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Cover Photo: Entrance to Futurama, General Motors Pavilion, New York World's Fair. 1939.

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Sartre's Screen Projection of Freud

GERTRUD KOCH

During his lifetime Freud was, as we know, continually hostile to the idea of being made the subject of a biography. This is an aspect that Sartre, as Freud's biographer, didn't fail to evoke when he placed the expression of a triumphant sarcasm in the mouth of the young Freud in the process of burning his diaries: "I want to give my future biographers a hard time. They'll shed tears of blood."[1] But Freud was no less reticent with regard to the UFA (Universum Film-A.G.) project to make psychoanalysis the theme of a feature film, or to the Hollywood desire for permission to bring his best cases together for a scenario. The answer to such ideas was always full of reservations.

In a letter to Sandor Ferenczi from the 1920s, Freud comments on UFA's projects—which finally took the form of Pabst's film *The Secret of a Soul*: "It seems that a film on psychoanalysis has become as inevitable as the boyish bob. But for my part, I won't have my hair cut that way and I would wish even less to be personally connected to any film whatsoever."[2] In 1962, it happened: the double nightmare became reality. John Huston had just finished the film on his life and on the birth of psychoanalysis, narrated in light of several clinical cases and their theoretical and therapeutic resolutions. The original scenario was by Sartre, who had furnished several versions.[3] If ultimately the writer, Freud's biographer, did not wish "to be personally associated" with the final version of the film, going so far as to withdraw his name from the credits, this is undoubtedly due as much to personal as to substantive misunderstandings. Sartre's

1. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Freud Scenario,* ed. J.-B. Pontalis, trans. Quintin Hoare (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), p. 26.
2. Mechthild Zeul, "John Huston's Freud-Film (1961)," *Psyche* (October 1989), p. 955. Zeul gives a brief survey of the genesis of the film, going from there to her personal interpretation of it, to which she devotes, with some reason, more attention than is generally the case. In the opening summary, Zeul cites this letter of Freud's.
3. The three versions are in the 1984 edition. The second appeared only in fragmentary form, but the Appendix, through the comparison of the two versions, allows one to have a fairly precise idea of it. Further, the publication of the synopsis can be found there.

scenario opposes two domains, psychoanalysis and film, in relation to both of which Sartre took an ambivalent, or at least stubbornly unchangeable, stance. But how did such an encounter ever take place at all?

To say that at this moment Sartre had tax problems and a pressing need for money—the money Huston was promising—is perhaps enough to explain why it was he who was given the project.[4] But precisely, when it was this accidental combination of a lack of money and the offer of a film script that served as the impetus, why would Sartre have let this work run to a volume of several hundred pages, to which he was so attached that the finished version of the film irritated him to the point of totally withholding his name from it? It's thus, with this written work, that he now seems more like the author of a biography of Freud adapted for the screen; and all the more so since it was only released posthumously in 1984 by Gallimard, his official publisher, and in the "Connaissance de l'Inconscient" series—a detail not lacking in irony since we know that the Sartrean concept of psychoanalysis was based on a refusal of the theory of the unconscious.

The series of objective facts, known and uncontested, that are at the origin of the scenario can be rapidly sketched: In 1946 John Huston had staged *Huis Clos* in New York, and he had met Sartre in 1952 in Paris during the shooting of *Moulin Rouge*. Huston's enthusiasm for psychoanalysis was based on his own experience of hypnosis in 1945 when shooting the documentary *Let There Be Light*. At the Mason military hospital Huston had filmed the therapy given to victims of war neuroses for which the doctor in charge had adopted a treatment based on hypnosis. Huston had himself taught the technique and could even apply it in the doctor's stead.[5] It is possible that the idea of the Freud film in which Huston, astonishingly enough, has psychoanalysis develop out of Freud's hypnotic "Charcot period" dates from this time.

What Sartre found so exciting in Huston's concept was precisely the idea of dramatizing that very Freud: the one who had not yet discovered the sexual etiology of psychic illnesses, the one who still had to surmount all the crises before arriving at last at his own freedom. But in an interview given in 1969, Sartre insisted that it was Huston who "didn't understand what the unconscious is. That's where all the difficulties came from. He wanted to repress it, to replace it with the pre-conscious. He wanted at all costs not to hear the unconscious spoken of."[6] In total opposition to this is Huston's account, according to which Wolfgang Reinhardt—who eventually replaced Sartre as scriptwriter—and he "had an idea that made him suffer; [they] imagined that Freud's descent into

4. See Axel Madsen, *Jean-Paul Sartre und Simone de Beauvoir. Die Geschichte einer ungewöhnlichen Liebe* (Dusseldorf, 1980), pp. 236ff.
5. I am recounting here the latest version of the events, such as they are given by Zeul.
6. "Sartre par Sartre," an interview by Perry Anderson, in the introduction to the German edition of *L'Imaginaire* (Reinbek, 1971), p. 14.

the depths of the unconscious would be as terrifying as that of Dante into hell."[7] It's exactly this line—psychoanalysis as an aesthetics of fear—that the prologue of the final version of the film follows.

Where we can best gauge the extent to which Sartre and Huston misunderstood each other is in the contemptuously nasty tone they take, one as much as the other, in describing their encounter in the country house Huston owned in Ireland. Huston unleashes an undisguised resentment: "I never worked with someone as mulish and categorical as Sartre was. Any discussion was impossible with him. And equally so, getting a word in edgewise. Without catching his breath he would come at me with a flood of words. He didn't speak English and he had such a rapid rate of flow that I could hardly follow his reasoning. I was certain that what he was saying was brilliant. . . . I would have to leave the room in despair, totally exhausted by the effort of following his exposition. His droning would follow me until I was out of hearing distance. When I would come back, he wouldn't even notice I had left."[8]

For his part, Sartre is no less hurt when he speaks of the matter and no more flattering: "He is not even sad, he is *empty,* except in the moments of childish vanity when he dons a red tuxedo, when he rides a horse (not very well), when he inventories his pictures and directs his workmen. Impossible to hold his attention for more than five minutes: he doesn't know how to work anymore, he avoids rational argument. . . . It's emptiness more, perhaps, than death. He flees thought because it makes him sad."[9]

For the conclusion of the film, Charles Kaufman's and Wolfgang Reinhardt's script follows Sartre's almost exactly, or more precisely a second very abridged version of Sartre's, although at the beginning it was much more developed than the first. Simply from reading it, it is obvious that Sartre's scenario supplies material for a film of at least seven hours, something everyone knew from the outset. This is why it's not probable that the falling out between the two men could be explained by the necessary cuts made in the text. It seems to me that it is more connected to what Sartre, *through* the Freud biography, became fixated about in his conception of psychoanalysis, and also to the fact that he had a fairly self-contradictory attitude towards the cinema.

Huston's film begins with a prologue that makes Freud's original scientific contribution the discovery of the unconscious, placing him, after Kepler and Darwin, among the men who managed to humble human pride. This means that from the very outset the film presents Freud in a perspective within which the unconscious is seen as an irrefutable fact, one of a scientific nature, ineluctably conferring a hagiographic character to the narrative of his life—told

7. John Huston, quoted by Zeul, p. 953.
8. Ibid., p. 954.
9. Annie Cohen-Solal, *Sartre 1905–1980* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), p. 499.

thereafter in flashback up to the discovery of the concept of the unconscious—because, whatever the crises that Freud had to surmount to make himself recognize or vanquish his doubts, the spectator is immediately certain of participating in the voyage of discovery of an explorer of the human soul, instead of witnessing the construction of a fragile sketch of the human subject and the history of its life, drawn in the light of its sexual needs. Even though it is fashionable to attack Huston's film, I must say that it nevertheless contains several impressive scenes of dark bourgeois interiors within which one sees an echo of the type of sexual scandal that psychoanalysis represented at the beginning of the century. In a significant manner, the scenes take place for the most part in domestic interiors, and it is rather clever to attack the sexual grounding of family life starting with its very interior.

But before getting into the inherent resistance to the film which Sartre experienced in relation to Huston's work, it seems useful once again to shed light on what Sartre, in principle, opposed in the Freudian theory of the unconscious. J.-B. Pontalis, the specialist on the history and comparative literature of psychoanalysis who edited the *Freud Scenario,* cites a letter to Simone de Beauvoir in which Sartre, obviously irritated, notes that Huston does not sufficiently admit the notion of the unconscious.[10] But Pontalis omits citing this refusal by Sartre of the concept of the unconscious, expressed clearly in a later interview: "On the other hand, I don't believe in the unconscious in the form in which psychoanalysis represents it to us."[11] And he justifies his position historically as well as systematically in concluding:

> I must say that as a Frenchman, from a purely Cartesian tradition and imbued with rationalism, it was impossible . . . to understand Freud, and that the idea of the unconscious shocked me totally. But this wasn't all: even today, something that is inevitable within Freudian thought shocks me: the biological and physiological language through which he expresses ideas that cannot be transmitted otherwise. The result is that his description of psychoanalytic phenomena is not exempt from a sort of mechanical rigidity. Sometimes he succeeds in overcoming this difficulty. But most of the time his language gives rise to a mythology of the unconscious, which is unacceptable to me.[12]

Sartre nevertheless underscores that he is not putting the facts that the unconscious is supposed to explain in doubt—for example, the phenomena of repression, of condensation, of displacements, etc. What he reproaches a Freudian

10. J.-B. Pontalis, "Preface," in Sartre, *The Freud Scenario,* p. viii.
11. "Sartre par Sartre," p. 18.
12. Ibid., p. 15.

type of psychoanalysis with is simply comporting itself in a way that is too teleological.

> The results of this are a particular representation of the unconscious: it seems at times like a collection of totally mechanistic determinations, that is, like a system of causes, and at others like a mysterious purpose, so much so that there seem to be "ruses" of the unconscious just like there are "ruses" of History. . . . The unconscious is at one moment *another* consciousness, and in the next it's something *other than consciousness.* But that which is a different thing from consciousness simply becomes a mechanism.[13]

Such a critique, which finds "*words* like 'repression,' 'censorship,' or 'drive'" useful but doesn't accept the *facts* they serve to characterize, is in part transposed by Sartre into the scenario.[14] In a striking scene Freud tries to convince his friend from Berlin, Fliess, that the "theory of seduction" which he had held earlier now turns out to be false, that there is absolutely no need of direct sexual assault by adults on children for them to experience precocious sexual tensions, and that if anything it is children who develop sexual fantasies in their relations to their parents. From within psychoanalytic theory this exactly marks the transition from a materialist and mechanical theory of trauma to the theory of unconscious fantasies within which trauma masks over desire:

> Fliess, *tartly*: In short, you were mistaken?
> Freud: Totally. But I'm glad of it. That's what led to the whole thing collapsing.
> Fliess: No more traumatism, then?
> Freud: Oh, yes. That's the shock preventing the liquidation of childhood. . . .
> Fliess: Then the child's first relations with its parents are of a sexual nature?
> Freud: Yes.
> Fliess: So there is infantile sexuality?
> Freud: Yes.
> Fliess: Six months ago, you were saying the opposite.
> Freud: But this time I'm right. . . .
> Fliess: I don't believe it! Children being raped by perverted adults, that yes! That was something solid! A basis for my calculations. But I don't care two hoots about psychology. It's just words.
> Freud: Yes, words![15]

13. Ibid., p. 16.
14. Ibid.
15. Sartre, *The Freud Scenario,* pp. 374–75.

Freud's acquiescence to Fliess's reproach of "just words" takes on, in the context of Sartre's work, a special tone. By means of this expression Sartre includes Freud in the network of his biographies, in the biographies of authors who constitute themselves through words. Words that mark things as if by proper names, thereby instituting them as myth. The reproach that Sartre will later make against Freud of characterizing phenomena by words through which he dissolves their existence and makes mechanisms out of them, the making of words themselves, then, into things—this reproach is already present in the *Freud Scenario.* In the biographical description Sartre even makes his own concept of psychoanalysis win out, in one instance, over that of Freud. Behind the discovery of the unconscious and of the Oedipus complex, which forms the manifest subject of the scenario, Sartre the biographer hides his own project of existentialist analysis of an author named Freud.

In opposition to what Huston's film suggests by means of its explanatory prologue, Sartre's Freud must first of all make himself into what he is. And he, like Flaubert, will abandon the narrow world of the empiricists (doctors and pharmacists, for example) and the sphere of the bourgeois professional; he will become the creator of the imaginary, a solitary demiurge observing from on high the mechanisms that he apprehends in words. In many places within the different versions of the script, Sartre emphasizes that at the end Freud is "free" and "alone." This passage is to be found in the synopsis: "*Freud's off-camera voice tells us what he writes as we go along*: Dreams are the fulfillment of a wish . . . By this dream I took advantage of the death of Meynert . . . to imagine that . . . I was finally free—and alone."[16] A little further down we read: "Freud is finally free, absolutely free; he no longer needs a guardian, he'll work alone. At the age of forty-two he's beginning to live."[17] And the synopsis ends with Freud's off-camera voice: "I was forty-one. It was my turn to play the father."[18] The end of the first version of the script is completely clear: after the discussion with Fliess ("just words"), Freud returns to Vienna. His wife tells him about the death of Breuer's brother. Freud goes to the cemetery, to his father's grave, with the hope, as well, of there encountering Breuer, who is at his brother's funeral. In front of Freud's father's grave the hoped-for explanation does in fact take place between these two men whose paths diverged once Breuer rejected Freud's discovery of the sexual etiology of the neuroses. Meynert, Breuer, Fliess: in front of the grave of his father, Jacob, Freud describes to Breuer how he effected a transference onto all his "spiritual" fathers in order to compensate for the weak image that he had made of his own father. Finally

16. Ibid., p. 533.
17. Ibid., p. 538.
18. Ibid., p. 539.

freed from all the fathers he has been able to say, "I'm the father now."[19] The first version of the script ends with an emotional scene of farewells:

> Breuer, *gently*: I don't suppose we'll be seeing much of each other any more.
> Freud, *in a friendly tone*: Not much, no.
> Breuer: You have won the right to be alone.
> Freud, *with deep sadness*: Yes.
>
> *He points to the sky: the clouds have disappeared; bitterly cold winter sun.*
>
> I'm alone and the sky has emptied.
> I'll work alone, I'll be my sole judge and my sole witness.
> Luckily we always die in the end.[20]

"I'll be my sole judge and my sole witness." What led Sartre to see in Freud a solitary demiurge who, finally, will love nothing but his own creations, his children and his students?[21]

As the source for the script, Pontalis points to the Ernest Jones biography of Freud, published in 1953, but the first volume of which did not appear in French until 1958. Ernest Jones ends this first volume with an "imaginary topography" of the unconscious, the preconscious, and the conscious mind applied to the biography of the corpus—a discovery that had to open many channels. As for Freud's character, here is what he says about it on the last page:

> At the point we leave our subject for the time being, and corresponding with the turn of the century, it may fairly be asserted that Freud had attained full maturity in every sense. His intellectual development had been precocious, but the emotional side of his life, itself late in being aroused, had taken longer to achieve stability. After this moment of time, however, we shall encounter a very different being from the disturbed and distressed man who had had to fight his way through both inner and outer difficulties.[22]

Jones then goes on: "But he had two far rarer qualities: a creative imagination that, once it was released from the strict discipline of his scholastic upbringing, took him to the very confines of thought; and a superb courage."[23] Already, in these short extracts from Jones's vast biography, certain essential elements are

19. Ibid., p. 382.
20. Ibid.
21. Ibid., "Breuer: Will you be able to love again? Freud: Yes. My children . . . and adopted sons—the men who'll believe in my words, if any such can be found."
22. Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud* (New York: Basic Books, 1953), vol. 1, p. 404.
23. Ibid.

to be found that allowed Sartre to forge a model of character and personality. Because *following* Jones's description, Sartre had to begin by trying to discover how Freud became the person he seemed to be by the end of the first volume of this biography. How was this discouraged man, so unsure of himself, who should have become an anonymous author within an academic discipline, transformed into a fearless creator?

In his scenario Sartre proceeds by organizing Freud's biography around two axes. One is that of contingent existence within which he was born on such a year, in such a place, to such parents; the other axis being that of the Oedipal relation to these same parents which would turn out for Freud himself to be the constitution of an "individual generality": in others (his patients, the characters Karl and Cecily of the script) he discovers himself; the most individual trait becomes the most universal trait through the extension of his own incestuous desire toward his mother into the metapsychological myth of the Oedipus complex. Sartre is wary of saying whether he himself believes in this discovery of Freud's or if he is content to represent what Freud thinks he has discovered.

It is obvious that Sartre accentuates the trait when he pulls out of the Jones biography, or the letters to Fliess, or again the case histories (Anna O., Dora, and Cecilie M.) certain elements that he makes too literal or deforms to the point of unrecognizability. He makes the famous Hannibal/Hamilcar episode into a motif; something that is justified if we adopt the perspective of a Sartrean existential psychoanalysis.

