascist ideologues as in that of the Bataille of the 1930s, it was based on the following observation—variously appreciated and exploited according to author, of course, but in the end always the same: modern man, so-called *homo democraticus*, is in reality a "man of the crowds," a man of the "communal" masses, of "groups in fusion." And that anonymous man, brutally revealed by the retreat of the great politico-religious transcendances, is no longer a subject: he is the true "Man without Qualities," without personal identity, deeply panicked, de-individualized, suggestible, hypnotizable ("mediatized," as we would put it today) among "solitary crowds." Thus only an

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our knowledge made, that Freud had started the I[nternational] A[ssociation] of P[sychoanalysis] on its path ten years prior to the time, in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, he became interested in the Church and the Army, in the mechanisms through which an organic group participates in the crowd, an exploration whose clear partiality can be justified by the basic discovery of the identification of each individual's ego with a shared ideal image the mirage of which is supported by the personality of the chief. A sensational discovery, made prior to fascist organizations' making it patently obvious. *Made aware earlier of its effects* [emphasis mine] Freud would obviously have wondered about the field left open for dominance by the function of the *boss* or caïd in any organization that," etc. A remark that in turn gives rise to several others: (1) Freud's "basic discovery" in *Group Psychology* is not that *egos* are united in the same *identification* with the ego's Ideal-Chief, because he states, on the contrary, that they mutually self-identify because of their shared *love* for the "Object" that is set up "in place of" their Ego Ideal. Lacan's "remark" supposes, in fact, a reinterpretation of Freud's thesis and a reinterpretation probably dictated by implicit reflection on the fascist phenomenon. (2) Freud's "sensational discovery" "anticipates" the fascist mass organizations (as Bataille was to note as early as 1933, cf. *Oeuvres complètes*, I, p. 356) only because it broadly confirms a description of "crowd psychology," such as that of Gustave Le Bon, which fascist ideologues, led by Hitler and Mussolini, were to exploit deliberately (cf. R. A. Nye, *The Origins of Crowd Psychology. Gustave Le Bon and the Crisis of Mass Democracy in the Third Republic*, London, 1975, pp. 178–179). (3) "Made aware of its effects . . ." in 1921 Freud felt absolutely no need to reorganize the analytical community on another model—and for good reason: as Lacan himself noted in the earlier version of his text (published as an Annex to *Ecrits*, p. 487), Freud insisted so much on his own function as Chief-Father because he never for an instant doubted the basic "inadequacies" of his "band" of disciples. The masses need a leader—isn't that what all the great "leaders" of this century have constantly reiterated, in public or in private, from Lenin to Mao by way of Mussolini or Tito? And is this not what Lacan himself is also saying in his way, when he heaps contempt on those attending his seminar or signs his contributions to *Scilicet* with his proper name alone? In fact, nothing would have been done either by Freud or by Lacan to deal with what the latter called "the obscenity of the social tie" and substitute for it another, "cleansed of any group needs" ("*L'Etourdit*," in *Scilicet*, 4, Paris, 1973).

12. Freud, *SE*, XXII, p. 212.

absolute Chief—"prestigious" and "charismatic" say Le Bon and Weber, "sovereign" and "heterogenous" in Bataille's words—can embody, reembody, in other words, give substantial consistency and subjective unity to, this magma of unanchored identities or imitations. In the texts of theoreticians as in the histories inspired by them, the figure of Chief-Subject thus emerges brutally, the more so in that it wards off what is perceived of as a radical de-subjectivization and alienation. In this connection it is probably not enough to say, as one so readily does today, that the twentieth-century totalitarianisms have politically realized the modern rationale and goal of the Subject in all its total ab-solution and immanence. It must be added that they have had greater success insofar as they have lucidly, cynically dealt with the de-liaison and dissolution of the subjects dually implicit in such a goal of immanentization. Briefly, the totalitarian Chief the more easily imposes the fiction or figure of his absolute subjectivity because he knows full well that it *is* a myth and that what he has before him is a mass of nonsubjects. So, in this connection, it is no mere chance that totalitarianisms have caused so many "new mythologies" and "personality cults" to flourish, nor that Bataille and his friends should have dreamed, lucidly and naively, of opposing fascism with an *other* "heterogeneous" and "acephalous" mythology. Inasmuch as the masses have no proper identity, only a myth can provide them with one by positing a fiction in which their unity is embodied, depicted—in short: in which they auto-envisage or auto-represent themselves as Subject. Henceforth, *the Subject is a myth*, because we know we are dealing with something fictional, with a deus ex machina, but it is also a myth because in that fiction it is reembodied and *massively* reinstated.

We find this same totalitarian myth of the Subject in *Group Psychology*, and here too, on the far edge of an investigation into the nonpresence of the self implicit in the social being. For just as Freud, on behalf of social identifications, emphasizes the radical alteration of so-called "subjects" assembled in crowds, just as he emphasizes the original character of such group psychology, so does he restore, reinstitute, despite everything, the full primacy and principality of an absolute Subject. I would therefore recall that the investigation of *Group Psychology* concludes with an invocation of the "totally narcissistic" Father-Chief-Hypnotist. Here, this theme of "narcissism" and of the jealous "egoism"[13] of the primal Father is still decisive, because it is quite obviously only on condition that he be free of ties to anyone (to any "object," as Freud says) that the Chief is able to propose himself as a unique object to the admiring and awe-struck love of the masses—in short, to create community where earlier there

13. Freud, *SE*, XVIII, p. 123: "He, at the very beginning of the history of mankind, was the 'superman' whom Nietzsche only expected from the future. Even to-day the members of a group stand in need of the illusion that they are equally and justly loved by their leader (*Führer*), but the leader himself need love no one else; he may be of a masterful nature, absolutely narcissistic, self-confident and independent."

had been nothing but a chaos of reciprocal identification and suggestions. In other words, everything is locked onto this fascinating figure of a Narcissus or Egocrat sprung from nowhere—which makes moot the difficult question of a relationship or social tie anterior to the ego and makes room for a "scientific myth" that is at once the myth of the Subject's origin and the myth of the foundation of a Politics. The Subject self-proclaims itself Chief, and the Chief thereupon self-engenders himself as Subject.

It goes without saying that this myth remains for us to interrogate, both in its enigmatic resemblance to the totalitarian myth and because of its odd renewal of the figure of the Subject. Yet is it really fitting, in this case, to call it a mere *myth*? I do not think so, and I put even greater stress on this because it is, after all, just such a denunciation of myth that preoccupied me in *Le sujet freudien*. In that book, I tried to show that the very violence with which Freud posited a Subject as the origin of Politics seemed to me to signal the failure of his attempt at foundation, at *instauratio*. And, in a way, I revelled in demonstrating that failure: I confined myself to drawing attention to Freud's inability to found the social tie—the relationship with others—other than by presupposing in mythic form a Subject founded in itself and based upon itself. In short, I confined myself to revealing the innately unfounded, abyssal, nature of this constant, circular presupposition of a Subject-Foundation. Yet might not that very abyss—the abyss of relationship—be the source of some non-"subjective" notion of politics, of a non-"political" notion of the subject? Were we condemned, in accordance with the deeply ambiguous gesture of our post-Nietzschean modernity, to keep coming up with things like lack-of-foundation, obliteration-of-subject, loss-of-origin, collapse-of-principle? And this "an-archy" of the masses, in extremis warded off by the Chief-Subject myth, did it enable us in extremis, as it were, to achieve another and more essential understanding of the *archy* itself, the beginnings, the commandment?

For, in the last analysis, that is the formidable problem posed by the Freudian and, more generally, totalitarian Chief-Subject myth. Once its mythic character has been noted, we must still understand whence it derives its incredible *authority*. Because the myth works, whether we like it or not: everywhere, the masses group themselves around a Chief or Party supposed to represent them; everywhere, they convulsively sacrifice themselves on the altar of his or its myth. And that myth functions all the better, as we have seen, when it posits the radical lack of the very political subjectivity it creates. Whence, then, its awesome founding power? Whence does it derive its authority, since it is not from some subject? Since the subject—and this is the cynical lesson totalitarianism teaches us—is a myth? Today, we can no longer shirk that question. And we can do so even less in that it is only through that question that we can—perhaps—find the means to resist the henceforth global domination of the "politics of the subject." For, in the end, *on behalf of what* should we reject totalitarianism? In the name of what notion of "subject" and "politics," if it can truly

no longer be that of the Individual against the State, nor that of the Rights of the Human-Subject?

Perhaps, in spite of everything, the Freudian myth can provide us with the beginnings of an answer to that question. For we cannot, as I have done hitherto, rely on the version supplied by *Group Psychology*. That political version of the myth is already reinterpreting, reelaborating, an anterior version, a more properly *ethical* version, to which we must now return. We are familiar with this mother-form of the myth: it is the fable of the murder of the primal Father, as set forth in *Totem and Taboo*. And this fable, if we examine it closely, envisages quite another genesis for authority than does *Group Psychology* (I use *authority* in order to avoid the word *power*). For, in *Totem and Taboo* the primal authority is not the Father-Chief-Hypnotist, that "Superman" Freud evoked after Nietzsche before calling him, in *Moses*, the "great man." It is the *guilt-creating* Father, and guilt-creating because he is a *dead* Father. Therefore, we can already say—and herein lies the enigma—that such authority is not the authority of any person, in any case not of any man, and even less that of some absolute Narcissus.