This memory of Freud's is placed by Jones in relation to the Viennese anti-Semitism from which Freud suffered.[24] In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (which Sartre moreover, according to Pontalis, had available to him), Freud tells about an episode from his childhood that led him to identify with Hannibal, whose father, Hamilcar, had made him swear on the household altar to avenge himself on the Romans. The identification with the man from Carthage against the Romans, and the desire that arose from it to go at last to Rome and to take the city, are described by Freud as one of his fantasies as a Vienna schoolboy who associated the Carthagenians with the Jews and the Romans with the Catholic church, and thus with the Christians. In this context the Hannibal/Hamilcar story serves to release another memory in which we see how, during their walks, Freud's father used to tell the child all kinds of things about life:

> Thus it was, on one such occasion, that he told me a story to show me how much better things were now than they had been in his days. "When I was a young man," he said, "I went for a walk one Saturday in the streets of your birthplace; I was well dressed, and had a new fur cap on my head. A Christian came up to me and with a single blow knocked off my cap into the mud and shouted: 'Jew! get off

24. Jones, *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, vol. 1, p. 22.

> the pavement!'" "And what did you do?" I asked. "I went into the roadway and picked up my hat" was his quiet reply. This struck me as unheroic conduct on the part of the big, strong man who was holding the little boy by the hand. I contrasted this situation with another which fitted my feelings better: the scene in which Hannibal's father, Hamilcar Barca, made his boy swear before the household altar to take vengeance on the Romans. Ever since that time Hannibal had had a place in my fantasies.[25]

While the account Freud himself makes of this scene is not, here, dramatic in any way, Jones tells us: "Submission was not in his nature, and his father never regained the place he had held in his esteem. . . ."[26]

In Sartre, the scene is radically transformed. Out of the story that the father tells to give his child the feeling that he lives in Vienna under much better conditions than those that had prevailed for his father in Eastern Europe, Sartre makes a traumatic event. To do this he makes little Sigi six years younger—so that he is six at the time—and the narrated story is turned into an event actually lived by the little boy in the streets of Vienna. In the course of a visit to the bedside of his enfeebled father, the latter begins to conjure for his son a future of court adviser. The senile sentimentality of the father makes Freud visibly pity him. Taking off from an association of ideas with head-covering, the father evokes Hannibal's oath. At this moment, in a flashback, Freud remembers the scene. Sartre shows it this way: during the time that they walk along the street the child, his hand in that of his father, raises his eyes now and then to look at his parent, proud and full of admiration. After the attack by the anti-Semite has pushed them both into the roadway, they are splashed by a passing car. "The young Freud assumes a somber, stubborn expression (the very one we have so often seen on Freud's face).[27] After the scene of the oath, at the house, the father becomes aware of the importance of the event, and his face gradually becomes more solemn as he realizes that "his action would weigh on his son's entire life."[28] In this way the menace of the anti-Semitic pogrom is revealed as a real danger, the attitude of the father is shown in both its objective dimension as a social act and its subjective one in its consequences for the son. For Sartre, this event, composed from the narratives of Jones and Freud, forms the point of crystallization in Freud's development. He must become this Hannibal character prompted by the fall of the idolized father. In this scene Freud constitutes himself in relation to his Jewishness, thus

25. Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams,* trans. James Strachey (New York: Avon, 1965), p. 230.
26. Jones, *Life and Work of Sigmund Freud,* vol. 1, p. 22.
27. Sartre, *The Freud Scenario,* p. 285.
28. Ibid., p. 287.

taking on his contours within the contingent existence that gave him birth as a Jew in an anti-Semitic world.[29] In this approach to Freud in terms of a self-elaboration as a Jew, the 1945 essay on "The Jewish Question" obviously shows through. Sartre in fact gives Breuer the role of the "unauthentic" Jew, with a dialogue between him and Freud on this matter. Moreover one is struck by the far from negligible part that the script gives to Judaism and anti-Semitism. Through this Sartre established a far more existential cause than Freud's original discovery of the Oedipus complex could ever be in his eyes.

It is interesting to note that in the script Freud's mother has no particular role; she remains almost taboo for Sartre while the genealogy of the fathers makes up the structuring factor. This can be felt not only at a manifest level—Freud raises the subject himself—but also in the many directions in the script about cutting to the statue of Moses, and in this way probably to the later work of Freud on Moses and monotheism as well. However, one notices that the statue already assumed the features of Michelangelo's Moses and lives, so to speak, its own life, in this sense a caricature revelatory of those defaulting fathers: Meynert, Breuer, and Fliess. Freud designates himself as someone looking for the strict Mosaic law, someone who ends up becoming its guardian, judge, and witness in a single person—free and independent—this is what plays a role in the Jewish complex of this character. It is clear, however, that Sartre tries to objectify this, in the sense of the "objective neurosis" that he describes in his massive study of Flaubert. Sartre's interest in this period of Freud's life, which ends in Freud's freedom, is subordinated to his desire to show once more how an individual emerges, in his existence, into an individual-in-History. This is why Sartre is not particularly interested in the different case histories, which he presents and often solves schematically; why, as if in a wish for revenge, he had precipitated onto them his defiance with regard to the Freudian theory of the unconscious.

What interests Sartre the most is a concept of otherness that seems to him drawn by the model of transference and countertransference. This becomes particularly clear when Freud tries out and then suspends the classical setup of analysis conducted by a therapist seated out of sight, thus discovering things within the medium of an intersubjective relationship.

Even if we could say, then, that in the script he wrote as a biography of Freud, Sartre conceals a Sartrean project that does not always proceed in the direction of Freudian intentions, we are still producing only one element that could have turned him against Huston's film—which still drew all its action scenes from Sartre's script. We have to look for a second one on the implicit level of the filmic production even if it is indicated or suggested by the script

29. See "Entretien avec Kenneth Tynan," in Sartre, *Un théâtre de situations* (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), p. 162.

itself. What sort of relation to film can be drawn from the scenario, and how is this in accord with Sartre's usual conception of cinema?

Sartre, who declared himself on so many subjects, only rarely took an explicit position on the subject of film, even though we know that he was a frequent and avid moviegoer. Aside from a few early speeches and essays, several critiques, and above all a series of scenarios, there were naturally enough a significant number of filmic adaptations of his plays that will not enter into consideration here. Of the eleven scripts he wrote, six come from the years 1943–44 for the Pathé Studios: *Typhus,* adapted by Yves Allégret in 1953 as *Les Orgueilleux; Histoire de Nègre; L'Apprenti sorcier;* an untitled script on the resistance; *La Grand Peur;* and finally, *Les Jeux sont faits,* shot in 1947 by Jean Delannoy. In 1947 Sartre wrote *Les Faux nez;* in 1948 *L'Engrenage;* in 1956 the treatment for a script on the French Revolution, *Joseph Lebon;* and the adaptation of the Arthur Miller play *The Witches of Salem,* shot in 1957 by Raymond Rouleau. In 1959 there came *Le Scénario Freud.* This activity as a scriptwriter is generally explained by the part he played as a well-known dramatist and by the chance to earn money and thus to give up teaching. It is true that the two most famous scenarios, that of *Freud* and *Les Jeux sont faits,* presented an array of spatial and temporal constructions only achievable by filmic means, but that, on the whole, the general construction and the structure of the dialogues remain quite close to that for the theater.

As opposed to this, however, what Sartre intuitively grasped was the affinity between filmic staging and the gaze. On the one hand he often insists, in *The Freud Scenario,* on the direction and quality of the characters' gazes, as in the passage already cited on the setup of analysis, or what arises from the decision to make the other into a mirror into which one looks in order to recognize oneself. In the rare directions Sartre gives about camera movement he places the camera in the viewpoint of a character: in the analysis of Dora, for example, where under hypnosis she has the hallucinatory vision—in flashback—of the sexual aggression of a candy seller. There the camera is directed to take a subjective position (Dora's) such that the implicated shopkeeper looks directly at the camera (thus at Dora). The change in the camera's height marks the jump in time and the passage within the memory of Dora, the fifteen-year-old adolescent, to that of the child of six. The gaze of the old shopkeeper, "his staring, crazy eyes—which are looking towards the camera," is grasped by the subjective perspective of the child.[30] This gaze paralyzes the child, who is petrified by this look, up to the point where his touch unleashes her cries. The imagination that Sartre turns towards the camera work defines his implicit position in relation to the matter of filmic aesthetics: the camera as gaze. In this way he relates it, on the level of materialist aesthetics, to his own work, specifically the famous chapter on the gaze in *Being and Nothingness.* In

30. Sartre, *The Freud Scenario,* p. 180.

any case, it is interesting to see how in this place he totally resolves the sequence by the concept of subject/object relations as defined in this chapter on the gaze. In the hallucination there is no third-person point of view; the empirical world of the action is forever locked into the master/slave dialectic of the gaze. Yet once more it becomes clear that, for Sartre, personal character is produced within the materiality of the gaze, as in his work on Genet, where the latter becomes a thief because he has been seen in the act of stealing, because he is constituted as a thief in the look of others. In this way, this slight technical indication on camera movement reveals something of Sartre's relation to psychoanalysis as much as to cinema: two domains of interest to him as modes of construction through the gaze, which is simultaneously a reality and a contribution to the creation of reality. This is why Sartre comes to this conception of it, as expressed in his interview with Kenneth Tynan: "Film . . . looks for a reality that contains moments of truth."[31]

But where the camera no longer stays within the material constitution of the subject/object relation, it becomes aesthetic and derealizing for Sartre because, taking on the third-person point of view, it reifies the real world, presenting it as a mechanism, much as it does toward the end in the demiurge Moses-Freud. Sartre makes this leap of the camera into the third-person position of "bird's eye view" into a description by analogy in his Flaubert study:

> In the darkness of the cathedral we were so close to Emma that we saw her "take out her lorgnette" and heard, when she walked, "a rustle of silk on the flagstones." All of a sudden, the box—a change of perspective, a downward view. At the end of the chapter, the lumbering machine that has swallowed two singular persons will give us back Emma generalized in this form: "a veiled woman . . . who walked with her veil lowered, and without turning her head"; Léon will not be given back to us at all. As we see, there has been a camera movement whose *gratuitousness* reminds us of the author's malicious intent. This is what happens when the writing of a movie director is aestheticizing. The protagonists are framed in close-ups—the spectator is among them; and then, suddenly, the camera flies off, we are at the camera end of a long shot for no good reason, we are looking at them from above. Well, there is one reason—the image is good. But it is the death of illusion: there are no more characters, merely dummies manipulated by a cinematographer. . . .
>
> More than all other qualities, the one most striking in this jocular narrator is the formidable ubiquity of his gaze, which spots the cab wherever it is, comes down in a thunderclap, and, even while crushing it to earth among thousands of cabs and houses, falling from such a

31. "Entretien avec Kenneth Tynan," p. 154.

> height, possesses the incredible acuity to render it in detail. For a look that will allow him to laugh at the two lovers, Gustave has chosen to take a cosmic point of view—or if you like, the world has chosen an intermediary, a giant possessed by the negative infinite who wants to preserve only a "glancing acquaintance" with men.[32]

If we fix on the point of reproach that threads through his reconstitution of Flaubert's procedure in posing as an omniscient narrator, we can easily draw the conclusion that Sartre must have an ambivalent relation to narrative cinema. For in reality all the motifs of a "*gratuitous* camera movement" that Sartre underscores with such an air of faint disgust are part of the aesthetically formal texture of a film, once it is not entirely given over to subject/object relations through the pure simulation of the gaze, such as they are established by using the subjective camera or through eyeline-matching. Sartre's preference for the film "of the masses" that "grabs you by the throat," which he defends against the intellectual editing of Welles's *Citizen Kane,* certainly have a connection to the simulations of the gaze of the classical narrative Hollywood film.[33] Parisian intellectuals, disappointed that Sartre showed not the slightest inclination for the cinematic avant-garde, liking Godard not at all and preferring to go to see conventional movies, showed little understanding of Sartre's secret affinities with cinema. It's only because this connection wasn't clear that generations of readers could have been surprised by what Sartre wrote on film in his autobiographical novel *Les Mots.* In a few pages Sartre describes going to the movies with his mother, who in a secret complicity took him to trivial, proletarian entertainments. The first silent films he saw, and ones which greatly impressed him, had not systematically committed to memory the rule that the actors should not look straight at the camera; the phenomenology of the gaze as direct subject/object relationship was often still to be found there in a troubling way, and even Feuillade, to whom Sartre refers with *Fantômas,* was still shooting *Tih Minh* with the direct gaze at the camera. It was in this way that Sartre developed the impression that music was escaping from their bodies, that their mutism was desired so that music could become a more eloquent medium. These are the musical motifs that made the little Sartre into a voyeur, who could of course predict nothing since he was not master of the unreeling of the images, but who already knew from the music that an assassin was there:

> I felt I was a prophet without being able to foresee anything: even before the traitor betrayed, his crime entered me; when all seemed peaceful in the castle, sinister chords exposed the murderer's pres-

32. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot,* trans. Carol Cosman, vol. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), pp. 177–79.
33. Jean-Paul Sartre, "Quand Hollywood veut faire penser . . . *Citizen Kane* d'Orson Welles," *L'Ecran français,* no. 5 (August 1945).

> ence. How happy were those cowboys, those musketeers, those detectives: their future was there, in that premonitory music, and governed the present.[34]

What Sartre loved in silent film, sustained by the music, was to find himself placed in the position of prophetic and omniscient narrator whose look could —sadistically—observe or—masochistically—fuse: "I was compromised; the young widow who wept on the screen *was not I,* and yet she and I had only one soul: Chopin's funeral march; no more was needed for her tears to wet my eyes."[35] From these memories we obviously recognize a filmic theory of identification, a theory that puts the spectator in the place of the author—Sartre becoming, in his own description, the "giant" Flaubert who presents his characters from on high, *and at the same time* he who derealizes himself in them, disappearing into them and with them:

> I had found the world in which I wanted to live, I touched the absolute. What an uneasy feeling when the lights went on: I had been wracked with love for the characters and they had disappeared, carrying their world with them. I had felt their victory in my bones; yet it was theirs and not mine. In the street I found myself superfluous.[36]

The Huston film on Freud stumbles against Sartre's already developed ambivalence: on the one hand, he was wholly in accord with the type of narrative cinema Huston participated in; but on the other, he had never been able to silence in himself the many reservations he had developed with regard to all aesthetics of derealization, to which a film like this belonged, one in which distanciation and identification, as in the Flaubert study, were closely mixed together. Sartre's implicit theory of film seems, however, astonishingly current, in the context of the most recent theories which, connected to the essay by Lacan on the mirror stage as formative of the function of the ego, see the film screen as a mirror in which the subject finds something to pad out his uncomfortable position—dependent on the other—thanks to an ideal ego, imaginary and narcissistic. I don't know if Sartre, who only makes a brief reference to Lacan at the outset of his Flaubert study, knew this 1949 essay at that precise time. But one can imagine all the same that, in the circle of his acquaintances, which Lacan also frequented, he had been confronted by this author's ideas.

34. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Words,* trans. Bernard Frechtman (New York: George Braziller, 1964), p. 124.
35. Ibid.
36. Ibid., p. 125.

After having taken *The Freud Scenario,* a posthumous publication, as the point of departure for my sketch of the double relationship of Sartre to psychoanalysis and to cinema, I don't want to omit calling equal attention to the fact that the Sartrean concept of existential psychoanalysis and the positions enunciated in *The Psychology of Imagination* could serve as the backdrop to films of an entirely different type, ones that would not allow themselves to be trapped in the domination of the gaze as defined by Sartre, as for example Claude Lanzmann's film *Shoah,* which is inscribed in a dialectic of presentation and representation.

Max Ernst. Oedipus. *1931.*

Convulsive Identity

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To posit an origin in order to ground a self, to found a style: this is a very familiar trope of modernism. Attended by a baptismal name, manifesto, or demonstration, it may also involve an origin myth. Often these myths stake a vanguard advance on a partial return—to an imaginary moment located in a devalued period within the culture or to an exoticist site projected outside it. Of course the modernist search for a new beginning is not restricted to such archaisms and primitivisms; as a primary ambition is to liberate vision from convention, it operates in more strictly formal styles too. Frequently the two goals, a primitivism of origin and a purification of means, are connected, even conflated. Indeed, such purification through the putatively primal is a basic ideological machine of practices from Courbet to Kiefer; it unites thinkers as diverse as Ruskin and Breton, and artists as different as Cézanne and Dubuffet.

This quest for an innocent eye or a zero degree of art would be quaint now if it were not still so problematic. Under the pressure of events political and theoretical, the last decade saw an intensive inquiry into such conceits, most often through a critique of the imperialist unconscious at work in modernism, especially its primitivist projections of origin and/or a deconstruction of the metaphysical assumptions of the avant-garde, especially its antihistorical assertions of originality. Recently, however, these critiques have become confused with contempt: hence the emergent *doxa* that reduces modernism to mastery, indeed to imperialism, or dismisses the avant-garde, in its pursuit of presence, as just another philosophical error. Partly permitted by postmodernist polemicism, this reduction deprives these formations not only of historical complexity but also of present criticality. It misses the resonances, say, between surrealist ethnological speculations and counterprimitivist practices today.[1] And it forgets that the deconstruction of avant-garde originality was concerned not to expose

1. I have in mind the practices of Renee Green, Fred Wilson, Hachivi Edgar Heap of Birds, Jimmie Durham, James Luna, many others.

this myth from a privileged position of postmodernist truth so much as to demonstrate that the values of the original and the unique were governed by the very terms that the avant-garde sought to suppress as secondary or supplementary: the copy and the multiple, the seriality structural to modern production and the repetition operative in psychic life.

I rehearse this particular point because its general lesson seems obscured: that rather than foreclose modernism in a restrictive definition it is more productive to open it up to its contradictions, indeed to its critiques of its own principles, not the least of which is its resisted recognition of "an always already self-divided origin."[2] In this spirit the following text treats a few origin myths that suggest the risks of such a quest—in particular that the avant-garde logic of a progressive advance through a radical return may involve a psychic regression difficult to control. In these surrealistic stories the origin becomes a fantasy that problematizes the very concept of origin, as the search for foundations leads to subversively nonfoundational scenes.

*

Freud distinguished three primal fantasies (*Urphantasien*): that of seduction, the primal scene proper (where the child witnesses parental sex), and that of castration. First called scenes, they were later termed fantasies when it became clear that they need not be actual events to be psychically effective—that they are often constructed, in whole or part, after the fact, frequently with the collaboration of the analyst. Yet, though often contrived, these fantasies also tended to be uniform; in fact the narratives appeared so fundamental that Freud deemed them phylogenetic: given schema that we all elaborate upon. They are fundamental, he speculated, because it is through these fantasies that the child teases out the basic riddles of origins: in the fantasy of seduction the origin of sexuality, in the primal scene the origin of the individual, in the fantasy of castration the origin of sexual difference. Freud added another primal fantasy, that of intrauterine existence, which may be seen as a salve to the other traumatic fantasies, especially that of castration, to which it is technically anterior.[3] Here, however, I will focus on the first three types, specifically on the

2. Rosalind Krauss, "Originality as Repetition," *October* 37 (Summer 1986), p. 40. This recognition, which is a modernist legacy (Marx, Freud, Nietzsche, but also Duchamp, Bataille, etc.), was developed in relation to postmodernist art in this magazine—but mostly in critical and deconstructive terms, less so from a psychoanalytical perspective.

3. This at least is how it functions in surrealism where it is pervasive—fundamental to its sense of space as uncanny. "'Love is a homesickness,'" Freud writes famously in "The Uncanny" (1919), "and whenever a man dreams of a place or a country and says to himself, still in the dream, 'this place is familiar to me, I have been here before,' we may interpret the place as being his mother's genitals or her body. In this case, too, the *unheimlich* is what was once *heimisch*, homelike, familiar; the prefix 'un' is the token of repression" (in *Studies in Parapsychology*, ed. Philip Rieff [New York: Collier Books, 1963], p. 51).

ways that they govern the (proto)surrealist work of Giorgio de Chirico, Max Ernst, and Alberto Giacometti, each of whom narrates the origin of his art in terms of such a fantasy.

The return of such traumas in art is uncanny in its own right, but so is the very structure of the original scenes, formed as they are through a reconstructive repetition or "deferred action" (*Nachträglichkeit*). In his early work on hysteria Freud referred each case to an actual event: for every hysteric there was a perverse seducer. Although he abandoned the seduction theory as early as 1897, he retained the essential idea of a trauma that is psychically originary though frequently fantasmatic. This initial event, whether sexual or simply enigmatic, is one which the child cannot comprehend (Freud described this state as one of fright [*Schreck*]). The memory of this event becomes pathogenic only if it is revived by a second event that the now sexual subject associates with the first, which is then recoded as sexual and so repressed.[4] This is why trauma seems to come from within and without, and why it is the memory, not the event, that is traumatic. Not strictly real for the child nor merely contrived by the adult, these primal scenes, Freud finally proposed, may be fantasies, pledged in part "to cover up the autoerotic activity of the first years of childhood, to gloss it over and raise it to a higher level."[5] And yet they have all the effectivity of real events—even more so, Freud argued, for the subject often reworks

4. Freud: "Here we have an instance of a memory exciting an affect which it had not excited as an experience, because in the meantime the changes produced by puberty had made possible a new understanding of what was remembered. Now this case is typical of repression in hysteria. We invariably find that a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma *after the event.* The reason for this state of things is the retardation of puberty as compared with the remainder of the individual's development" ("Project for a Scientific Psychology" [1895], in *The Origins of Psychoanalysis,* trans. James Strachey [New York: Basic Books, 1954], p. 413). Also see Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), pp. 111–14.

Dominick LaCapra and Peter Brooks have discussed the ramifications of this concept for historical and literary studies; it is time art historians did the same. Among other things "deferred action" may allow one to complicate readings of influence, to think the effectivity of the present on the past, and to mitigate the teleological determination of dominant narratives of Western (especially modern) art. See LaCapra, *Soundings in Critical Theory* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), pp. 30–66, and Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* (New York: Vintage Books, 1984), passim. Also see David Carroll, "Freud and the Myth of the Origin," *New Literary History* 6 (Spring 1975), pp. 513–28, and Michael Fried, "Painting Memories: On the Containment of the Past in Baudelaire and Manet," *Critical Inquiry* 10 (March 1984), pp. 510–42.

5. Freud, *On the History of the Psychoanalytical Movement* (1914), trans. Joan Riviere (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 52. This revision led to his recognition first of infantile sexuality and then of the Oedipus complex. These fantasies bear on the origins of sublimation as well as of sexuality; as such they are especially pertinent to artistic origins too. See Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, "Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality" (1964), in *Formations of Fantasy,* ed. V. Burgin, J. Donald and C. Kaplan (London, 1986), p. 25. I am indebted to this text throughout my essay. Also helpful are Ned Lukacher, *Primal Scenes* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), and Elizabeth Cowie, "Fantasia," *m/f* 9 (1984), reprinted in *The Woman in Question: m/f,* ed. P. Adams and E. Cowie (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1990).

actual experience according to the given scenarios of seduction, parental sex, and castration.[6]

Fantasy cannot be reduced to these three types, nor do they appear in pure form. As we will see, the seduction fantasy of de Chirico has a castrative aspect; the primal scene of Ernst betrays a seductive side; and the castration fantasy of Giacometti begins as an intrauterine wish. These fantasies are also inflected by screen memory and conscious design; they are thus not temporally primary so much as structurally originary. Yet it is precisely in this way that primal fantasy may illuminate surrealist art. More fundamental than the dream since it involves the very advent of sexuality and representation, primal fantasy provides a way to think entire oeuvres "obsessionally" rather than to decode individual works iconographically. Moreover, as expressly visual scenarios in which the psychic, the sexual, and the perceptual are bound together, primal fantasy does much to explain the peculiar pictorial structures and object relations of surrealism—specifically why subject positions and spatial constructions are rarely fixed in this art. The scene of a daydream, for example, is relatively stable because the ego is relatively centered. This is not the case in primal fantasy where the subject not only is *in* the scene but may also identify with any of its elements. Such participation renders the scene as elastic as the subject is mobile, and this is so because the fantasy is "not the object of desire, but its setting," its mise-en-scène.[7] Such fantasmatic subjectivity and spatiality are put into play in surrealist art, where the first is often passive and the second often perspectivally skewed or anamorphically distorted.[8]

Breton struggled to articulate this basis of surrealist art in two well-known metaphors. In the "Manifesto of Surrealism" (1924) he points to the fantasmatic position of the surrealist subject with the automatist image of "a man cut in two by a window."[9] This image suggests neither a descriptive mirror nor a narrative window, the familiar paradigms of postmedieval art, but a fantasmatic window,

6. For many this recourse to hereditary narratives remains the most problematic aspect of the theory. In "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (1914) Freud argues that under the pressure of the inherited schema the Wolfman came to imagine his father as castrative despite his "negative Oedipus complex," i.e., despite his love for him (see note 25). The cases of de Chirico and Ernst offer parallels in this regard.

7. Laplanche and Pontalis, "Fantasy," p. 26. On mobile identifications see especially "A Child is Being Beaten" (1919; French trans. 1933).

8. Ernst wrote of the artist as a passive "spectator" in *Beyond Painting* (New York: George Wittenborn, 1948) and Breton as an "agonized witness" in *Nadja* (Paris, 1928; trans. Richard Howard [New York: Grove Press, 1960], p. 20). Before them de Chirico wrote of the artist as a "surprised" viewer in "Meditations of a Painter" (1912; trans. in James Thrall Soby, *Giorgio de Chirico* [New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1955]). The helpless child in fright before a traumatic event may be the prototype of the "ill-prepared" surrealist "taken by a sudden fear in the *forest of symbols*." See Breton, *L'Amour fou* (1937), trans. Mary Ann Caws as *Mad Love* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 1987), p. 15; *AF* hereafter in the text.

9. Breton, *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. Richard Seaver and Helen R. Lane (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1972), p. 21. Breton considers this the ur-image of his automatist writing.

a "purely interior model"[10] in which the subject is somehow split both positionally—at once inside and outside the scene—and psychically—"cut in two." Later in *L'Amour fou* (1937) Breton complements this image of the subject in fantasy with an image that suggests its projective aspect: surrealist art as a grid inscribed with "letters of desire" (*AF* 87). Implicitly in both accounts the artist does not invent new forms so much as he retraces fantasmatic scenes.[11]

Two points should be stressed here. All three fantasies touch upon the castration complex, to which the surrealists typically respond with scenarios fetishistic, voyeuristic, and/or sadistic in import. Adorno, no friend of surrealism, once argued that its images are "object-fetishes on which the subjective, the libido, was once fixated. They bring back childhood by fetishism and not by self-submersion."[12] This is indeed the rule of these images, but the presence of the primal fantasies points to exceptions: they suggest a self-submersion that might complicate sexuality, identity, and difference, a surrealism that might *de*fetishize these terms. In short, the surrealist subject is more various than its heterosexist types otherwise imply (again such mobility is characteristic of fantasy). After all, the primal fantasies are *riddles* about origins: they question rather than fix these terms.

Second, the source of surrealist fantasies is uncertain, as is registered by the paradoxical language used to describe them. Breton says that he "looks out" into a pure interior (*SP* 4), Ernst that he limns "what is visible inside him" (*BP* 20). This uncertainty may be related to that of the source of the trauma narrated in the primal fantasy. As Jean Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis gloss the theory of seduction,

> the whole of the trauma comes *both* from within and without: from without, since sexuality reaches the subject from *the other;* from within, since it springs from this internalized exteriority, this "*reminiscence* suffered by hysterics" (according to the Freudian formula),

10. Breton, *Surrealism and Painting,* trans. Simon Watson Taylor (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 4; *SP* hereafter in the text.

11. Of the "Manifesto" image Breton writes: "Here again it is not a matter of drawing, *but simply of tracing.*" The image seems to point to a trauma, perhaps a residual fantasy of castration, which Breton cannot "incorporate . . . into . . . poetic construction" (*Manifestoes,* pp. 21–22). The *L'Amour fou* metaphor also suggests a "tracing" of trauma, which Breton typically projects from the past to the future: "This grid exists. Every life contains those homogenous patterns of facts, whose surface is cracked or cloudy. Each person has only to stare at them fixedly in order to read his own future. Let him enter the whirlwind; let him retrace the events which have seemed to him fleeting and obscure among all others, which have torn him apart" (*AF* 87).

12. Theodor W. Adorno, "Looking Back on Surrealism" (1954) in Irving Howe, ed., *The Idea of the Modern in Literature and the Arts* (New York, 1967), p. 223. Between the lines this reads as an objection, long after the fact, to the surrealist influence on Benjamin. See Susan Buck-Morss, *The Origin of Negative Dialectics: Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin and the Frankfurt Institute* (New York: Macmillan Free Press, 1977), pp. 124–29.

> reminiscence in which we already discern what will be later named fantasy.[13]

Hardly limited to hysteria, this uncertainy of inside and outside, psychic and perceptual, is fundamental to the talismanic concepts of surrealism: the marvelous, convulsive beauty, *amour fou.* Indeed, the distinctive character of surrealist art may reside in the different ways that it works through psychic trauma in scenes that register as both internal and external, endogenous and exogenous, fantasmatic and real—in a word, surreal.

Primal fantasy structures other surrealist oeuvres, and informs the contradictory and simulacral aspects of surrealist images more generally too.[14] I focus on de Chirico, Ernst, and Giacometti because each not only evokes a different primal fantasy but also accounts for a different aesthetic method or medium: the development of "metaphysical" painting by de Chirico, of surrealist collage, frottage, and grattage by Ernst, of "symbolic" objects by Giacometti. These origin myths are the manifest content of the elaborated fantasies, but again they are grounded in more basic questions concerning the origins of sexuality, identity, and difference. Here degrees of awareness become difficult to determine.[15] The Ernst text seems consciously to exploit a screen memory of a primal scene in order to upset given ideas of identity (which, he writes after Breton, "will be convulsive or will not exist" [*BP* 19]). The Giacometti text also involves a screen memory—of a castration fantasy that encompasses both an Oedipal threat and a pubertal dream of sadistic revenge—but it is never fully worked through. Finally, the de Chirico text is somewhere between the other two. Set in an adult moment, his fantasy of seduction is traumatic, and yet he deploys its sublimated signs too; they are basic to his aesthetic of "enigma."

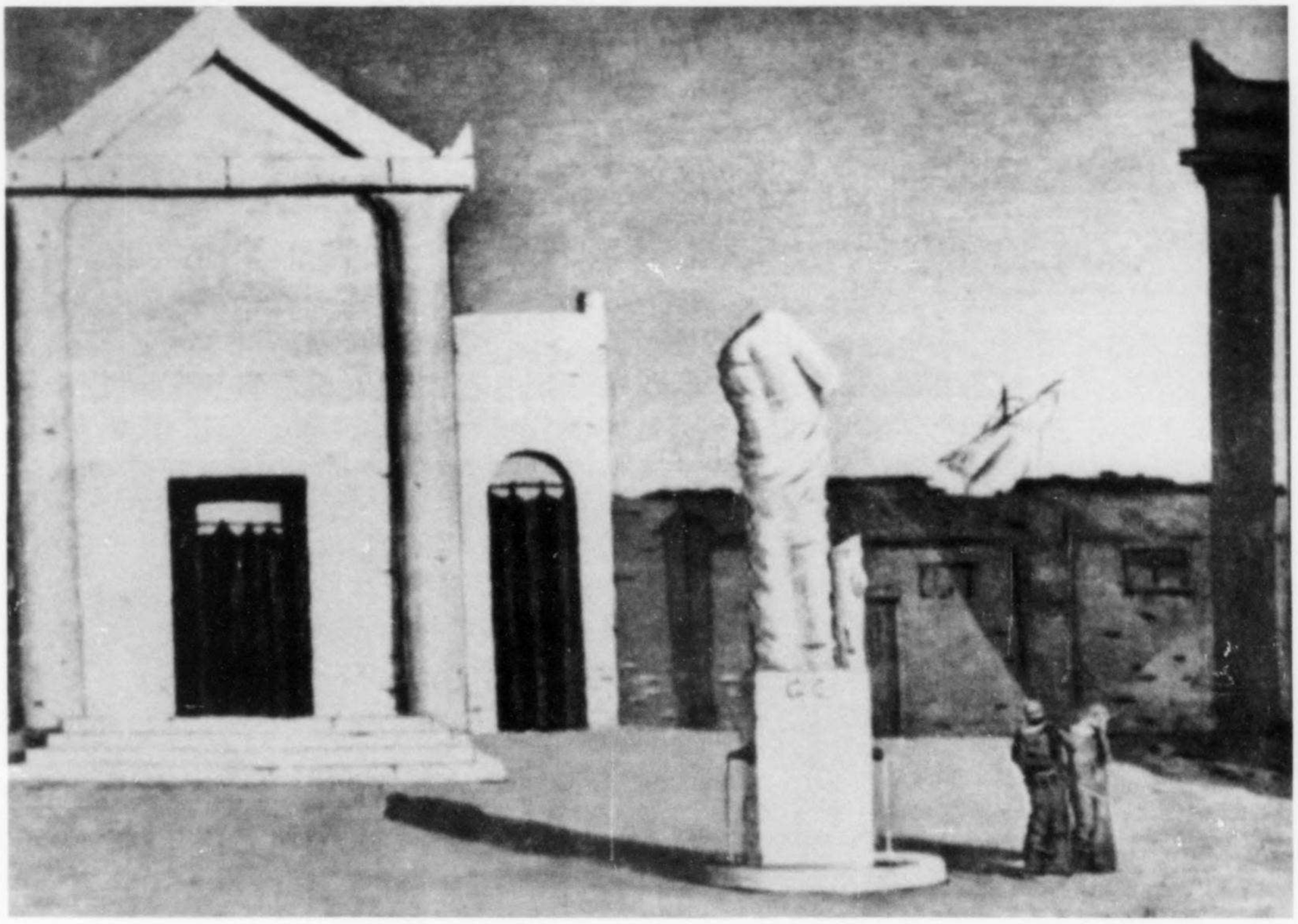
In a recent text Laplanche uses this de Chirican term to rethink all the

13. Laplanche and Pontalis, "Fantasy," p. 10.

14. Dalí and Bellmer are also likely candidates for analysis in terms of primal fantasy. In the text that attracted the young Lacan to the surrealists, Dalí wrote of the "traumatic nature of images [*simulacres*]" evocative of both "desire" and "terror" ("L'Ane pourri," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution,* July 1930). On Bellmer see my "Armor Fou," *October* 56 (Spring 1991). I take up surrealist contradiction and simulation below.