True, Freud is still speaking of a murder of a primal "Father," and in so doing he appears once again to be using the language of myth. It is for this that all of our disenchanted modernity, from Lévi-Strauss to Girard, has criticized him: presupposing the authority of the Father rather than deducing it, *Totem and Taboo* does no more than provide us with a new myth of origins, a new myth of foundation. And yet that myth—which is a myth even in its auto-representation as a myth—is also the myth of the origin of the myth of the Father (indeed, we can say of *all* myth). Freud is well aware that the dominating and jealous male of the Darwinian tribe is no Father, and that is even why he feels the need, in his narrative, to have him murdered by his fellows: his power derived from strength alone, he still does not hold any properly paternal authority, and thus, according to this logic of the natural state, he must be someday overthrown. It is thus *after* the murder, *after* they have killed and devoured their tyrant, that his murderers submit to him, through an enigmatic guilt and obedience that are described as "retrospective" (*nachträglich*). The "Father," in other words, only emerges afterward, in the remorse felt by those who, in like wise, become, for the first time in history, "brothers"—and brothers because they are guilty "sons." The "Father," then, does not appear in this strange Freudian myth other than as a myth—the myth of his own power and the power of his own myth. "The dead," Freud writes, "became stronger than the living had been."[14]

Now, this genesis of authority is extraordinarily interesting when viewed from the angle we are now taking, to the degree that it describes the primal authority as an "ethical," "moral" authority, and not as a political authority.

14. Freud, *SE*, XIII, p. 143. (Translation slightly modified.)

What the members of the tribe submit to—and because of which they form a community, an ultimately fraternal, human community—is no power, because the wielder of that power is now dead and perfectly powerless. As Freud insistently emphasizes, it is only out of the guilt feeling—the feeling of *moral* lapse, or sin—that the terrible figure that is to become the omnipotent Father, and later the God or the Leader, emerges. As he says in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, guilt feeling is not social anxiety (*soziale Angst*), the commonplace fear of being punished by some external power or censor. It is moral anxiety (or anxiety of conscience: *Gewissenangst*) vis-à-vis an "inner" authority as "imperative" as it is "categorical." It is this strange moral authority—even stranger, for that matter, because the subject submits to it by himself, autonomously—that Freud has earlier described as the "voice of conscience" (*Stimme des Gewissens*) and that he was later, after *Totem and Taboo*, to dub the "superego" or "ego ideal." And it is *in place of* that ego ideal that he will set up the *Führer* of *Group Psychology*, finally indicating that the essence of the community is "ethical" before being "political." What creates the community is not principally the fusional and loving participation of a collective Super-Subject or "Superman," but the always singular interpellation of a *Super*-ego that is strictly, rigorously, no one.

For I repeat: the primal authority—ethical authority—belongs to no one, and above all not to the Father-Chief-Narcissus, whose myth will emerge only afterward. Far from his murderers' feeling guilty because of some anteriorally known and established law (which brings us back to the status of *soziale Angst*), they become aware of the law of the Father—inexplicably, out of terror—through the sense of sin (through *Gewissenangst*): "They thus created," writes Freud, carefully underscoring the paradox, "*out of their filial sense of guilt* the two fundamental taboos of totemism."[15]! Freud does not, then, say that the murderers feel anxiety at having transgressed against taboos laid down by the Father. He says—and this is even odder—that the Father's taboos, and, thus, human society, all spring from anxiety—about what? Nothing; nobody. In a wholly disconcerting way, it is when the powerful male is dead and no longer present to forbid anything that the alterity of duty and the debt of guilt, all the more unbearable, emerges. The Father emerges from his own death, the law from its own absence—literally ex nihilo. That, as a matter of fact, is why the Freudian myth is not, despite all appearances, a "twentieth-century myth," a new myth nostalgically reinstating the lost transcendency of myth (of the Father, of God, of the Chief). Freud does not deplore the death of the Father, nor does he attempt to alleviate the resultant "discontent of civilization." On the contrary, rooting civilization in the "discontent" of an a priori guilt anterior to any law and any Name of the Father, he offers us the myth of the *death* of myth—and of its

15. *Ibid.*, p. 143.

tireless resurrection as well. For, finally, if the Father is dead (if his power is purely mythic), how is it that his murderers submit to him? Or, rather (for we are talking about ourselves, about the "killers of God"), if God is dead, how is it that we are so eager to reinstate him at the center and base of our societies, socialist mankind lying prostrate before the Stalinist "Little Father," the *Volk* or race bound together in a fasces behind its *Führer*?

Because we feel guilty for having killed him: that is Freud's—still mythic—response. The question, however, merely bounces back: why do we feel guilty if no Father is any longer there, if he never was there, to punish us? That is the engima of the myth—both of Freudian myth and of the mythic power it describes. To solve it, is it enough to evoke once again the love for the Father? Freud in fact writes that the murderers "hated their father, who presented such a formidable obstacle to their craving for power [*Machtbedürfnis*] and their sexual drives; but they loved and admired him too. After they had got rid of him, had satisfied their hatred and had put into effect their wish to identify themselves with him, the affection which had all this time been pushed under was bound to make itself felt."[16] Yet such "love" for the Father, as is all too obvious, is also a part of the myth. For it is only *after* they have eliminated the detested rival and when they are impelled by remorse that his murderers come to love him as a Father and to be united in that love. In order to love him, they thus had to begin by killing him. Society, a community of love, rests on a crime, and on the remorse for crime committed.

So, should we not seek the key to filial-fraternal "retrospective obedience" not so much in "love" per se as in the highly ambivalent, hate-filled and devouring side of its nature? The members of the tribe, as the myth makes clear, killed and *devoured* the male of whom they were jealous. Why this, if the only goal was to get rid of the retainer of exclusive rights over the females of the flock? The myth spells it out for us: because his murderers "loved and *admired* him." That singular "love" was admiring, identifying, envious, and it thus led inevitably to the cannibalistic incorporation of the model. As the narrative has it: "The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers: and in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength."[17]

16. Freud, *SE*, XIII, p. 143, cf. also, *SE*, XXI, p. 132: "This remorse was the result of the primordial ambivalence of feeling toward the father. His sons hated him, but they loved him, too. After their hatred had been satisfied by their act of aggression, their love came to the fore in their remorse for the deed. . . . Now, I think we can at last grasp two things perfectly clearly: the part played by love in the origin of conscience and the fatal inevitability of the sense of guilt."
17. Freud, *SE*, XIII, p. 142. See also *SE*, XXIII, p. 82: "they not only feared and hated their father but also honoured him as a model, and . . . each of them wished to take his place in reality. We can . . . understand the cannibalistic act as an attempt to ensure identification with him by incorporating a piece of him."

"Model," "identification," "devouring," "appropriating," all that is clear. Here the myth is not telling us about a love for an object, but about an indissolubly narcissistic and identificatory passion: it is to *be* the Father—*to be the Subject*—that the members of the horde kill and devour him. Not (or only secondarily) to *have* the women of the flock. Freud expresses it clearly when he speaks of the "need for power" and the "desire to identify with the Father": the murder is committed, not to gain possession of an object of desire or pleasure, but to acquire an identity. In this light, then, the murder of the Father is far less a mere animal struggle than it is the Freudian version of Hegel's "struggle for pure prestige." If desire leads to murder and devouring, it is because it is a desire to take unto oneself the other's being, a desire to assimilate his power (*Macht*), his strength (*Stärke*), in short, his mastery: his autonomy as Narcissus. My being is in the other, and it is for that reason that I can become "me," an ego, only by devouring him—*that* is what the Freudian myth is telling us, and in the end much less mythically than might seem. For what it treats of, by setting it in the mythic origins of the human community, is the primal relationship with others—"primal" because it is the relationship of no ego to no other, no subject to no object. And thus, it is a relationship without relationship to another, an absolved tie: I am born, I, the *ego*, in assimilating the other, in devouring him, in incorporating him. Everything therefore begins, in the history of so-called "individuals" as well as in that of society, with a murderous and blind identification, the more so in that no ego is yet present to see or conceive anything at all, and the "envied" model it assimilates is immediately eradicated, eaten, swallowed up: "I am the breast," "I am the Father"—i.e., *no one*. In other words, everything begins with an identification without subject—and here the Freudian myth corresponds exactly with the status of panicked anarchical, acephalic masses without a Chief. The Father (but not a father, nor even a brother, but merely a counterpart, a fellow being) has been killed and there is therefore no subject at the foundation of the social tie, neither loving subjects nor beloved Subject.