15. The primal scene was mentioned as early as *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900; French trans. 1926). The idea of primal fantasies was sketched in "The Sexual Enlightenment of Children" (1907) and "Family Romances" (1908), and the fantasy of seduction was elaborated in *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood* (1910; French trans. 1927). But the typology of the fantasies was not fully developed until "A Case of Paranoia Running Counter to the Psychoanalytic Theory of the Disease" (1915; French trans. 1935) and "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis" (1914/18; French trans. 1935).

The de Chirico texts which I cite below date from 1912–13, '19, and '24, and the relevant works begin in 1910. The Ernst texts date from 1927, '33, and '42, and the relevant works from 1919. Both Giacometti texts and works are from the early 1930s. Ernst had begun to read Freud as early as 1911, and he would have known some of the relevant Freud texts, certainly *Leonardo.* (On this point see Werner Spies, *Max Ernst, Loplop: The Artist in the Person* [New York: George Braziller, 1983], pp. 101–9). It is unlikely that the others were directly aware of the relevant concepts.



primal fantasies as forms of seduction: not as sexual assaults but as "enigmatic signifiers" received by the child from the other (parent, sibling, etc.).[16] It is this enigmatic, even seductive nature of primal fantasy that moves the artists not simply to simulate it but to elaborate the very origins of art in its terms. They cannot, however, escape the trauma of such fantasy, and it is finally this trauma that, never tamed, compels them to reenact such scenes—an uncanny reenactment of which they often appear more victim than master.

*

In several short texts from 1911 to 1919 de Chirico speaks of "revelation" and "surprise," "enigma" and "fatality."[17] During the period that Freud drafts "The Uncanny" de Chirico works to depict the world as "an immense museum

16. See Laplanche, *New Foundations for Psychoanalysis*, trans. David Macey (London: Blackwell, 1989). "The *enigma* is in itself a *seduction* and its mechanisms are unconscious. It was not for nothing that the Sphinx appeared outside the gates of Thebes before Oedipus's drama began" (p. 127).
17. As will soon be clear, in "surprise" I want to hear "shock," and in "enigma" "seduction." The texts from 1911–15, written in Paris, remained in the collection of Jean Paulhan and Paul Eluard; the texts from 1919 were published in *Valori Plastici*. Translated extracts can be found in Soby, *Giorgio de Chirico;* in Marcel Jean, ed., *The Autobiography of Surrealism* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), pp. 3–10; and in Herschel B. Chipp, ed., *Theories of Modern Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1968), pp. 397–402, 446–53.

Giorgio de Chirico. The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon. *1910.*

of strangeness," to reveal the "mystery" in insignificant things.[18] Clearly his topos is the estrangement that comes of repression and returns as enigma, an enigma which he once refers to "the great questions one has always asked oneself—why was the world created, why we are born, live and die. . . ."[19] His "metaphysical" terms are thus so many riddles about origins—but to what origin do "surprise" and "enigma" speak? What origin estranges even as it founds? "Art is the fatal net which catches these strange moments," de Chirico tells us, and these moments are not dreams.[20] What are they then?

In his early texts de Chirico dwells on a memory that is elaborated in his early paintings, especially *The Enigma of an Autumn Afternoon* (1910), to which it is directly referred, and *The Enigma of a Day* (1914).[21] In some sense it is elaborated in all his work. The first version comes from the 1912 text "Meditations of a Painter":

> One clear autumnal morning I was sitting on a bench in the middle of the Piazza Santa Croce in Florence. It was of course not the first time I had seen this square. I had just come out of a long and painful intestinal illness, and I was in a nearly morbid state of sensitivity. The whole world, down to the marble of the buildings and the fountains, seemed to me to be convalescent. In the middle of the square rises a statue of Dante draped in a long cloak, holding his works. . . . Then I had the strange impression that I was looking at all these things for the first time, and the composition of my picture came to my mind's eye. Now each time I look at this painting I again see that moment. Nevertheless, that moment is an enigma to me, for it is inexplicable. And I like also to call the work which sprang from it an enigma.[22]

However enigmatic, this scene has its own sense. The space of the piazza is transformed by two temporalities that coexist within it: an event of "not the first time" that triggers a memory of "the first time," a structure characteristic of deferred action in primal fantasy. So too the scene is traumatic in the aforementioned sense that the enigma comes to de Chirico both from within and without, in the symptom of the intestinal illness and in the guise of the Dante statue. The illness alone is not enough to render the scene an originary

18. De Chirico in Jean, p. 6. De Chirico did not rehearse the Freudian uncanny, yet his art is populated by its avatars—mannequins, doubles, spectral father figures, most of which he introduced into the surrealist repertoire. In "Metafisica et unheimlichkeit" (*Les Réalismes 1919–39* [Paris: Centre Pompidou, 1981]) Jean Clair notes the contemporaneity of "On Metaphysical Art" and "The Uncanny."

19. Ibid., pp. 5–6.

20. De Chirico, "On Metaphysical Art" (1919), in Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art,* p. 448.

21. The latter, once owned by Breton, was a talisman of the surrealists, some of whom speculated about its sexual implications in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 6 (May 15, 1933).

22. De Chirico, "Meditations of a Painter" (1912), in Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art,* pp. 397–98.

"revelation"; it has this effect because it evokes a primal fantasy through a resisted, retrospective association—perhaps of *sick* with *sexual,* of *intestinal* with *genital.* Thus the scene reads as a displaced version of a fantasmatic seduction, a hypothesis that figures the statue as the father, the other who initiates the subject into sexuality (another section of this text is titled "The Statue's Desire").[23] Here de Chirico sublimates a traumatic initiation into sexuality into an origin myth of art.

Yet why is the scene partly seductive, or at least not entirely traumatic? Consider how it is treated in the two most relevant paintings. The "atmosphere" of the 1910 *Enigma* is "warm,"[24] and the space welcomes artist and viewer. Yet a few ambiguous signs disturb this relative calm: two obscured portals; an acephalic, almost androgynous statue; and two tiny figures in antique dress posed like Adam and Eve in an expulsion. This tension constitutes the "enigma" of the painting, sexual in nature, to be referred to a precocious initiation. For Freud a related seduction was crucial to the formation of Leonardo: an initiation by the mother that produced a sexual ambivalence, as worked over, never openly, in the enigmatic smile of the Mona Lisa and the androgynous features of other figures. A similar trauma informs de Chirico, but here the fantasmatic seducer is paternal, and the seduction produces an especially ambivalent Oedipal subject. In the first *Enigma* this ambivalence is worked over in terms more "negative" than "positive," i.e., by a subject more amorous than jealous of the father.[25]

The treatment of this ambivalence is dramatically different in the 1914 *Enigma.* The space now threatens artist and viewer with its extreme perspective, and the mysterious portals are replaced by a steep arcade, "symbol of the intransigent will."[26] This arcade submits our look to the patriarchal statue that dominates the scene; meanwhile, the Adam and Eve figures are all but banished by this modern god. In the two *Enigmas,* then, a primal fantasy of seduction seems replayed first in its seductive (negative-Oedipal) aspect and then in its traumatic (positive-Oedipal) form.

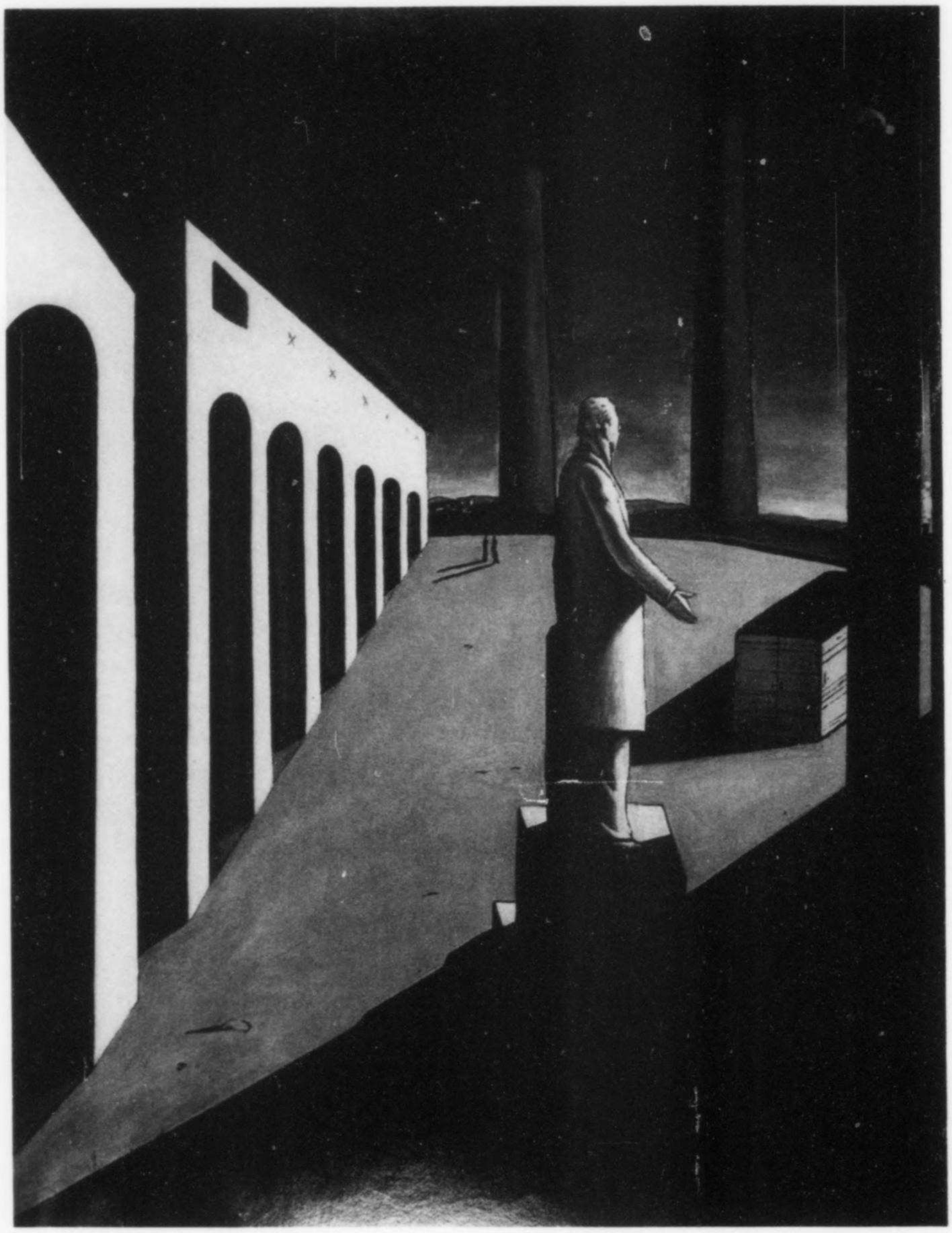
In his 1913 text "Mystery and Creation" de Chirico restages this fantasy

23. This identification is supported by the further association with Dante, "father" of Italian culture. (In the 1933 questionnaire devoted to the 1914 *Enigma,* Eluard identifies the statue as the father.)

24. De Chirico, "Meditations," p. 398. *Stimmung* (atmosphere) is another privileged de Chirican term, borrowed from Nietzsche.

25. "The more complete Oedipus complex . . . is twofold, positive and negative, and is due to the bisexuality originally present in children: that is to say, a boy has not merely an ambivalent attitude towards his father and an affectionate object-choice towards his mother, but at the same time he also behaves like a girl and displays an affectionate feminine attitude to his father and a corresponding jealousy and hostility towards his mother" (*The Ego and the Id* [1923], trans. James Strachey and Joan Rivière [New York: W. W. Norton, 1962], p. 23).

26. De Chirico, "Meditations," p. 400.



in the anxious terms that become standard in his paintings after the second *Enigma*:

> I remember one vivid winter's day at Versailles. . . . Everything gazed at me with mysterious, questioning eyes. And then I realized that every corner of the place, every column, every window possessed a spirit, an impenetrable soul. I looked around at the marble heroes, motionless in the lucid air, beneath the frozen rays of that winter sun which pours down on us *without* love. . . . At that moment I grew aware of the mystery which urges men to create certain forms. And the creation appeared more extraordinary than the creators. . . .

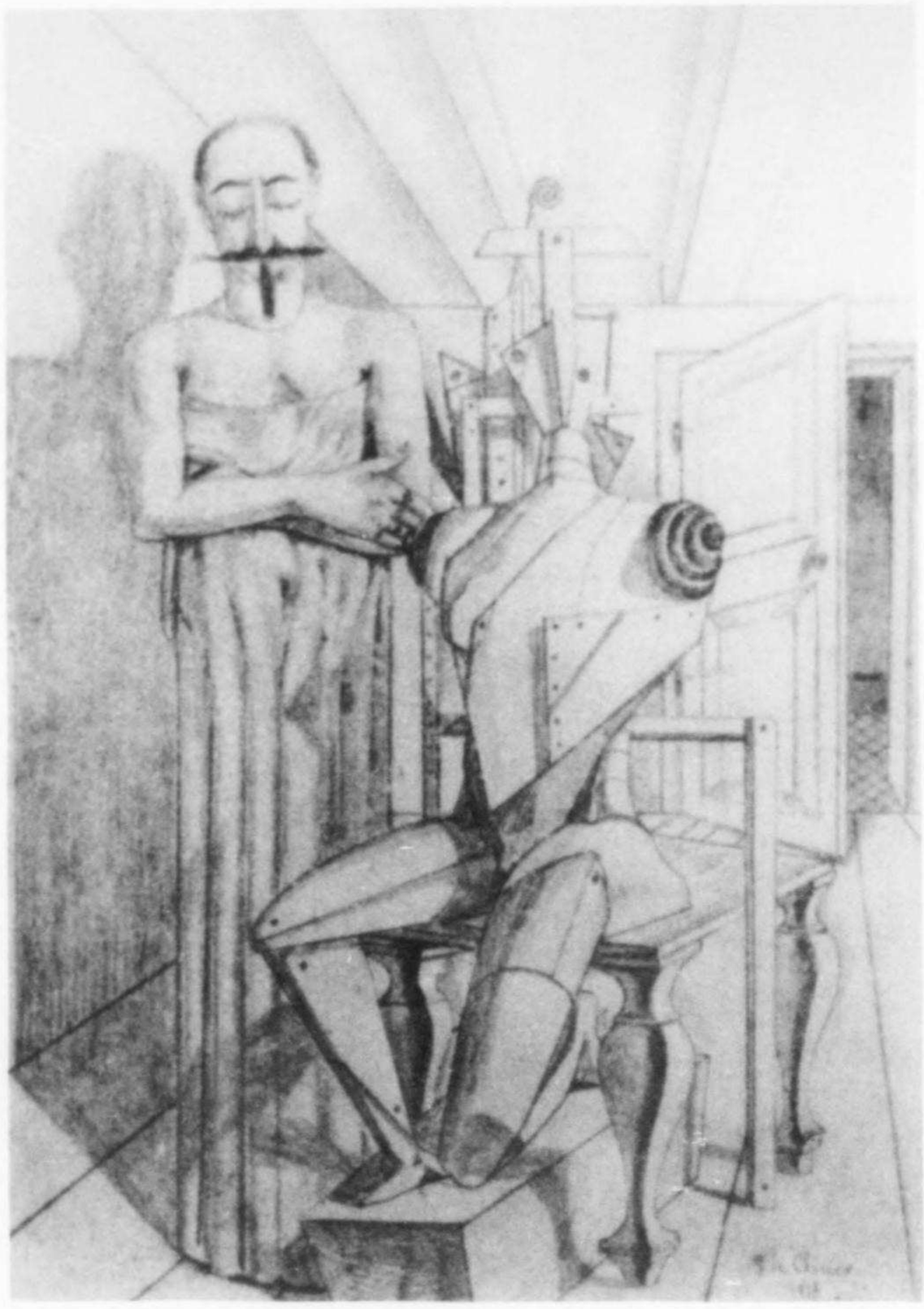
Giorgio de Chirico. The Enigma of a Day. *1914.*

> Perhaps the most amazing sensation passed on to us by prehistorical man is that of presentiment. It will always continue. We might consider it as an eternal proof of the irrationality of the universe. Original man must have wandered through a world full of uncanny signs. He must have trembled at each step.[27]

Again a later scene seems to trigger a memory of a prior event, which returns here less as a seductive enigma than as a traumatic threat. However sublimated, the agent of this provocation remains the father. No doubt this hypothesis now seems fully absurd, for where is the father in this fantasy? In the first version he appears in proxy (the statue), and so he does here. In this scene the look of de Chirico is returned as a gaze back at him (in the guise of the "marble heroes"), and it is this gaze, castrative in import, that stands in for the father. Endowed with a gaze, objects appear more alive than de Chirico, and they query his lack. His active seeing has reversed into a passive being-seen.[28]

In this form of the gaze as threat, de Chirico works over his enigma, especially in his still lifes of spectral objects and his cityscapes of paranoid perspectives. In these paintings perspective works less to ground any depicted figure than to unsettle the expected viewer; so forward is it thrown that things often appear to see us. Thus if de Chirico revives perspective he does so in a way that disturbs it from within.[29] Both points of coherence, viewing and vanishing, are decentered, sometimes to the extent that the "seer" appears *within* the scene as a sightless, degendered mannequin, a "Medusa with eyes that do not see."[30] As rational perspective is deranged, the visual array as such becomes uncanny: a forest less of iconographic symbols than of enigmatic signifiers concerning sexuality, identity, and difference. In the second version of the fantasy as in the first, de Chirico almost grasps its significance. Once more he senses that origins are at stake, but again he displaces them—here not to art but to creation as such. As in the primal fantasy according to Freud, he "fills in

27. De Chirico, "Mystery and Creation" (1913), in Chipp, *Theories of Modern Art,* p. 402.
28. This structure is similar to that of the famous dream in "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," the *locus classicus* of the primal scene, where the look of the young Wolfman is returned as the staring of wolves.
29. It is as if de Chirico pictorializes what Lacan theorizes about "the scopic field": "Everything is articulated between two terms that act in an antinomic way—on the side of things, there is the gaze, that is to say, things look at me, and yet I see them" (*The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis,* trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: W. W. Norton, 1977], p. 109). In so doing, he exposed its paranoid aspect long before Lacan (or Dalí) in a "rehabilitation" of perspective that, as with Duchamp, debilitated it all the more. On de Chirico and Renaissance perspective see William Rubin, "De Chirico and Modernism," in *De Chirico,* ed. Rubin (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1982), pp. 58–61.
30. De Chirico, "Meditations," p. 400. In *The Seer* (1916) it is as if the "seer" that constructs the pictorial space within the picture also represents it in its Medusan effect—both blind and blinding, fragmented and fragmenting.



Giorgio de Chirico. The Return. *1917.*

the gaps in individual truth with prehistoric truth."[31] That is, he refers his fantasy, his confusion about origins that upset as well as ground the subject, to "prehistorical man," as if his primal fantasy, its uncanny signs, were always already there to seduce and threaten.

But why see this enigma as a primal fantasy, and, more outrageously, why claim it to be a fantasy of seduction, especially when the de Chirico texts, though clearly concerned with origins, are scarcely sexual? One might invoke sublimation, but the de Chirico of this period evinces seduction in two ways at least: in a thematic register of a welcomed seduction in which paternal figures actually appear, and in an enigmatic register of a traumatic seduction whose sublimated signs are everywhere—in the gaze of objects, the corruption of space, the

31. Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis* (1916–17), trans. James Stachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966), p. 371. This is Freud in his phylogenetic mode: "It seems to me quite possible that all the things that are told to us today in analysis as phantasy—the seduction of children, the inflaming of sexual excitement by observing parental intercourse, the threat of castration (or rather castration itself)—were once real occurrences in the primaeval times of the human family, and that children in their phantasies are simply filling in the gaps in individual truth with prehistoric truth."

uncanniness of repeated symbols and shapes. The first register is most apparent in a theme that de Chirico repeats in different ways: the Return of the Prodigal. Here the fantasmatic seduction is perfectly disguised: in this traditional subject the father can be represented as fully ambiguous, a desired persecutor. In one drawing of 1917, for example, the mustachioed figure is partially robed in petrified drag, while in another drawing of 1917 he is a statue come down from its plinth. In both images the son is a sightless, armless mannequin, submissive in the first, struggling in the second. This encounter recurs throughout his work, as do these identities of the statue and the mannequin.

The more important enigmatic register of seduction is more difficult to locate. Breton once suggested that the de Chirican "revelation" concerning "our instinctual life" is effected through a revision of time and space,[32] and it is indeed here that his fantasy of seduction is folded into his art: according to de Chirico, in the "inhabited depth" that disturbs like a "symptom" the array of his metaphysical painting,[33] or, in our terms, in the psychic time (the deferred action of primal fantasy) that corrupts his pictorial space. De Chirico tends to think this strange revision of time and space in symbolic, even iconographic terms. Influenced by *Geschlecht und Charackter* (Sex and Character), the notorious 1903 text by the Austrian Otto Weininger that touches on the psychological effects of geometric forms, de Chirico advocates "a new metaphysical psychology of things" that might capture "the terror of lines and angles . . . [the] joys and sorrows . . . hidden within a portico, the angle of a street or even a room, on the surface of a table between the sides of a box."[34] Clearly this psychology involves a traumatic vision, one of uncanny signs, and these signs are associated with the engineer father whose traces (tools, easels, drawings) are indeed everywhere.

The subject doubled by strange figures, surveyed by ambivalent objects, threatened by anxious perspectives, decentered by claustrophobic interiors: these enigmatic signifiers point to a sexual trauma, a fantasy of seduction. This reading is supported by the more manifest complexes that govern the oeuvre, paranoia and melancholy, the first associated with de Chirico by the surrealists, the second evoked by the artist in various titles.[35] Both underscore the fantasmatic basis of his art.

The fantasy of seduction stirs a sexuality which the subject defends against. According to Freud, paranoia may also be a defense against sexuality—

32. Breton, "Giorgio de Chirico," *Littérature* 11 (January 1920), and *Les Pas perdus* (Paris, 1924), p. 145.
33. De Chirico, "On Metaphysical Art," p. 451.
34. Ibid., p. 452. Weininger, a Jewish anti-Semite, misogynist, and suicide, proposed a fundamental bisexuality, as did Fleiss and Freud, though very differently. See Frank J. Sulloway, *Freud, Biologist of the Mind* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), pp. 223–29.
35. Like the texts concerning primal fantasies, the Freud texts on these subjects are roughly contemporaneous with the de Chirico oeuvre, not prior to it.

homosexuality—whereby the subject transforms the loved parent of the same sex into a persecutor.[36] This projection may account, at least in part, for the ambiguity of the surrealist father, split as bad object and good, philistine castrator and benevolent protector, as well as for the ambivalence of the surrealist son, contemptuous of the father yet obsessed by him (as Ernst, Dalí, and Bellmer, to name a few others, all were). Though more manifest elsewhere, this surrealist topos of paranoia begins with de Chirico, and it is he who develops its basic pictorial formulas.[37] Suggestive in this regard is the mannequin, doll, or dummy as a disguised self-portrait, the paranoid significance of which is intimated in "The Uncanny" where Freud discusses the E. T. A. Hoffmann story "The Sandman." In this story the father is split as if by the Oedipal ambivalence of the son Nathaniel into two sets of figures, the one kind and protective, the other castrative and pledged to blind him—a familiar association between castration and blindness central to surrealism. Important here is the desire of the son for the good father, a "feminine attitude" figured by the doll Olympia: "Olympia is, as it were, a dissociated complex of Nathaniel's which confronts him as a person, and Nathaniel's enslavement to this complex is expressed in his senseless obsessive love for Olympia."[38] This is the psychological import of this surrealist self-representation. Sexually ambiguous in the de Chirican oeuvre, it suggests that the fantasmatic persecution of the father may be a reversed form of the desired seduction by him. And in de Chirico as in Ernst (who follows him closely here) the two terms are in fact mixed: in some works the paranoid term is dominant (e.g., most famously, in the de Chirico *The Mystery and Melancholy of a Street* [1914] and the Ernst *Two Children are Threatened by a Nightingale* [1924]), while in other works the seductive term is paramount (e.g., *The Child's Brain*

36. This contested theory runs roughly as follows. For Freud libido passes from autoerotism through narcissism to object-love. A first love object of the male infant is a narcissistic one, his own body; a first outer love object is a homosexual one, a body with the same genitals, his father. When the child intuits the stake of this love object—that he must be castrated in order to receive it—he sublimates his homosexual desire. Later, if frustrated, he may regress to this point in his passage—the paranoiac past sublimated homosexuality to narcissism. For Freud this point of fixation suggests the motive of the paranoiac: he regresses to narcissism as a defense against homosexual desire. And this defense often takes the form of projection—of an excessive reconstruction of the world. Such reconstruction is necessary to the paranoiac because he regards his withdrawal from the world as its end. Thus "the delusion-formation, which we take to be a pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction" ("Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia" [1911], in *Three Case Histories,* ed. Philip Rieff [New York, 1963], p. 174).

37. It is marked in Ernst, and it becomes programmatic with Dalí, who was also influenced by two 1933 texts on the subject by Lacan, "Le Problème du style et la conception psychiatrique des formes paranoïaques de l'expérience" and "Motifs du crime paranoïaque: le crime des soeurs Papin," published in *Minotaure* 1 and 3–4.

38. Freud, "The Uncanny," pp. 38–39. The association in Freud of "passive" with "feminine" is obviously problematic, as it is in surrealism. However, it is disturbed in Ernst and, to a lesser extent, in Giacometti.

[1914] and *Pietà, or Revolution by Night* [1923]).[39] Though opposite representations of the father, both terms may elaborate upon a disguised love for him.

This reading is supported by the third psychic trope that governs the de Chirico oeuvre: melancholy. In certain ways the melancholic incorporation of the dead father overcodes the other two scenarios of welcomed seduction and paranoid projection. From "surprise" and "enigma" de Chirico passes to "nostalgia" and "melancholy": from scenarios of seduction and persecution he moves to compulsively repeated homages to the dead seducer. Evariste de Chirico died in 1905 when Giorgio was seventeen. The son was devoted to the father, but de Chirico never refers the melancholy in his oeuvre to this loss. He assigns it to other terms (which the critical literature mostly reiterates): a nostalgia for Italy, neoclassical styles, old master techniques, and so on. Certainly these lost objects pervade his work in the form of ruined references and failed recoveries. Psychically, however, they are charged as representatives of the dead father.[40]

For the melancholic the lost love object is partly unconscious. Unable to give it up, he clings to it "through the medium of a hallucinatory wish-psychosis" in which deeply cathected memories are obsessively repeated.[41] Along with the sublimation of seduction, this process effects the uncanny nature of de Chirican scenes, hallucinatory and reiterative as they are; it also compounds the ambivalence which they register. For just as the subject of the fantasmatic seduction is ambivalent vis-à-vis the seducer, so too is the melancholic vis-à-vis the lost object. As the melancholic de Chirico internalizes his lost object; he also internalizes his ambivalence for it, which is then turned round on the subject.[42] This ambivalence for both subject and object is most apparent in de Chirico, and for a time he sustains it. However, its destructive aspect soon becomes dominant, as he comes to identify with images of the dead (dead father, traditional motifs, old master methods), as is evident in *Self-Portrait* (1922). Here melancholy passes over into masochism.

The working over of seduction, the paranoid projection of persecution, the melancholic repetition of loss: all these processes fascinate. Certainly they fascinated the surrealists—that is, until they could no longer ignore his necrophilic turn. In 1926 Breton wrote: "It took me, it took us, five years to despair

39. The most famous incarnation of this "dissociated complex" of the son may be in *Revolution by Night,* where the figure of the mustachioed father is also derived from de Chirico.

40. This paternal loss was compounded by cultural dislocations, and de Chirico may have associated the two. In this way compulsive repetitions of certain emblems (e.g., the train) may also involve attempts to work through paternal loss.

41. Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), in *General Psychological Theory,* ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1957), p. 166.

42. Ibid., p. 172. This is how Freud understands the "self-torment of melancholics": as "sadististic tendencies" toward the object "turned around upon the self." "Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, so that the latter could henceforth be criticized by a special mental faculty like an object, like the forsaken object" (p. 170). Detached from naturalistic purpose, de Chirican shadows seem to "fall" in a related way on his fragmented ego-surrogates.

of de Chirico, to admit that he had lost all sense of what he was doing."[43] But did he really lose this sense, or was he finally overcome by it? That is, was his deathly repetition (first of historical motifs, then of his own images) a willed break in bad faith, or an involuntary development of an uncanny psychologic? As Breton knew with Nadja, a disruptive subject may intrigue, but a truly defusive one repels, and so it was with de Chirico and the surrealists. Compulsive repetition was always the motor of his obsessional work. For a time he was able to recoup it as a mode of art, to make a muse of uncanny returns, as he did in *The Disquieting Muses* (1917). Eventually he could inflect it no further, and his work petrified in melancholic repetition, as is evident in the many versions of this painting.[44] As petrification became its condition rather than its subject, his art came to express, as Freud once said of melancholy, "a pure culture of the death instinct."[45]

*

In 1924 in *La Révolution surréaliste,* de Chirico was asked to recount his most impressive dream:

> I struggle in vain with the man whose eyes are suspicious and very gentle. Each time I grasp him, he frees himself by quietly spreading his arms which have an unbelievable strength, an incalcuable power. . . . It is my father who thus appears to me in my dreams. . . .
>
> The struggle ends with my *surrender: I give up*: then the images become confused. . . .[46]

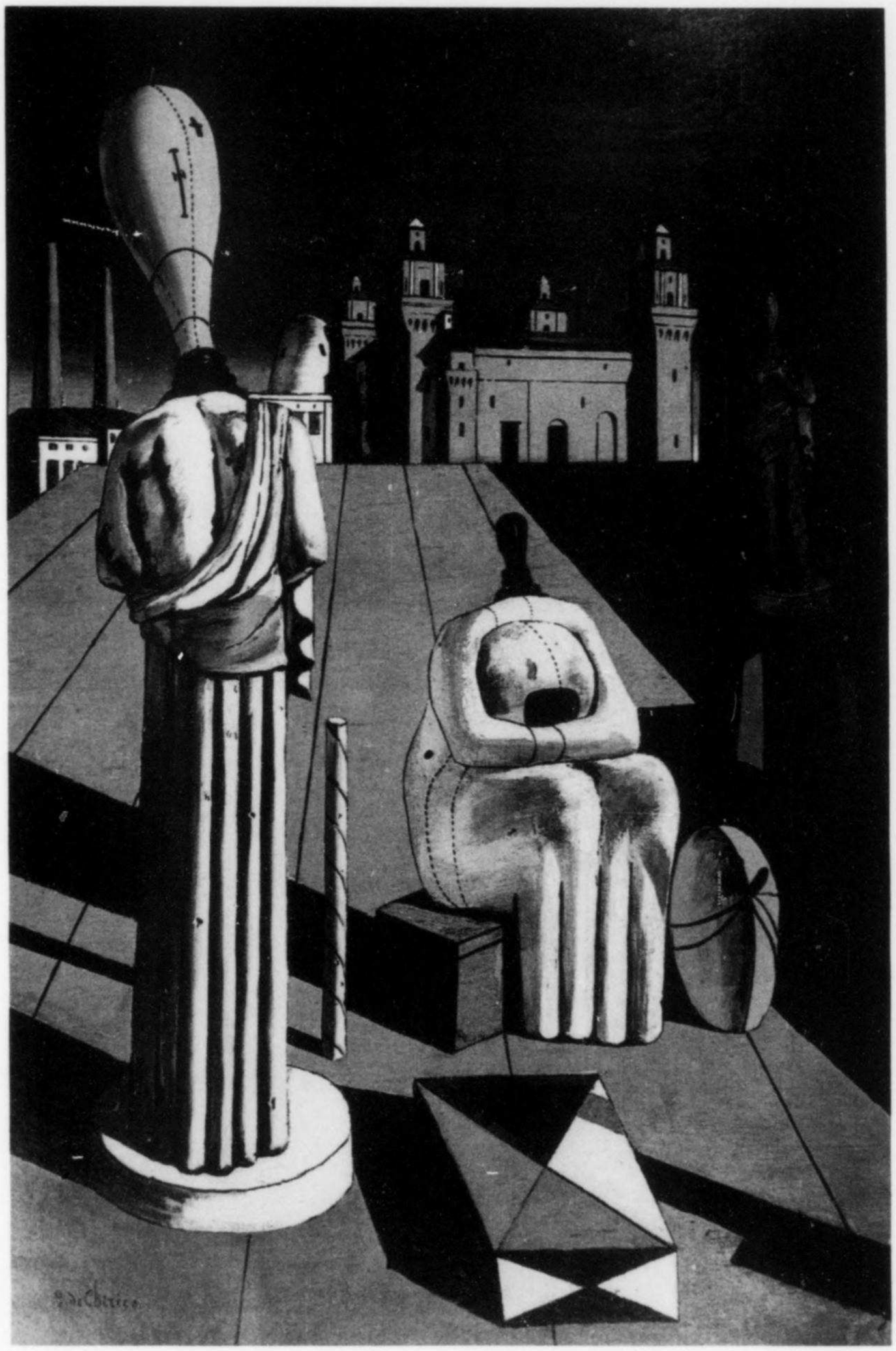
In effect, this dream conflates aspects of a fantasy of seduction with a primal scene. No longer returned as a persecutory gaze from the scene, the look becomes embodied within it, as the subject assumes a "feminine attitude" to the father. Yet this relation is overcoded by the traumatic schema of seduction, so that the father remains a menace as well. In this way images of seduction and

43. Breton, "Le Surréalisme et la peinture," *La Révolution surréaliste* 7 (June 15, 1926). Breton reproduced many de Chirico works in this journal, even though his classicist program was announced as early as 1919 (e.g., in "The Return to Craft").