Yet it is at this juncture that the myth of the Subject arises. The phantom of Father-Subject attacks the guilty conscience of the sons, who then attempt to atone for their sin through their love and submission. From where does this ghost, then, derive its vain, empty power? From the *failure* of the devouring act of identification. Freud puts it in a footnote, and it is ultimately to be the only explanation of the son's "retrospective obedience" he vouchsafes: "This fresh emotional attitude must also have been assisted by the fact that the deed cannot have given complete satisfaction to those who did it. From one point of view it had been done in vain. Not one of the sons had in fact been able to put his original wish—of taking his father's place—into effect. And, as we know, failure is far more propitious for a moral reaction than satisfaction."[18] Thus, none of the

18. Freud, *SE*, XIII, p. 143.

sons was able to become Subject and Chief by appropriating to himself the identity and glorious being of the Other. And what is, finally, the indomitable alterity that brings about the failure of the identificatory act of violence, the dialectical assimilation of the other? To return to and reverse Hegel's term, it can be nothing other than the "absolute Master," death. Death or the *dead*: *der Tote*, says Freud.

In empirical reality there is nothing to prevent one of the tribe from taking in his turn the place of the dominant male by eliminating his competitors (indeed, Freud conceives of this solution in other versions of the myth[19]). So it must be something quite different, and not at all empirical, with which we are dealing here: namely the unoccupiable place of the dead, death being the absolute limit of identification. The myth, to be sure, does not state it so clearly, but it is the only way we can understand the retrospective power of death. *Der Tote* who is resurrected and lives on eternally in the guilty memory of his sons *represents* death, represents for them their own unrepresentable death. We must in fact imagine, at the myth's extremity, that the murderers, having devoured the other in order to appropriate his being, suddenly find themselves faced with "themselves"—in other words, with no one. The other was dead, *and therefore they themselves were dead.* The identifying incorporation brought them—brutally, dizzyingly—face to face with what is par excellence unassimilable: their own death, their own being-dead, with what escapes all appropriation. That is why "the dead became stronger than the living had been" and also why the "sense of guilt" is born of the anxious apprehension of death "beside the dead body of someone [we] loved," as Freud says in "Thoughts for the Times on War and Death."[20] "This dead man," his dazed murderers must have told themselves, "this dead man is me—and yet he is infinitely other, since I cannot envisage

19. First and foremost in *Totem and Taboo*, in which Freud, as though frightened by his own paradox, has the father's murder followed by a fratricidal struggle—which brings Freud back to his point of departure and thus constrains him to fall back on the hypothesis (more classic and the one which the hypothesis of "retrospective obedience" was intended to avoid) of a "social contract" among the rival brothers. See also *SE*, XXIII, p. 82: "It must be supposed that after the parricide a considerable time elapsed during which the brothers disputed with one another for their father's heritage, which each of them wanted for himself alone." *Moses and Monotheism* describes the same scenario, the brothers struggling to take the father's place.

20. Freud, *SE*, XIV, pp. 294–295: "What came into existence beside the dead body of the loved one was not only the doctrine of the soul, the belief in immortality and a powerful source of man's sense of guilt, but also the earliest ethical commandments. The first and most important prohibition made by the awakening conscience was 'Thou shalt not kill.' It was acquired in relation to dead people who were loved, as a reaction against the satisfaction of the hatred hidden behind the grief for them." The important thing in arousing the moral conscience is not, therefore, that the corpse be that of a father, nor that it have actually been murdered. The only important thing is that "primal man" be confronted with a *dead person with whom he identifies* in the ambivalent mode of devouring "love." For "then" in his sorrow he will experience the fact that he, too, can also die, and all his being revolts against the recognition of that fact; isn't each of the persons dear to him *a part of his well-beloved ego*?

myself dead.[21] He is myself, and all the more other. And this All-Other, this All-Mighty who has escaped my power, how now can I appease His wrath?"

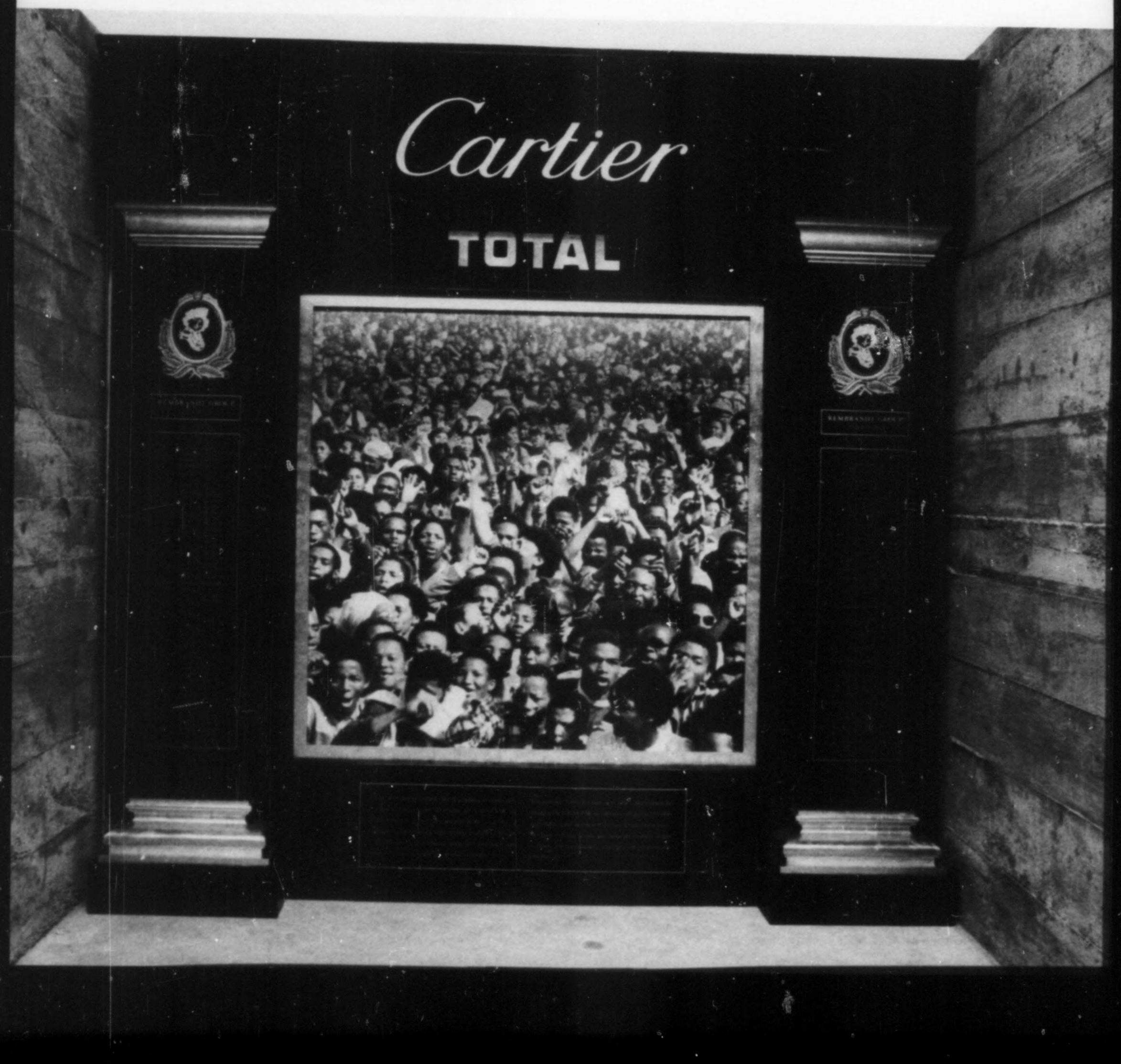
I have just used the language of the myth, following Freud's attempt to represent the unrepresentable, attempting *myself* to envisage this other that is me by setting it, once more, before myself. Of course, it is a myth, but the myth is inevitable, inescapable. And that, precisely, is its power: we cannot (but) represent the unrepresentable, we cannot (but) present the unpresentable. That is why, in attempting to represent this deep withdrawal of the subject, Freud could only write a new myth—powerful, like all myths, and one that also created a group, a community. Yet this myth—the myth of the death of myth, the myth of the inevitable power of myth—is no longer wholly a myth. A myth of the mythic emergence of the Subject, it is no longer wholly the myth of the Subject, and it is for that reason, lucidly confronting the vast power of the totalitarian myth, that it may perhaps enable us to elude it.

For, in the end, what is it telling us? First, that we are submitting to nothing but ourselves—in that, of course, it is only repeating the totalitarian myth of Subject: State, Law, the Chief, the *Führer*, the Other in general are Me, always Me, always "His Majesty the Ego." And it is also quite true that Freud himself believed in this myth to a considerable degree, that he himself succumbed to its power. Yet by adding that this all-powerful ego is "the dead," *our* death, he also told us something quite different, something almost impossible to say and that he was therefore forced to utter in mythic terms: "I am death," "I am the other." In short: "I am not myself, I am not subject." What the members of the murderous horde submit to, what they assemble before, what unites them in a community, is *nothing*—no Subject, no Father, no Chief—other than their proper-improper mortality, their proper-improper finitude, their proper-improper powerlessness to be Absolute Subjects, "total Narcissus."

And, finally, that is why the enigmatic "retrospective obedience" of which Freud speaks is an ethical respect before it is a political submission, respect for others before being submission to oneself. It is obedience to what in the subject is beyond the subject, to what in me is above me, to the ego's superego. Or, and to return to the Freudian myth, adding *nothing*, it is obedience to what withdraws from the body social in its very incorporation and thereby—and only thereby—creates a "body politic" or a "mystical body": "This is my body. Behold here my death. Here behold your own."

21. *Ibid.*, p. 294: "Man can no longer keep death at a distance because he had tasted it in his pain about the dead; but he was unwilling to acknowledge it, for he could not conceive himself as dead."

Hans Haacke. Les must des Rembrandt. *1986.*



The Antidote

YVE-ALAIN BOIS

More than any other artist of our time, Hans Haacke has wrought a visual equivalent of Walter Benjamin's observation that "there is no document of civilization which is not at the same time a document of barbarism."[1]

Haacke's various pieces dedicated to Philips, Alcan, Mobil, etc., expose the desire of these companies to be positioned on the scene of aesthetic production as liberal and generous sponsors of cultural activity, while establishing the connection between this desire and these corporations' actively pro-apartheid policy in South Africa. And his crypto-portraits of Peter Ludwig, the Saatchis, or Dietrich Bührle (the last one again dealing explicitly with South Africa) point to the gentle art of collecting as a perfect front for a kind of gangsterism in business.

Thus we could say that ever since he started focusing on political issues, Haacke has construed the subject of his work in terms of art's role as a kind of "social grease," his main target having become the utilization of art "as a social lubricant"—to quote from an Exxon official whose words are reproduced in one of Haacke's pieces.[2] But more than a moral protest against the enlistment of "pure" art as an ally by late capitalism, Haacke's work is like a cleanser washing away the mask of culture, which a new power, the multinational corporation, has understood as particularly useful for its new marketing strategy, a mask that serves as a perfect cosmetic cover for public image building. In each of Haacke's works in which this operation is put into play, the same struc-

1. Walter Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History," in *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn, New York, Schocken, 1969, p. 256. For *civilization*, Benjamin's original text uses the German word *Kultur*; this could, of course, also be translated *culture*, which would be more to the point here.

2. *On Social Grease* is the title of what is, to my knowledge, the first of Haacke's works dealing with corporate sponsorship of art exhibitions and other cultural activities. Dating from 1975, it uses this quote from Robert Kingsley, a high executive at Exxon: "EXXON's support of the arts serves the arts as a social lubricant. And if business is to continue in big cities, it needs a more lubricated environment." See Hans Haacke, *Framing and Being Framed*, Halifax, The Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1975, p. 120.

ture is to be found, one which I would like to call that of the antidote, or "the restoration of truth."

"On the Restoration of Truth" is, in fact, a short text written by Brecht in 1934, one that Roland Barthes presented, to the astonishment of his students, as an example of what, in his own intellectual formation, had generated the birth of semiology. This, it turned out, was Brecht's *seismology*, or strategy of shaking. (Barthes said of Brecht: "He shakes the smooth tableclothlike continuum of the logosphere" [il secoue la nappé de la logosphère].)[3]

In this article, Brecht explains how to react against nauseating texts, how to loosen oneself from their ideological glue. When one has to swim against a tide of tacky rhetorical treacle, there are not many ways to save oneself. Brecht's proposed procedure is to create an antidote of even greater stickiness than the original glue, thus opposing a rigorously adhering word-for-word gloss to the viscous primary text:

> The thinker advances from sentence to sentence, such that he slowly but completely corrects what he has read and heard, always following the sequential links. In this way he omits nothing. . . . When he reads, "A strong people is less easily attacked than a weak one," he has no need of correcting—an addition suffices: "but it goes on the attack more easily." When he hears it said that wars are necessary, he will add, here again, under what circumstances they are and for whom.[4]

Of course, this dogged loyalty of the reader to the sickening course of the viscous text is not an act of masochism. Rather, by pursuing the very linearity of the text, one can make out the falsehood of the argument and, particularly, the rhetorical devices masking its logical flaws through this continuity: "The thinker is thus led to destroy the linkage of the incorrect sentences, never overlooking the fact that these, from the very fact that they adhere, can assume the appearance of correctness."[5] To read the gluey text, says Brecht, one has to produce a counter-text, one which "restores the truth." The best method is to present these as two facing texts, the first in the left column, the second in the right. After having read both columns in this order, one will realize that the author of the gluey text had "to overcome the enormous difficulties articulated

3. See Roland Barthes, "Brecht and Discourse: A Contribution to the Study of Discursivity," in *The Rustle of Language*, trans. Richard Howard, New York, Hill and Wang, 1986, pp. 211–222. This article, first published in 1975, is the outcome of the first of Barthes's seminars that I attended, in 1971–72. Bearing a title to the effect of "History of Semiology," the seminar did not open with Saussure, which everyone expected, but with Brecht. Brecht's article "Über die Wiederherstellung der Wahrheit," which Barthes used as a major example, is published in his *Gesammelte Werke*, Frankfurt, Suhrkamp, 1967, vol. III, pp. 747–754.
4. Brecht, p. 747.
5. *Ibid.*

in the right-hand column (in the text of restoration). Then, in rereading inversely from right to left, one will be able to study how the individual acquitted himself of his task. One will then understand what kind of man one is dealing with."[6]

Having set forth his method of ideological reading, Brecht proceeds to decorticate two Nazi speeches, the first by Goering, the other by Hess (his Christmas greetings).[7] Reading this piece of degreasing, one is struck by the similarity between Brecht's procedures and those of Haacke. First, there is Brecht's almost tender faithfulness toward the literality of the Nazi message. As Barthes remarked, "The destruction of monstrous discourse is here conducted according to an erotic technique . . . as if there were not, on one side, the vengeful rigor of Marxist science (the science which knows the reality of fascist speeches), and, on the other, the complacencies of the man of letters; but rather as if it were natural to *take pleasure in the truth.*"[8]

One could easily apply Barthes's dictum to Haacke's work, although this work does not function primarily at the linguistic level. The photo-engraved magnesium plates of the work specifically called *On Social Grease*, for example, which Haacke took great pains to realize in a "corporate-style" typeface, are the result of an equivalent of Brecht's "erotic technique" in the realm of the visual (speaking about the quotations he uses in this piece, taken from books and newspapers, Haacke says, "I made commemorative plaques of them so that they look as if they would be at home in the lobby of corporate headquarters or in the boardroom.").[9] The difference from Brecht here is, of course, that Haacke is *stealing* a language and not merely commenting upon it. But both pieces convey the same acute attention to the smallest detail of the signifier;

6. *Ibid.*, p. 754.
7. Only a short sample will be necessary to give an idea of the method's efficiency. I quote here from the first paragraph of the reading of Hess's Christmas speech of 1934 (Brecht, p. 751):

Literal Reproduction of the Text	*Restoration of the Truth*
Legitimately proud of the spirit of sacrifice	Proud of the generosity of the haves who have sacrificed a little of that which the have-nots have sacrificed to them,
and of the solidarity of our German fellow-citizens	and of their quickness in displaying solidarity with those whom they maintain in misery,
let us say, this day: On this Christmas day, in this time of German winter, let no one of her children go hungry.	let us say, this day: On this Christmas day, in this time of winter of the haves, in Germany, let none of those who have nothing die, completely, of hunger.

8. Barthes, p. 216.
9. Quoted in Yve-Alain Bois, Douglas Crimp, and Rosalind Krauss, "A Conversation with Hans Haacke," *October*, no. 30 (Fall 1984), p. 33.

both criticize (put into crisis) a political message by scrutinizing its forms, by voluntarily remaining on the surface of its signs.