44. Pursuit of profit alone did not drive these repetitions. If *The Disquieting Muses* represents the first moment when de Chirico still inflects the uncanny return of the repressed (*unheimlich* is often translated *inquiétant*), its repetitions represent the second moment when he is overcome by its compulsive mechanism. In this light the reprise of this image by Warhol (1982) is especially appropriate: the contemporary master of deathly repetition repeats the image in the modernist canon most emblematic of the compulsion to repeat.

45. Freud, *The Ego and the Id,* p. 43.

46. De Chirico, *La Révolution surréaliste* 1 (December 1, 1924). In *Hebdomeros,* his 1929 novel that recaptured some surrealist favor, this glance returns—in the body of a woman: "All at once, Hebomeros saw that this woman had his father's eyes; and *he understood*. . . . 'Oh Hebdomeros,' she said, 'I am Immortality. . . .'" (*Hebdomeros,* trans. Margaret Crosland [New York, 1988], p. 132).



struggle, desire and anguish are indeed "confused." In Ernst such confusion regarding sexuality, identity, and difference is programmatic; he consciously puts into play the trauma of the primal scene (in which a similar fantasmatic relation to the father is suggested) in order "to hasten the general crisis of consciousness due in our time" (*BP* 25).

In 1927 in *La Révolution surréaliste,* Ernst published "Visions de demi-sommeil." This short text is the germ of his 1948 book *Beyond Painting* in which Ernst deploys infantile scenarios, family romances, and screen memories (with echoes of the Freud studies of Leonardo, the Wolfman, and Judge Schreber),

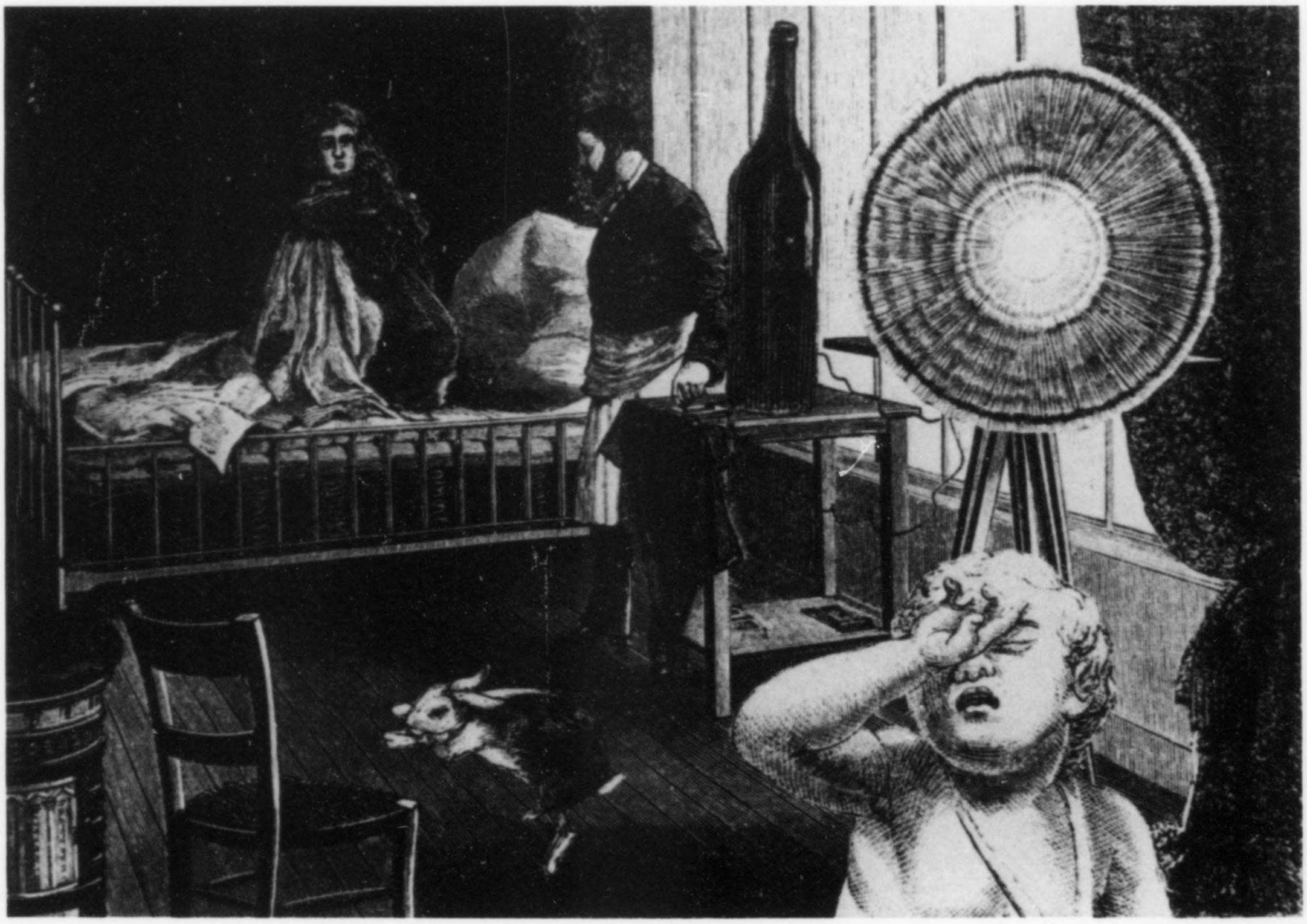
Giorgio de Chirico. The Disquieting Muses. *1917.*

Max Ernst. The Failed Immaculate Conception. *1929.*

many of which are also invoked in his art.[47] The title text, "Au-délà de la peinture" (1936), has three parts. The first, titled "History of a Natural History," opens with a "vision of half-sleep" dated "from five to seven years":

> I see before me a panel, very rudely painted with wide black lines on a red ground, representing false mahogany and calling forth associations of organic forms (menacing eye, long nose, great head of a bird with thick black hair, etc.).

47. Besides the title text, *Beyond Painting* includes a draft of this text ("Comment on force l'inspiration," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 6, 1933) as well as a psycho-autobiography ("Some Data on the Youth of M.E. as told by himself," *View,* April 1942). "Visions de demi-sommeil" appeared in the same issue (*La Révolution surréaliste* 9/10, October 1, 1927) as an extract from *The Question of Lay Analysis* (1926).



> In front of the panel, a glossy black man is making gestures, slow, comical and, according to my memories of a very obscure epoch, joyously obscene. This rogue of a fellow wears the turned-up moustaches of my father. (*BP* 3)

Menacing eye, long nose, great head of a bird, obscene gestures, rogue father: this is an obvious chain of signifiers—a first encounter with painting cast in terms of a primal scene. In a near parody of deferred action this screen memory layers three moments: 1. "the occasion of my own conception" (*BP* 4), the fantasy of the primal scene which is the retrospective origin of the vision; 2. the described encounter with the father-painter (in the period of latency), which both evokes the primal scene as sexual and represses it as such; and 3. the act of memory ("at the age of puberty" [*BP* 4]), in which the first two scenes are recoded as an artistic initiation. Yet this origin is refused, as the father is made to appear both ridiculous and oppressive (Philip Ernst was a Sunday painter of academic art). It is, however, only as such that he is rejected; as his paranoid preoccupations suggest, Ernst is ambivalent about the paternal.

However contrived, this primal scene remains traumatic for Ernst, for he elaborates it many times over in his text—to master its charge, to transform its affect, to rework its meaning.[48] In "History of a Natural History" it is followed by a reference to Leonardo, an artist also said to work over a traumatic fantasy. Specifically, Ernst refers to his exemplum (cherished by the surrealists) that even a stain on a wall might inspire pictorial invention. If Ernst rejected his paternal artistic origin, he embraces this self-invented one:

> On the tenth of August, 1925, an insupportable visual obsession caused me to discover the technical means which have brought a clear realization of this lesson of Leonardo. Beginning with a memory of childhood (related above) in the course of which a panel of false mahogany, situated in front of my bed, had played the role of optical provocateur of a vision of half-sleep, I was struck by the obsession that showed to my excited gaze the floor-boards upon which a thousand scrubbings had deepened the grooves. I decided then to investigate the symbolism of this obsession. (*BP* 7)

This investigation takes the form of his first frottages or rubbings (published in a 1926 portfolio *Natural History*), to which Ernst responds: "I was surprised by the sudden intensification of my visionary capacities and by the hallucinatory succession of contradictory images superimposed, one upon the other, with the persistence and rapidity characteristic of armorous memories" (*BP* 7). Here again the visionary develops out of the voyeuristic; once more artistic identity

48. Ernst: "Certainly little Max took pleasure in being afraid of these visions and later delivered himself voluntarily to provoke hallucinations of the same kind" (*BP* 28).

is framed in terms of a primal scene (hallucinatory, contradictory, amorous). In this case, however, the primal scene is rewritten as an aesthetic invention, one that redeems the original event even as it is rooted in it: in its scopophilic look, in its autoerotic rubbing.[49] According to Freud, the "rubbing" in the primal scene is not that of the parents so much as that of the child whose fantasy is designed to "cover up" his autoerotic activity, to "elevate" it in fact. The frottage technique reprises this hypothetical moment: it is an artistic origin in which fantasy, sexuality, and representation are all bound together, at once covered up and elevated.

49. Ernst: "When someone would ask him: 'What is your favorite occupation?' he regularly answered, 'Looking.' An analogous obsession conducted Max Ernst later to search for and discover some technical possibilities of drawing and painting, directly connected with the processes of inspiration and revelation (frottage, collage, decalcomania, etc.)" (*BP* 28). Interestingly, Philip Ernst was a teacher of the deaf and dumb.

Max Ernst. Untitled (*from* Une semaine de bonté). *1934.*

But how covered up and elevated, i.e., how sublimated? Here Ernst diverges from the Freud account of Leonardo, which he otherwise parallels, even follows. There Freud argues that the investigative powers of the artist derived from a sexual curiosity never checked by his absent father. Ernst shares this curiosity, which is finally about origins, and in "Some Data on the Youth of M.E." he plays with this portrait (as in Freud he keys the curiosity to the birth of a sibling rival). However, the crux of the Leonardo analysis concerns his precocious initiation, a trauma which emerges as a sexual ambiguity in his art. It is this that Ernst seeks to reproduce, but with a difference. He does not sublimate it; in his techniques of collaging, rubbing, and scraping he resexualizes it—in part to flaunt his father (who was far from absent), to shock his petit-bourgeois society. For his part Freud thinks this sexual ambiguity through the famous fantasy of the vulture wherein the infant Leonardo was brushed on his lips by its tail: this story contains a memory of the nursing of his solitary mother, a memory of love later reciprocated in his artistic devotion to the theme of the Virgin and Child.[50] However, Freud argues, this memory of a maternal nipple also conceals a fantasy of a maternal penis, and it is finally this paradox—of a seduction both pleasant and assaultive, of a parent both tender and terrible—that Leonardo works over in his enigmatic figures. A related enigma, I have claimed, is treated in different ways by de Chirico. So is it too by Ernst, most consciously in his bird persona Loplop, who is indeed ambiguous, variously bird and/or human, male and/or female.[51] But he also works over this sexual ambiguity in formal, procedural ways. Indeed, his aesthetic privileges the "passive" (homosexual) position that Leonardo assumes in his fantasy; more generally it prizes "the continuously shifting positions of traumatic sexuality."[52] It is this sentient, sexual motility that Ernst seeks in his art.

In this way Ernst not only puts this traumatic sexuality into play but also recoups it as a general theory of aesthetic practice. "It is," he writes, "as a spectator that the author assists . . . at the birth of his work. . . . [T]he role of the painter is to . . . *project that which sees itself in him*" (*BP* 9). A complicated formula, this nonetheless suggests why the primal scene is so important to Ernst, for it allows him to think the artist as both active creator (of his aesthetic identity) and passive receiver (of his automatist work), as both participant inside and voyeur outside the scene of his art. Like the subject in the fantasy "A Child is

50. As is well known, Freud worked from a mistranslation of "vulture" for "kite," which renders most of his mythological speculations spurious. See, among other texts, Meyer Schapiro, "Leonardo and Freud: An Art Historical Study," *Journal of the History of Ideas,* XVII (1956), pp. 147–78.
51. In one image in his 1934 collage-novel *Une Semaine de bonté,* Ernst seems to quote the Leonardo fantasy directly.
52. Leo Bersani, *The Freudian Body: Psychoanalysis and Art* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 43. His provocative discussion of *Leonardo* is pertinent to Ernst, as is that of Laplanche in "To Situate Sublimation," *October* 28 (Spring 1984), pp. 7–26.

Being Beaten," he is not fixed in any one position: hypothetically at least, the usual oppositions of subject and object, active and passive, masculine and feminine, heterosexual and homosexual, are suspended. But how exactly is this done? What is the psychic mechanism at work?

Ernst focused his first memory of the primal scene on an active, even sadistic object: the father-painter (the child often interprets parental sex as paternal aggression). In his second scene, however, there is a turning round from the object to the subject and a reversal from active to passive: a move from an active seeing almost to a passive being-seen (as occurs in de Chirico). For Freud sexuality first emerges in this turn to the autoerotic, to the fantasmatic hallucination of the lost object, and it is this originary turn that Ernst wants to recapitulate in his art. It is a moment that, recovered, suspends the aforementioned oppositions that constrain identity. In *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes* (1917) Freud defines this in-between state thus: "The active voice is changed, not into the passive, but into the reflexive middle voice."[53] Though understood here as a linguistic position, this state is eminently visual and tactile, and it is in these terms that Ernst poses it as the basis of his art: in the reflexive moment of looking, in the autoerotic sense of touching. If de Chirico swings between seeing and being seen, Ernst privileges the state in between—when one is caught up in the sequence of fantasmatic images, "surprised and enamored of what I *saw* wishing to identify with it all" (*BP* 9). For Ernst this is the ideal condition of art—to be "engrossed in this activity (passivity)" (*BP* 8), to be suspended in a sentience disruptive of identity, a convulsive identity in which axes of desire and identification cross. It is a "hysterical" condition that the surrealists prized above all others; in its benign form they called it *disponibilité*, in its anxious form "critical paranoia" (*BP* 8).

In the second section of "Au-délà de la peinture," Ernst continues this art-treatise-*cum*-auto-analysis in relation to collage (its title, "The Placing Under Whiskey-Marine," was that of his 1921 Paris show of dadaist collages). "One rainy day in 1919 . . . I was struck by the obsession which held under my gaze . . . an illusive succession of contradictory images . . . peculiar to love memories and vision of half-sleep" (*BP* 14). Obsession, gaze, contradictory images, visions of half-sleep: once again Ernst frames an aesthetic discovery in terms of an infantile one, the visual fascinations and (pre)sexual confusions of the primal scene. This association determines not only his definition of collage: "the *coupling* of two realities, irreconcilable in appearance, upon a plane which apparently does not suit them" (*BP* 13); but also his understanding of its purpose: collage

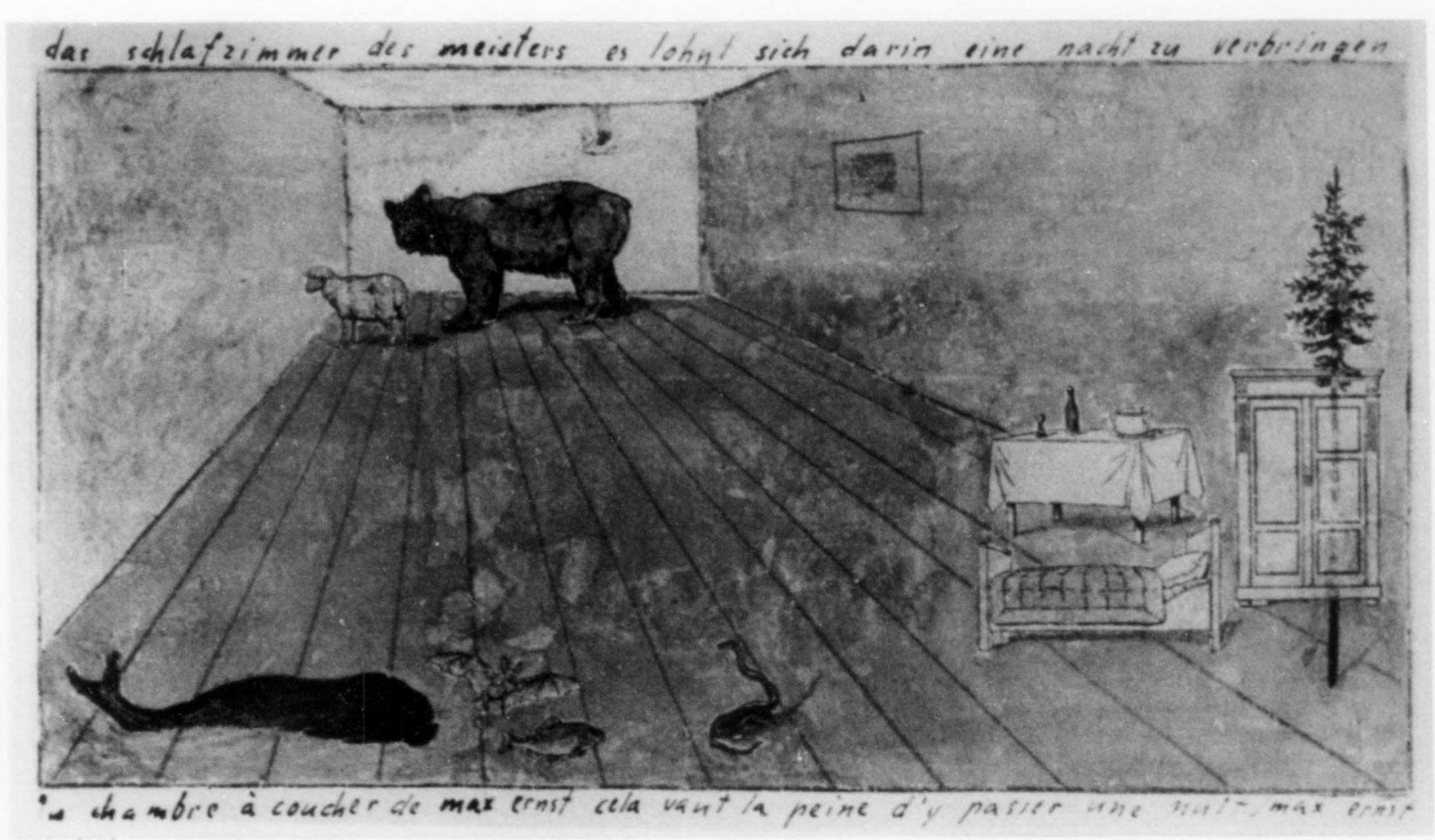
53. Freud, *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes,* in *General Psychological Theory,* p. 96. The best discussion of these processes is Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis* (1970), trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 85–102.

Max Ernst. The Master's Bedroom. *c. 1920.*

disturbs "the principle of identity" (*BP* 19), even "abolishes" the concept of "author" (*BP* 20).[54]

Not just another rehearsal of Lautréamont, this definition is fundamental to surrealism, for it implicitly characterizes the surrealist image as a transvaluation of dadaist collage. In surrealism collage is less a transgressive montage of constructed social materials (i.e., of high art and mass-cultural forms) located in the world, as it is in dada, and more a disruptive montage of conductive psychic signifiers (i.e., of fantasmatic scenarios and enigmatic events) referred to the unconscious. To the social reference of dadaist collage the surrealist image adds the unconscious dimension: the image becomes a psychic montage that is temporal as well as spatial (in its deferred action), endogenous as well as exogenous (in its sources), subjective as well as collective (in its significations). In some sense the image in surrealism is patterned upon the structure of the symptom as an enigmatic signifier of a psychosexual trauma.

54. My italics. The dadaist Ernst sought to decenter the authorial subject in several ways: anonymous collaborations, the use of found materials and mechanistic techniques, etc. Here Ernst borrows the term "principle of identity" from Breton, who used it in his catalogue essay to the 1921 Ernst show in Paris (reprinted in *Beyond Painting*). For Breton too these collages "disturb us within our memory" (*BP* 177).



Again, for Ernst the primary trauma is the primal scene; it is this coupling that his collage aesthetic works over. As with de Chirico, this working over is not only thematic; it occurs at the level of process and form—if only to disperse the first and to undo the second. In his early work Ernst did not simply reject painting as paternal and traditional; rather, he moved "beyond" it to collage modes as more effective ways to transform the principle of identity. One early example of such coupling must suffice here. *The Master's Bedroom* (1919) alludes to the primal scene thematically, but it is in the construction of the scene that the trauma is treated, the charge released in the subject, the *punctum* inscribed in the viewer: in its contradictory scale, anxious perspective, and mad juxtaposition (table, bed, cabinet, whale, sheep, bear). Together these procedural elements produce the de Chirican effect of a returned gaze that positions the spectator both in and out of the picture, that makes him (like the eponymous child) both master and victim of the scene.[55]

Such couplings are repeated in his collages, frottages, grattages, and decalcomanias, all of which, driven by trauma and structured in repetition, are pledged, consciously or not, to transform the principle of identity. In "Instantaneous Identity," the last section of "Au-délà de la peinture," Ernst speaks of this subjectivity in the very language of the primal scene: "he displays [note the characteristic split in personal reference] two attitudes (contradictory in appearance but in reality simply in a state of conflict) that . . . are convulsively fused into one" (*BP* 19). Here a "hysterical" trauma is recouped as a convulsive identity, and it is precisely in the shock of the collaged image—in the "exchange of energy" (*BP* 19) between its psychic signifiers—that this is achieved. In the coupling of two scenes, in the deferred action of fantasy, subjectivity is indeed convulsed.

Such a convulsive identity is difficult to sustain; and rather than a reflexive, middle voice Ernst often swings between active and passive modes, sadistic and masochistic scenes. Paranoid fantasies (scenarios of domination or submission, delusions of grandeur or persecution, hallucinations of the end or of the beginning of the world) come to govern the work. Especially evident in the collage novels, such ambivalent visions also pervade "Some Data on the Youth of M. E.," where Ernst writes that "he came out of the egg which his mother had laid in an eagle's nest" and that "he was sure he was little Jesus Christ" (*BP* 27). Both these fantasies are related family romances, i.e., stories that reconfigure the family in ideal terms. The first fantasy of the egg displaces the father, but the second reveals this to be less a psychotic disavowal than an incestuous

55. These couplings need not be collages per se; as Ernst once remarked, "Ce n'est pas la colle qui fait le collage." Some (e.g., *The Master's Bedroom*) are overpaintings on found illustrations, a concealing-that-reveals that suggests a further connection between psychic and technical operations. For a related analysis of this work see Rosalind Krauss, "The Master's Bedroom," *Representations* 28 (Fall 1989), pp. 55–76.

apotheosis: little Max as Christ positions the father as God.[56] Gradually, however, this attachment is broken, partly through the intervention of Loplop. At first a paranoid figure of the father, this "menacing bird" later represents his law (the appellation "Bird Superior," the vocation "my private phantom" [*BP* 29], even the castrative onomatopoeia all suggest superego status). In other words, Loplop images the "positive" Oedipal passage of Ernst whereby he assumes a normative heterosexual position, i.e., to be "perturbed" about castration and to identify "voluntarily" with the father (*BP* 29). And yet this is to become fixed in a way that his aesthetic credo argues against. Finally Ernst is no more mobile in his positions than the usual post-Oedipal subject; and after the early collages his work illustrates more than enacts a convulsive identity.[57]

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If in de Chirico the origin of metaphysical painting is refracted through an enigmatic seduction and in Ernst that of surrealist collage through a primal scene, then in Giacometti the origin of symbolic objects is refracted through a fantasy of castration. For Freud artistic inventions may stem from sexual inquiries made as children, two of which he stresses: where do I come from? And what distinguishes the sexes, i.e., which one am I? While Ernst elaborates on both questions, Giacometti focuses on the second. Like Ernst, he poses this riddle in a way that troubles sexual difference, that places conventional subject positions in doubt; however, unlike Ernst, this riddle truly troubles him. Some of his surrealist objects attempt to suspend the putative castration that subtends sexual difference, or at least to render sexual reference ambiguous. Others

56. Freud: "In fact, the child is not getting rid of his father but exalting him" ("Family Romances," in *The Sexual Enlightenment of Children,* ed. Philip Rieff [New York: Collier Books, 1963], p. 45). In "Some Data" Ernst writes that he ran away as a child, only to be taken by "pilgrims" as Christ; his father then painted him in this guise. Such godly fantasies are classically paranoid (as Ernst may have known through the Schreber case). They are reworked (suggestively in relation to *Leonardo*) in *The Virgin Spanking the Child Jesus in front of Witnesses: André Breton, Paul Eluard, and Max Ernst* (1926). In *Subversive Intent: Gender, Politics, and the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990), Susan Suleiman reads this painting through "A Child is Being Beaten" in a way commensurate with my own account.

57. This is hardly without interest. Particularly in his collage novels, *La Femme 100 têtes* (1929), *Rêve d'une petite fille qui voulut entrer au carmel* (1930), and *Une Semaine de bonté* (1934), Ernst contrives primal scenes, castration fantasies, paranoid projections, and other such fantasmatic scenarios. "These archaic moments of disturbed visual representation," Jacqueline Rose writes, "these troubled scenes, which expressed and unsettled our groping knowledge in the past, can now be used as theoretical prototypes to unsettle our certainties again" (*Sexuality in the Field of Vision* [London: Verso, 1987], p. 227). This is what Ernst attempts, fifty years before the feminist art which concerns Rose, in the best of these collages. "They are reminiscences of my first books," Ernst told Siegfried Giedion, "a resurgence of childhood memories." This is true materially as well, for many of his collages were made from late-nineteenth-century school primers (especially, in the early collages, the Kölner Lehrmittel-Anstalt), illustrated novels, catalogues, and popular magazines. See Giedion, *Mechanization Takes Command* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1948), p. 363.

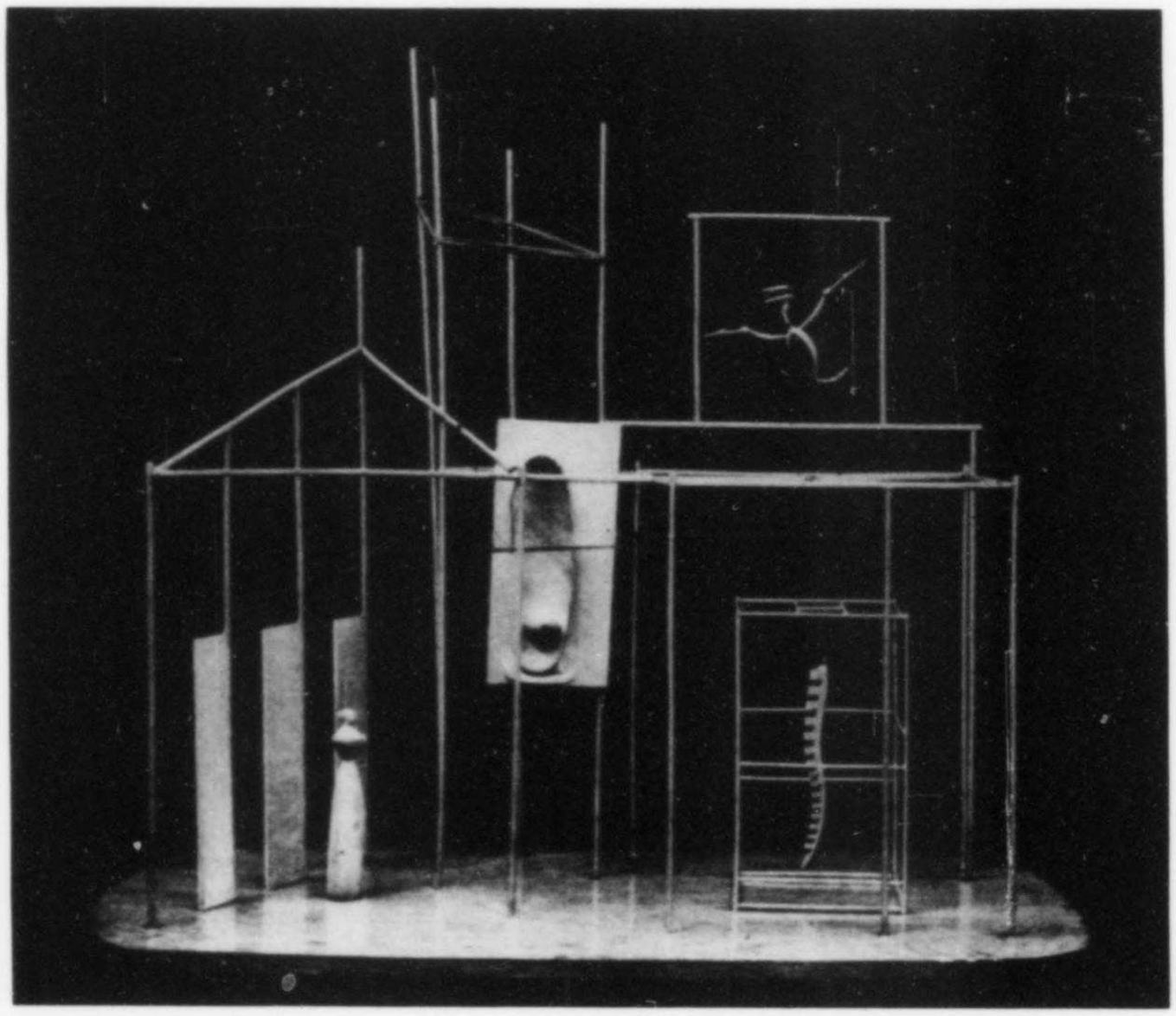
disavow this castration fetishistically, while still others punish its female representative sadistically. Although the surrealist fetish quickly became a cruel cliché, Giacometti was able to sustain his psychic ambivalence and to recoup it as a symbolic ambiguity—at least for a few years.[58]

Three texts will guide our reading. The first is the last in date, the famous statement regarding *The Palace at 4 a.m.* published in *Minotaure* in December 1933. Here Giacometti writes that his objects come to him "entirely completed" like so many psychic readymades that, if modified at all, are totally lost.[59] Automatist in bias, this remark also suggests the fantasmatic basis of his work, which Giacometti elsewhere describes in terms of "projection."[60] And in fact his

58. Freud thinks fetishism in relation to the castration and Oedipus complexes in the 1920s, the classic period of surrealism, in such texts as "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes" (1925) and "Fetishism" (1927). In an early text on Giacometti, Michel Leiris reads his objects in terms of a curative fetishism, one which treats "that affective ambivalence, that tender sphinx we nourish, more or less secretly, at our core," in a way that questions not only sexual identities but also cultural conventions, "our moral, logical and social imperatives." Leiris nonetheless sees this ambivalence in traumatic terms as "when abruptly the outside seems to respond to a call we send it from within. . . ." See "Alberto Giacometti," *Documents* 1, 4 (1929), pp. 209–10, trans. James Clifford in *Sulphur* 15 (1986), pp. 38–40.

59. Alberto Giacometti, "Le Palais de quatre heures," *Minotaure* 3–4 (December 1933), p. 46.

60. These objects were produced by others "so I could see them all done, like a projection" ("Entretien avec Alberto Giacometti," in Charles Charbonnier, *Le Monologue du peintre* [Paris, 1959], p. 156).