This brings me to a second similarity between Brecht's strategy and Haacke's work, a characteristic that is essential to their efficacy and which goes back to the tradition of agit-prop art and literature (one might think of John Heartfield's photomontages or, already in 1809, Heinrich von Kleist's *Manual of the French Press*, which dramatically mocked the disinformation organized by the French government during the Napoleonic wars). I'm referring to context-specificity, a quality of Haacke's work which has struck most commentators. It is the nature of the antidote that it be specific. Myriads of children's stories draw their suspense from a lost or closely kept secret for the fabrication of a precise counter-poison: nothing could be more pointed, less general than an antidote. Hence, says Haacke, "The context in which a work is exhibited for the first time is a material for me like canvas or paint."[10] Against a "generous" but more and more pointless emphasis on broad issues (a pointlessness due to the always increasing capacity of multinational capitalism—Haacke's current target—to coopt and absorb all deviation and protest), against the naiveté of certain sectors of the Left, which eventually leads to political discouragement and demobilization, Haacke's strategy is pointed and "molecular," to use Gramsci's definition of the type of work he sees the "specific intellectual" of the twentieth century as having to muster. One could even say that Haacke, like Brecht, identifies generalization itself as the weapon of the enemy. "In his speech," Barthes points out, "Hess constantly speaks of Germany. But Germany, here, is only the German 'possessors.' The Whole is given, abusively, for the part. Synecdoche is totalitarian: it is an act of force. 'The whole for the part'—this definition of metonymy means: one part *against* another part, the German possessors *against* the rest of Germany. The predicate ('German') becomes the subject ('the Germans'): there occurs a kind of local *putsch*: metonymy becomes a class weapon."[11]

To struggle against metonymy, against the fraudulent travesty both of history as nature and of the agonistic structure of society under the guise of humanist discourse—such is the task Haacke has set for his art. Hence, if he reads Fritz Philips saying, "You see me just as a man of capital, however, above all I really would like to help people to have the freedom to develop themselves as much as possible," etc., Haacke calls immediately to mind images of black South African workers, and he will remind us of the policy of the Philips Company in South Africa in order for us to grasp that the *people* our Fritz is talking about is in fact a very tiny and privileged minority.[12]

10. Quoted in Jeanne Siegel, "Leon Golub/Hans Haacke: What Makes Art Political?" *Arts Magazine*, vol. 58, no. 8 (April 1984), p. 111.
11. Barthes, p. 218.
12. I am referring here to *But I think you question my motives*, a photographic triptych, realized in

To be effective, the antidote has to be specific; that is, it must be as quickly effective as possible. Its rhythm is that of the *tit-for-tat* (and, for course, the comic element of this rhythm is part of Brecht's or Haacke's arsenal).[13] This has nothing to do with the time it took Brecht to write his article or Haacke to realize his pieces. I am not speaking of a speed of production but of a speed of *effect*. And this is where the half-sensuous/half-tedious, slow pace of Brecht's reading has a role to play: "In the periods demanding trickery and favoring error, the thinker must force himself to rectify what he reads and hears. He slowly repeats what he hears and reads, in order to rectify as he goes along. Sentence by sentence, he substitutes the truth for the counter-truth. And he carries out the exercise until he can no longer read or hear otherwise."[14] Indeed, it is this slowness (and this exhaustiveness) that gives Brecht a deep knowledge of the viscous text, and it is this deep knowledge which allows him, through a very simple editing, dealing mainly with additions, to take those radical shortcuts that give his counter-strokes their dazzling efficiency. It is as if the length of the "digestive" phase for the writer were in inverse proportion to the swiftness of the effect of the "restorative text" in the consciousness of its reader.

Here again, Haacke's procedures can be compared to Brecht's. As is well known, he spends months of research on each of his new projects, and always comes up with some information that was previously not altogether unavailable but usually hard to obtain and often not disclosed as such in the mass media. That is, Haacke usually uses published sources, but from provenances rarely even known by his audience (a Philips ad in a daily newspaper of Teheran, speeches of corporate executives, etc.); the richness of his documentation comes from his capacity to trace links. In one sense Haacke's investigations, which are one of his preliminary means, are an ad hoc substitute for the lack of work produced by professional journalists on the topic of art as social grease—and one could even speak of repression here, in the Freudian sense of self-censorship.

The meticulousness of Haacke's inquiries, the obvious pleasure he takes at his detective work combine with the exhaustiveness one finds in Brecht. At each of his exhibitions, pinned on the wall or handed out in a booklet, Haacke

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1978–79, that uses the autobiography of the founder of the Philips Company as its prime material. See Bois, Crimp, Krauss, pp. 30–31.

13. The clearest example of this is the one cited by Brian Wallis in "The Art of Big Business" (*Art in America*, vol. 74, no. 6 [June 1986], n. 13): "In that work, Haacke had engraved on silver plate an actual editorial advertisement placed by Tiffany & Co. on page 3 of the *New York Times* (June 6, 1977). Under the title 'Are the rich a menace?' the advertisement explains how the works of the rich man support approximately 100 other people. . . . Haacke's reply is succinct: 'The 9,240,000 Unemployed in the United States of America Demand the Immediate Creation of More Millionaires.'"

14. Brecht, p. 747.

gives his spectators the subtext that led to the pieces on view and which is part of the "restorative text" (the difference from Brecht here is that Haacke splits the "restoring operation" in two: the work itself as a final product, and the background information as a long caption; but this difference has to do with the different kind of prime material [or context] the two men deal with—a specific text in one case, a specific situation in the other). This information is as detailed as possible—I would even say saturated—as it usually conveys a huge amount of data not directly used in the piece but potentially refining our reading of it. For Haacke's work, like Brecht's, does not consist in dogmatic condemnation of political enemies. Instead he gives us a riddle, provides us with the necessary information to solve it, but leaves it at that, wanting us to take some almost playful pleasure in putting together the different pieces of the puzzle.

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Les must de Rembrandt is the first work Hans Haacke realized in relation to French material. It was exhibited all summer long in the town of Dijon, at the center of Burgundy, in a not widely publicized, but very active, alternative space, strangely called Le Consortium.[15] Although the name has nothing to do with Haacke's target, it is used in the new piece to refer directly to this target: the Cartier Company (it is part of a consortium, Haacke's piece tells us, and it is this consortium that is under scrutiny).

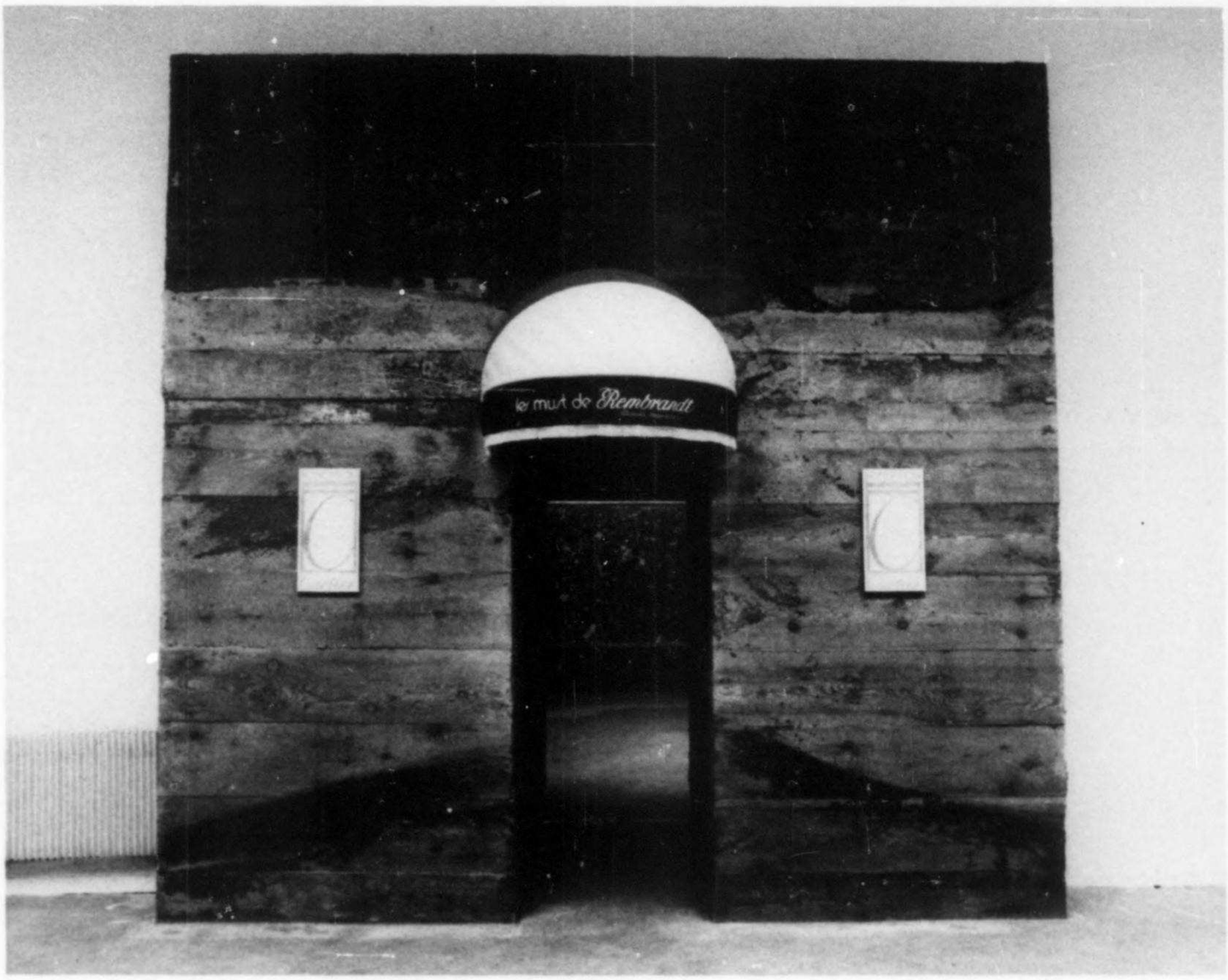
In the immaculate, white cube of this brand-new gallery space, the first surprise one encounters is a naked concrete wall, coarsely treated *à la brutalist*, with the cliché imprints of the molding planks. In the middle of this wall, a boldly pierced entrance is surmounted by an elegant canopy cut from what at first appears to French eyes, despite the red-orange color, the bunting from the French national flag, bearing the enigmatic title of the work (in Cartier-like typography). On each side the door is flanked by a gold-on-white board filled with the logo of the Cartier Foundation, with its huge capital *C* typeset in a delicate cursive italic. (The Fondation Cartier pour l'Art Contemporain has been much acclaimed, even in the Left press, for the exhibitions it has organized since its opening in October 1984. More on it below.) The ease with which the ruggedness of the concrete wall is tamed by the classical taste of the symmetry of the whole, instantly associated with luxury, is not insignificant, as we shall see.

Once through the doorway, one's glance is quickly drawn by the only

15. This noncommercial gallery space is managed by an artistic association (Le Coin de Miroir) that includes artists, art history students, and cultural workers. Although it functions with a very low budget (partly from state and municipal grants), and obviously lacks publicity, it has been able to mount quite a large number of exhibitions of artists of international stature, among other, more "local" shows, and to produce in most cases a catalogue (among the artists exhibited, one can cite Dara Birnbaum, Daniel Buren, Imi Knoebel, On Kawara, Richard Serra, Christian Boltanski, Lawrence Weiner). There was no catalogue for the Haacke show.

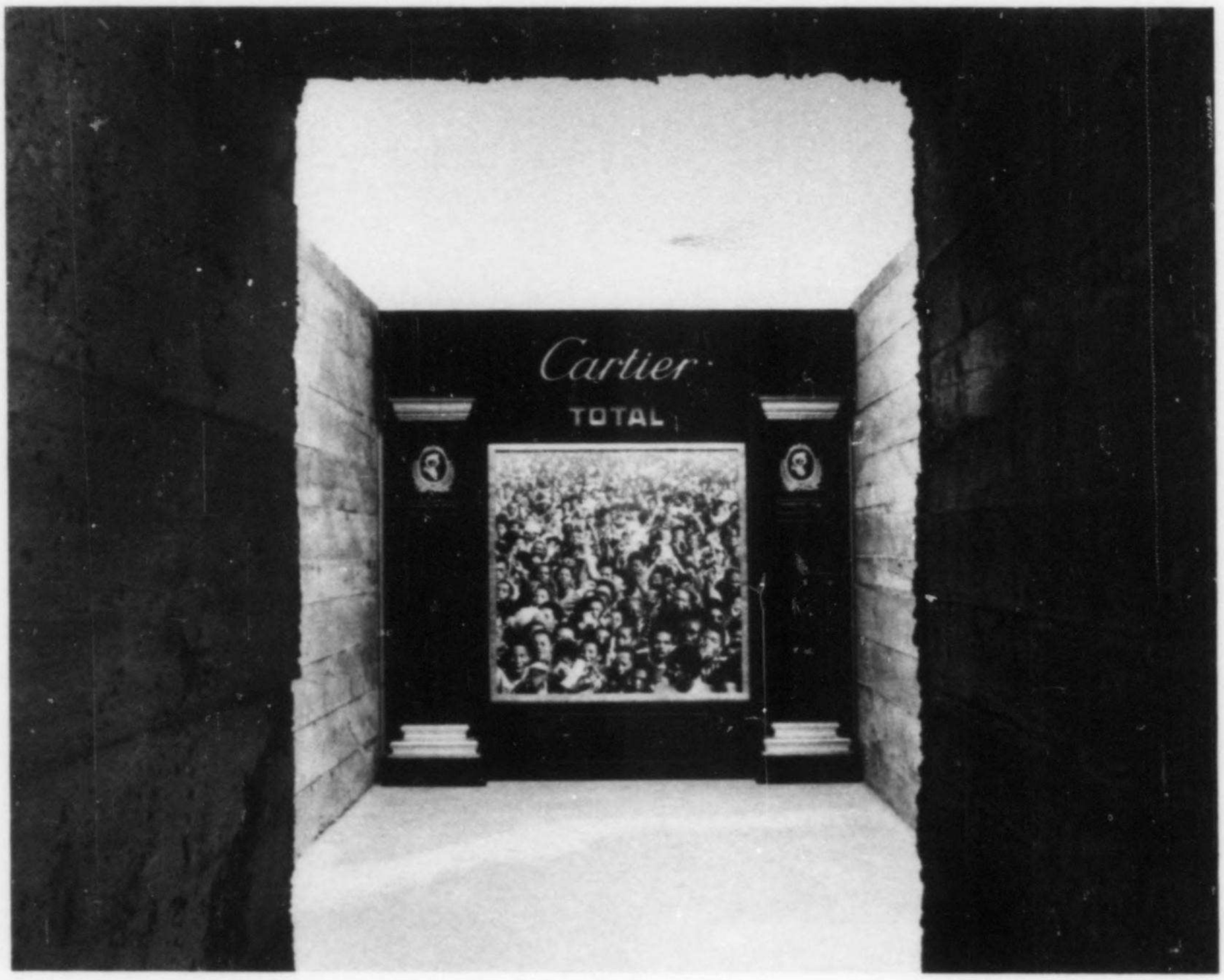
feature of the bare, bunkerlike, interior space of the work: the far wall. There again, an opposition is set up with the roughness of the walls. This time the contrast is not with elegance and luxury, but with what transcends them: money, power, and death. Filling the entire far wall is a shallow wooden structure. Two neoclassical pilasters are symmetrically disposed around a window panel, supporting an entablature of the same style (with the proper cornice), and bearing the golden inscription *Cartier*, once again typeset in the precise style of the company. This is a perfect imitation of the facades of some twenty Cartier boutiques scattered around the world—except that this time the window panel is filled by a photograph of a crowd of black demonstrators. Even more striking, the wooden facade is painted black (with gold for the capitals and bases on the pilasters), so that the light and optically flickering gold-on-white contrast of the exterior wall of the blockhouse has thus switched to a heavily loaded gold-on-black scheme, one full of funerary connotations. The

Hans Haacke. Les must de Rembrandt. *1986.*
Progression of views (through p. 137).



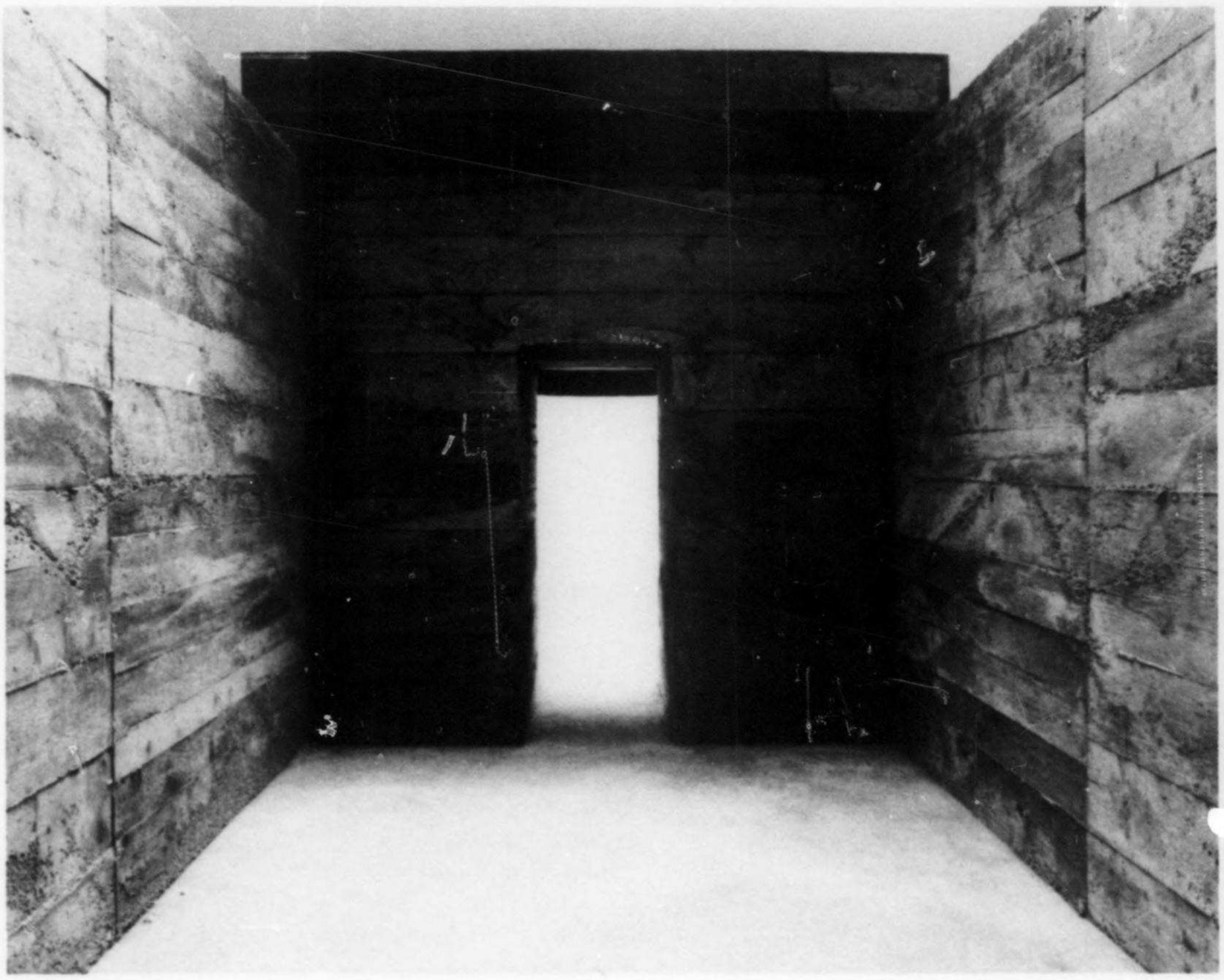
gold is no longer that of the jewels of Hollywood creatures (the gold used to set what was celebrated as "a girl's best friend"); it is now the gold of the South African mine, where workers are maintained in quasi-slavery, often dying at their labor. This gold, which is the ink of the inscriptions, has the morbid taste of blood (but, of course, there is only one gold, the blood being here the underside of the jewels, the barbarity under the civilization).

Indeed, independent of the saturated information which he provides with all his pieces, in text form—here it is stapled on the white walls of the gallery space, outside the bunker—the rebuses of Haacke's pieces are filled with inscriptions that are not exactly captions, but function as part of the montage, following the Heartfield tradition. Forming a kind of constellation, the message of those inscriptions is gradually built and deciphered within a collective reading: the logo of TOTAL, the bold sans serif type of which contrasts severely with Cartier's, right above it; the logo of the Rembrandt Group (the artist's



head in a medallion, cigar-band style) situated atop each pilaster, under which are listed names and descriptive identifications of those companies owned by or associated with this South African consortium (among them, of course, Cartier, but also Total and Rothmans); and finally (but perhaps read first, since it is positioned as a caption under the larger photograph), a short narrative about the brutal repression by Gencor, the coal and gold mining company of the Group (as we are told on the left pilaster), of a strike which ended with the firing of 23,000 men.

Now, if I say, "of course, Cartier," it does not mean at all that I, a complete novice in the world of finance, knew it all along; it means, on the contrary, that, reading the information given on the pilaster in a kind of shorthand form, I understood at a glance the connection made by the words written on the canopy between Cartier's famous "must" and the name of the Dutch painter. This "of course" is an exclamatory "Eureka!" Indeed, reading the inscriptions



on the pilasters, I realize that /Rembrandt/ here does not refer mainly to art, but to a South African financial empire controlling a host of multinational companies. And I realize at the same time that half of Cartier—a paragon of Frenchness—is in fact in the hands of fascist businessmen in South Africa.

And yet, the Rembrandt of the title has still to do with art, not only because the name of the Rembrandt van Rijn Art Foundation also appears on a pilaster as one of the holdings of the South African Group, but also because Haacke's works are a network of connotations, a condensation of meanings: from this title one is lead to expect in this work a conundrum about the link between art and money; and one goes from this expectation, which produces a semantic field, to the sharp discovery that in that case, as in most of the cases studied by Haacke, the link is deeply repellent.

The reading of /Rembrandt/ as referring to the artist, an initial connection natural to someone unaware of the South African Group, is thus not *wrong*: it is part of the stratification of significations that Haacke weaves in his work, even if, during the operation of deciphering, it very quickly appears as too imprecise. And the same could be said of the reading of the color black as related to coal or to black Africa, or of the style of the medallion as relating to tobacco. The particularly subtle shift produced by Haacke's rebus lies in the colors of the canopy above the entrance of the bunker; for instead of exhibiting the French national colors it is gradually revealed as referring to the South African ones, the proximity of the two colors on the spectrum emphasizing the numerous economic ties between the two countries. It is in the nature of the appropriation of codes, as a tactic of parody and irony, to elicit such inclusive adjustments.[16]

A further stage in the reading—a consolidation of the constellation of meanings one has elaborated upon at first—is the close look at the supplementary documentation provided by Haacke, the usual typed pages that accompany his pieces. Not really part of the work, which cannot fail to be correctly interpreted without them, the pages of this document promote a rising sense of nausea. They take time to read, and usually prompt a second visit to the piece, as if to determine which parts of the iconological requirements (set up by the context itself, as described in the document) have in fact been fulfilled, and which dropped. We read, for example, that the head of the Rembrandt Consortium is Anton Rupert and that he is a member of both the National Party of Pieter Botha and of the Broederbond, a secret society of the extreme right.

16. But, of course, there is appropriation and appropriation. On the one side are the fashionable art-historical gimmicks proposed by postmodernist architects or neoexpressionist painters who seem to believe that everything is quotable (this amounts to a kind of cynical raving about a so-called "end of history," a type of irony that results not in knowledge, but in a conservative regression); on the other side, coming from Dada (Duchamp, Heartfield) and the Situationists (Debord and his peers) is an art understood as interventionist (the "erotic technique" of Brecht), as a method for combining speed of effect and context-specificity.

With this information in hand (which Haacke has acquired from *Fortune*), we go back for a second look at the lacquered pilasters, where we are pleased to discover the name of the Rupert Foundation among the companies listed there: a detail that had only a quantitative sense at first (as *one* among many elements of the Rembrandt empire), but has now acquired some density for us, as our political awareness and knowledge of the ties Haacke is putting into place, in a kind of Brechtian mise-en-scène, increases.

Now, reading the typed pages, one will learn a great deal about the holdings of Cartier, of which a forty-seven percent share is owned by Rothmans, itself controlled by Rupert. But further, one will certainly feel prompted, if one does not know it already, to visit the Fondation Cartier itself, in its setting in a suburb just south of Paris. Indeed, it is this projected voyage that most clearly measures the efficacy of Haacke's operation, for the work's effect, which is rapid, is nevertheless lasting (indeed, the aftereffect of many of his pieces is a fundamental part of their structure and material).[17]

There is, of course, no way to know how many beholders of *Les must de Rembrandt* have had a prior encounter with the Fondation Cartier. Its press release, setting as a goal "to reach a larger public than the traditional museum-goers," claims that already in its first year of existence 50,000 people have visited it (it was indeed fairly crowded when I ventured to its location in Jouy-en-Josas), and it has had quite extensive press coverage, thanks to the official character of the French artists it has chosen to champion (for example, Cesar and Jean-Pierre Raynaud). In any case, either one had already had an experience of the Fondation before witnessing Haacke's work in Dijon (and thus looking at *Les must de Rembrandt* must have been totally exhilarating from the very outset), or one's desire to pay it a visit would have been far more stimulated by Haacke's work than by any other noise produced by the media. Paradox? No. Let us call it the pleasure of verification.

Not having lived in France since the opening of the Fondation Cartier, and having had only vague notions about it (it has never produced an event important enough to elicit the coverage of the international press), I was thus astonished to read in Haacke's detailed account that the shows it organizes "are held in a bunker which was built in the park by the German Army during the second war, when its officers occupied the chateau." Thus the bunker of *Les must de Rembrandt*, which I had interpreted as a signifier of South Africa's growing political and diplomatic isolation, was, in addition, a direct allusion to the

17. I have only to mention the famous cancellation of Haacke's show at the Guggenheim Museum in 1971 ("I'm surprised that people still talk about it thirteen years later," Haacke told Siegel in their interview, p. 111), and the piece entitled *Manet-PROJEKT '74*, whose refusal by the Wallraf-Richartz Museum became an international public event. Speaking about the interviews generated by the Thatcher/Saatchi piece, Haacke remarks, "This fallout, at the secondary level, is, in a way, part of the piece" (Bois, Crimp, Krauss, p. 43).

Fondation Cartier, Jouy-en-Josas, France.

actual "design" of the exhibition space of the Fondation. It was the shamelessness of this reuse of such a building—associated with the horror of the German occupation of France during World War II, but described in the Fondation's press release as "unusual volumes well suited to contemporary works of art"—that led Haacke to deal with Cartier in his first "French" piece.

Right from the start Haacke's desire had been to work on business sponsorship of the arts, a common subject for him but quite a new phenomenon in France, where it had only begun to be encouraged by the Socialist government and now continues to be urged by its conservative successors. "It is in the list of the members of ADMICAL [Association pour le Développement du Mécénat Industriel et Commercial] that I found the Fondation Cartier," Haacke recounts in an interview.

> Then I went to see the exhibition of Jean-Pierre Raynaud at the Fondation in Jouy-en-Josas [in June 1985]. I saw the place, I saw the bunker. This bunker, above all, struck me: an exhibition space set up in a bunker built for German officers during the occupation. . . . I was more and more interested by the Cartier phenomenon. I then did some research that led to the discovery that a substantial part of Cartier's capital was owned by a South African group.[18]

18. Quoted in Daniel Soutif, "Haacke: pas de Cartier," *Libération*, July 22, 1986.

With the bunker as the starting point, a fabric of semantic threads then began to be woven, complex and dense enough for a project to be elaborated (and it is not only luck, but also an expression of Haacke's acuteness in pointing to the exact works of a specific mechanism that, a few days before the opening of his show, the president of Cartier in Paris was asked by the Minister of Culture of the new conservative French government to head a committee dealing with corporate sponsorship of the arts).

As a sign of historical manipulation and oblivion (the worst type of appropriation), reuse of the bunker is a perfect marker of the activities of the Fondation Cartier as disclosed by Haacke's informative pages. He writes of the exhibition which was on view in Jouy-en-Josas at the same time as his work in Dijon, entitled *Les années 60—la décade triomphante*:

> A significant place is given in this show to the development, in 1968, of a luxury cigarette lighter by Robert Hocq (the beginning of "les must de Cartier"). Robert Hocq is the father of Nathalie Hocq, who today presides over Cartier International. Likewise commemorating the year 1968 is a barricade of cobblestones erected on the parking lot of the Fondation Cartier. The central exhibition space of the bunker features a display of creations by famous Parisian fashion houses, while several Rolls-Royces and other luxury cars driven by pop stars of the 1960s are lined up on the park's lawn.

Reconstruction of May '68 barricade for Les années 60—la décade triomphante, *Fondation Cartier, Jouy-en-Josas, 1986.*

Three notations here (the absurd exaggeration of Hocq's merit as a designer, the ridiculous movie set of the barricade, the central status of fashion design in the bunker, not to speak of the deluxe nostalgia projected through the cars) combine to form a single message, that of fraudulence: the '60s, we know, had nothing to do with the assembly of theater props.

This fraudulence, which pervades the whole show, is like a natural emanation of the masquerade that Haacke's piece denounces, but it adds a final touch of cheapness to the exhibition, as it denotes an unusual lack of professionalism in this operation of "image management," as the press release calls it. Going to the Fondation *after* having experienced *Les must de Rembrandt*, which was my case, was an experience of pure negative pleasure (the mediocrity of the 1960s show adding much to the strength of the aftereffect of Haacke's irony). Passing through the monumental gates of the ticket booth, one immediately feels oneself to be on the private property of a faceless trust, under the control of some corporate Big Brother. The park is huge, with luxurious trees and lawn, peopled with colossal sculptures (including Arman's grotesque accumulation of fifty-six cars in an eighteen-meter concrete tower) and with pavilions where the exhibitions are scattered, surrounded by high walls and probably populated at night by guard dogs. It is impossible to forget, there, in front of a kind of arrogance that only money can produce, the gold-on-black labels of Haacke's pilasters. And there, as well, "the Village at the heart of the Fondation, where houses welcome artists from the whole world to live, work, and exhibit" (press release), evokes the setting of Patrick McCoogan's Kafkaesque adventures in *The Prisoner* (a TV series of the 1960s indeed) far more than it exudes the atmosphere of real studios. Everything feels as though it were permeated with factitiousness, even the Directoire château, whose ugly proportions house an international convention center for corporate executives. And the pavilion devoted to the arts in the 1960s shows how little interest there was on the part of the organizers to convey an accurate portrait of the period (it features a small group of American paintings—why only American? why only paintings?—either pop or abstract, manifestly borrowed from a cartel of galleries, perhaps with an eye to a future deal).[19]

The bunker is, actually, a structure in shadow, almost entirely masked by the profuse expanse of magnificent trees. But much highlighted, and set right in front of it on a flat and bare area, is the mock-up reconstruction of a 1968

19. As indicated by the press release, the goal of the Fondation Cartier is not only to exhibit, but also to purchase art. The bulk of the material probably comes from Sonnabend (with the works of most pop artists); then Templon was obviously asked to contribute (de Kooning, Stella, Noland), as well as Lambert (Agnes Martin, Twombly), and Fournier (James Bishop, Joan Mitchell, Sam Francis), whose group, by means of this operation, receives an overrated ranking. Not only is there no consideration whatsoever of the European art of the period, but even within the domain of American art nothing is said, of course, of minimalism, earth art, conceptual art, process art, or any kind of production that could have raised the slightest curatorial problems.

students' barricade, with its cardboard figures of Daniel Cohn-Bendit speaking into a megaphone and of three policemen in their black cockroachlike uniforms. The scene is completed by an overturned car and a Delcaux bus shelter. This setting, no matter how realistic its arrangement, cannot but be perceived by all those with a memory as a grotesque travesty of history. Crowned by the famous '68 slogan "il est interdit d'interdire" [forbidding forbidden], the barricade parades the terrible indecency of such a sign in such a place: here, in front of a bunker and on the property of supporters of apartheid. Perhaps the ultimate in political cooptation, this reconstruction shows how easily social grease can function as an agent of oblivion and transfiguration, how the coarseness of reality can be smoothed away by its very own image. It is this ease that is exhibited in the elegant symmetry of the outside wall of *Les must de Rembrandt*.

Haacke's piece is also about the ineluctability of recuperation. "Capitalism has the power instantly and continuously to transform into a drug the very venom that is spit in its face, and to revel in it," Brecht writes.[20] This recuperative power undoubtedly complicates Haacke's preparation of the antidote. His strategy is to convey his awareness of this in the work itself.

One final note. The bus shelter at the Fondation looks incongruous at first. But the choice of this apparently neutral piece of urban furniture as a landmark of 1968 is in fact quite telling. Those bus shelters are named after the advertising wizard who managed around this time to buy ad space from the government throughout the whole of France, at the minimal cost of installing the supporting structures of those spaces, i.e., the bus shelters. When they first appeared, with one of their sides given over to a Vasarely image and the opposite one to some ad or other plus the name of Delcaux, they raised quite a controversy in the French press. It was pointed out that, far from being a service to the community, these Delcaux shelters were consolidating a company's network and financial operations. Everyone has by now forgotten this polemic; the Delcaux operation has been entirely "naturalized" and a number of new items have been added to it over the years without ever being noticed.

In much the same way, corporate sponsorship had to win an ideological battle in France, where the usual way of dealing with cultural affairs is through public funding. We already know that this victory was an easy one, but the presence of the Delcaux bus shelter here is like an homage paid to a path breaker.

On one of the inside walls of the bunker, imitating the cursive, sprayed graffiti of the 1968 explosion, but in pink paint, one finally encounters the inscription: "il n'y a pas de bonne publicité pour un mauvais produit" [there is no good advertisement for a bad product]. It is only because of the curator's in-

20. Bertold Brecht, "Rauschgift," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. VIII, p. 593.

competence that the Fondation Cartier made this notorious lie a truth. It is not certain that the image of the company (the product) profited very much from this show (and certainly not in the art world). But Haacke's pointed critique of Cartier's policy highly benefited from it, gaining still more resonance.

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3. FREQUENCY OF ISSUE: Quarterly	3A. NO. OF ISSUES PUBLISHED ANNUALLY: four	3B. ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: $20/Ind$49/Inst

4. COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS OF KNOWN OFFICE OF PUBLICATION *(Street, City, County, State and ZIP+4 Code) (Not printers)*

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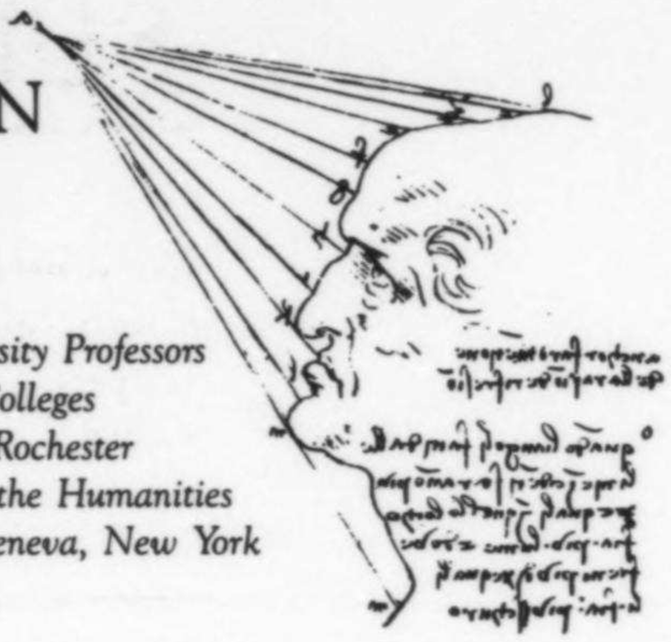

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For further information and application materials, please write or call: Tamar March, Associate Provost, Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, New York 14456-3397 (telephone 315: 789-5500).

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The editors of OCTOBER wish to acknowledge the generous support of the Pinewood Foundation; the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; and the New York State Council on the Arts.

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Founding Act

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Rudolph Loewenstein, and
D. W. Winnicott