Alberto Giacometti. The Palace at 4 a.m. *1933.*

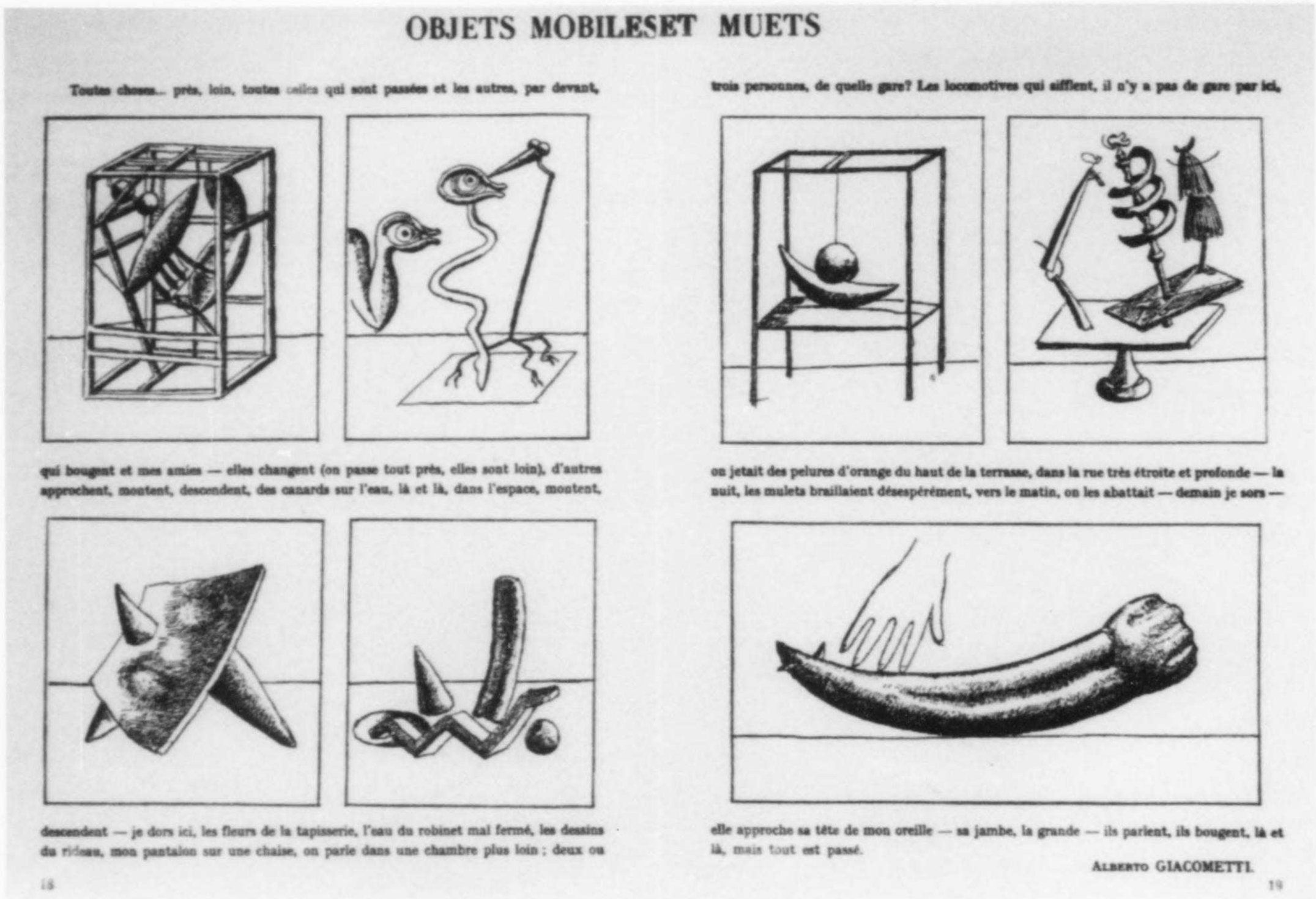
favored formats of the cage, the gameboard, and the fetish do project a fantasmatic space between the actual and the virtual. That the fantasies are traumatic is implied in the *Minotaure* text: "Once the object is constructed, I tend to find in it, transformed and displaced, images, impressions and facts that have moved me profoundly (often unknown to me), and forms that I feel to be very close to me, although I am often incapable of identifying them, which make them all the more disturbing to me."[61]

His test case is the *The Palace at 4 a.m.,* which seems to reprise a dream or screen memory that, prompted by a love affair, concerns a traumatic memory. Besides a skeletal bird and a spinal column, both of which Giacometti relates to his lover, the stage contains three primary figures: a scaffold of a tower; an abstracted woman in front of three "curtains" associated with his mother; and a pod form on a "red" plank with which Giacometti identifies (again the subject is *in* the fantasmatic scene). Within the Oedipal triangle these figures are indeed "displaced," for here the paternal term, the tower, is "unfinished" or "broken," while the mother appears dominant in her long "black" dress. Yet this displacement reveals more than conceals the fetishistic scenario of the piece: a vision "in my earliest memories" of his mother, a glance diverted to her dress which "seemed to me like part of her body." A site of a fetishistic displacement, the dress still provokes "fear and confusion." This implies that the castrative charge of the vision cannot be blunted; indeed, its stake is figured in the spinal column that hangs, like some phallus dentatus, at once cut and whole, from a wire. That this fantasy is not simply scripted is suggested by its genuinely disarticulative aspect, which is not only obscure in meaning but apparently layered in time.[62] That is to say, the scenario of *Palace* seems constructed out of the deferred action of traumatic fantasy.

Giacometti almost intuits this process in an earlier text published in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* in December 1931, which presents sketches of works such as *Cage, Suspended Ball,* two *Disagreeable Objects,* and *Project for a Square* (all c. 1931) under the rubric "objets mobiles et muets."[63] Below the drawings is an automatist caption that runs together different memories in a delirious cadence: "All things . . . near, far, all those that passed and the others, in front, moving; and my lady friends—they change (we pass, very near, they are far away); others approach, ascend, descend. . . ."[64] In this verbal dislocation

61. Giacometti, "Le Palais," p. 46. The quotations in the next paragraph are from this text.
62. Giacometti was sometimes suspected of such scripting, in this work in particular. See Reinhold Hohl, *Alberto Giacometti* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972).
63. In the same issue Dalí credits "the object of symbolic function" to Giacometti (specifically his *Suspended Ball*), which he relates to "clearly characterized erotic fantasies and desires." See "Objets surréalistes," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 3 (December 1931).
64. Giacometti, "Objets mobiles et muets," pp. 18–19. In a later text, "Le Rêve, le Sphinx et la Mort de T." (*Labyrinthe* 22–23 [December 15, 1946], pp. 12–13), Giacometti again alludes to the action of memories related in content but distant in time.

Alberto Giacometti. Objets mobiles et muets, Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution, *no. 3, 1931.*



OBJETS MOBILESET MUETS

Toutes choses... près, loin, toutes celles qui sont passées et les autres, par devant, qui bougent et mes amies — elles changent (on passe tout près, elles sont loin), d'autres approchent, montent, descendent, des canards sur l'eau, là et là, dans l'espace, montent, descendent — je dors ici, les fleurs de la tapisserie, l'eau du robinet mal fermé, les dessins du rideau, mon pantalon sur une chaise, on parle dans une chambre plus loin ; deux ou trois personnes, de quelle gare? Les locomotives qui sifflent, il n'y a pas de gare par ici, on jetait des pelures d'orange du haut de la terrasse, dans la rue très étroite et profonde — la nuit, les mulets braillaient désespérément, vers le matin, on les abattait — demain je sors — elle approche sa tête de mon oreille — sa jambe, la grande — ils parlent, ils bougent, là et là, mais tout est passé.

ALBERTO GIACOMETTI.

18 19

spatial juxtaposition comes to represent temporal spacing, and it is out of this layering of scenes that Giacometti constructs his objects. At this point, however, there is no indication of what the ur-scene or primal fantasy might be; this comes only a year and a half later, after most of the relevant objects are made.

Between these two brief texts Giacometti published a recollection, "Hier, sables mouvants" (Yesterday, Quicksand), in *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* in May 1933, which does not deal directly with any work. Instead it presents several memories dated, as was the case with the Ernst "visions of half-sleep," from latency to puberty. The first one begins:

> As a child (between four and seven), I only saw the things of the world that delighted me. . . . [D]uring two summers at least I had eyes only for one big stone. It was a golden monolith, its base opening on a cave; the entire bottom was hollowed out by the action of water. . . . I considered this stone a friend at once . . . like someone whom we knew and loved a long time ago and whom we met again with

> infinite joy and surprise. . . . I was overjoyed when I could crouch in the little cave at the bottom; it could hardly hold me; all my wishes were fulfilled. . . .[65]

The story points to a primal fantasy of intrauterine existence, the cave as womb. However, the mother in Giacometti is as ambiguous as the father in de Chirico or Ernst: both desired lost object and feared agent of this loss. Conventionally, these Oedipal roles are divided between maternal and paternal terms. And indeed the fantasy of intrauterine existence, of reunion with the mother, seems a response to a *prior* fantasy of castration, of interdiction by the father—for it is only this interdiction that causes the desire for the mother to be repressed, and only this repression that renders any return of the maternal, such as the memory of the cave, uncanny.[66] In short, the castration fantasy may determine the intrauterine fantasy; however, in this screen memory, the first follows the second:

> Once (I don't remember by what chance) I walked further than usual and found myself on a hill. Just below in a bunch of bushes rose a huge black rock in the shape of a sharp narrow pyramid. I can't tell you how bewildered and resentful I felt at that moment. The rock struck me as a living thing, hostile, menacing. It threatened everything: us, our games, our cave. Its existence was intolerable and I knew right away that, being unable to make it go away, I would have to ignore it, forget it, tell no one about it. I approached it nonetheless, but with a feeling of surrendering myself to something secret, suspicious, reprehensible. Fearful and disgusted, I scarcely touched it. I walked around it, trembling to find an opening. No trace of a cave, which made the rock all the more intolerable. But then I felt a certain satisfaction: an opening in this rock would have complicated everything, and already I felt the loneliness of our cave. . . . I fled this rock, I never spoke about it to the other children, I ignored it and never returned to look at it.[67]

65. Giacometti, "Hiers, sables mouvants," *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* 5 (May 15, 1933), p. 44.

66. Here the passage in "The Uncanny" concerning the maternal body might be recalled (see note 3). Giacometti was close to his mother, Annetta, throughout his life, and in his memory it is his father who shows him the cave.

67. Giacometti, "Hier, sables mouvants," p. 44. As experienced in this memory, the uncanny has an auratic aspect, which figures the desire of the mother, as here with the cave, and an anxious aspect, which signals the risk if this desire is acted upon, as here with the rock. A related connection between the uncanny and the auratic, crucial to surrealism, is noted in Miriam Hansen, "Benjamin, Cinema and Experience: 'The Blue Flower in the Land of Technology'," *New German Critique* 40 (Winter 1987).

Here the castration fantasy comes through the screen memory as transparently as did the intrauterine fantasy, but two things are not so clear: how do the two fantasies function together, and how does Giacometti deploy them? For Freud the paternal threat alone does not convince the little boy of castration; this requires the sighting of the maternal genitals as well.[68] In this light the cave may figure the fantasm not only of the intrauterine mother but also of the castrated one. This is more in keeping with the split significance of the maternal in the Giacometti oeuvre (e.g., the regenerative spoon woman versus the castrative praying mantis) as well as with its volatile ambiguity regarding sexual difference. In the heterosexist account of Freud, the threat of castration typically dissolves the Oedipus complex for the little boy, who surrenders the mother as love object, introjects the father as superego, and accepts a heterosexual structure of desire and identification. Here, however, Giacometti retains an ambivalence. Like Ernst, he refers his work to a fantasmatic memory, to the critical moment when the child foregoes infantile sexuality and responds to cultural renunciation. He returns to this critical moment to disturb the subject positions first fragilely posed there: to render them ambivalent again. This ambivalence is as difficult to sustain as is the reflexivity prized by Ernst; and just as that reflexivity was often the point between active and passive modes, so is this ambivalence often the movement between sadistic and masochistic impulses. Nevertheless, when sustained it produces a disruptive "oscillation of meaning."[69]

For Freud, of course, the fetish is a substitute for an absent (maternal) penis, a substitute which parries the threat of castration that such absence signifies for the little boy (the more ambiguous case of the little girl is mostly scanted).[70] Fetishism is thus a practice of ambivalence in which the subject simultaneously recognizes and disavows castration: "Yes . . . but. . . ." This ambivalence may split the ego, which, if disavowal becomes total, leads to psychosis; it may also split the object, which becomes ambivalent (as it were) too. After all, the fetish is as much a "memorial" to castration as a "protection" against it. That is, both recognition and disavowal are often evident in the object, as are both contempt and reverence in its treatment (fig leafs and bound

68. See "Splitting of the Ego in the Defensive Process" (1938), in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love,* ed. Philip Rieff (New York: Collier Books, 1963), p. 221. In other texts Freud alters the sequence of these "events" but insists on the necessity of both.

69. I borrow this term from Rosalind Krauss, who addresses a similar question through the Bataillean concept of *alteration.* See her "Giacometti," in William Rubin, ed., *"Primitivism" in 20th Century Art,* vol. 2 (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1984), pp. 503–33. For a formal analysis of the objects discussed here, see Michael Brenson, *The Early Work of Alberto Giacometti: 1925–1935* (Johns Hopkins University Ph.D. dissertation, 1974).

70. Many feminists have focused on this blind spot, Naomi Schor, Mary Kelly, and Emily Apter prominent among them. The formulation is even more problematic for gay men and lesbians: according to Freud, fetishism is one way to "fend off" homosexuality, and lesbians outstrip fetishists in their disavowal of castration ("Fetishism," *On Sexuality,* p. 352; "Some Psychical Consequences," pp. 336–37).

feet are the suggestive examples offered by Freud). This ambivalence is fundamental to the Giacometti objects, as indeed he recognizes: "all this alternated, contradicted itself, and continued by contrast."[71]

Giacometti designates seven objects "mobile and mute"; at least five were executed, while the other two evoke scenarios of sex and/or sacrifice somewhere between *Cage* and *Point to the Eye,* i.e., scenarios in which sexuality and death are bound up with one another in a conundrum crucial to surrealism. *Cage* images two abstracted praying mantises, a familiar surrealist favorite for the way in which, as here, the female devours the male during or after copulation. As discussed by Roger Caillois, these figures dedefine the order both of life and death and of reality and representation.[72] They also disturb the usual opposition of passive female and active male in a manner that symbolically deconstructs any strict binarism of the drives—erotic and destructive, sadistic and masochistic.

Suspended Ball figures a related ambivalence regarding sexual object rather than drive. If the mantises in *Cage* image desire preemptively consumed, the sphere in *Suspended Ball* that scarcely touches its wedge counterpart images desire forever frustrated.[73] At the same time the piece renders sexual reference indeterminate: neither form is simply active or passive, masculine or feminine; such terms become unfixed.[74] It is in sexual evocation, then, that both objects are "mobile and mute." The same holds true for the subject who, as in fantasy, can identify with either term or both; identification may come to rest, if at all, only with the implied motion of the piece. The forms not only cross each other in sexual reference but also suggest two series of signifiers (e.g., for the ball: testicles, buttocks, eye . . .) that have no fixed beginning or end; they are opened to the *play* of difference in language.[75] Yet the "round phallicism" of *Suspended Ball* is equally pledged to the Bataillean project of a *collapse* of difference in form. It is in this paradox—in difference both opened in language and

71. Giacometti, "Letter to Pierre Matisse" (1947), in *Alberto Giacometti,* ed. Peter Selz (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1961), p. 22.

72. Among other things it is able, when dead, to "imitate" death. See Caillois, "Le mante religieuse," *Minotaure* 5 (February 1934), and Krauss, "Giacometti," pp. 517–18; also see William Pressley, "The Praying Mantis in Surrealist Art," *Art Bulletin* (December 1973), pp. 600–15. Freud: "These creatures die in the act of reproduction because, after Eros has been eliminated through the process of satisfaction, the death instinct has a free hand for accomplishing its purposes" (*The Ego and the Id,* p. 37).

73. This was recognized by Dalí and recounted by Maurice Nadeau: "This emotion has nothing to do with satisfaction, rather with irritation, the kind provoked by the disturbing perception of a *lack*" (*The History of Surrealism* [1944], trans. Richard Howard [New York: Macmillan, 1965], p. 188). Together the objects are hellish in an almost Dantean way, as if the medieval image of damnation and the psychoanalytical conception of desire were here one.

74. See Krauss, "Giacometti," pp. 512–14.

75. Ibid. Krauss likens this to the series of ocular forms in *Histoire de l'oeil* (1928), or rather to the Roland Barthes reading of Bataille. See his "La Metaphore de l'oeil," *Critique* 196 (1963); the term "round phallicism" is his.

blurred in form—that the symbolic ambiguity of the piece lies. As for its psychic ambivalence, this affect stems as well from its implicit oscillation between the erotic and the autoerotic, the sadistic and the masochistic, an oscillation which, if posed in language, is as conundrumical as this question: who or what strokes or strikes whom or what? Here the paradox concerns not only a "round phallicism" but also a suspended motion or a mobile suspension—a convulsive beauty that seems to point to the sadomasochistic basis of sexuality, a basis which surrealism both embraces and defends against.[76]

Again, this ambivalence is difficult to sustain. In the two *Disagreeable Objects* it is treated in a strictly fetishistic way; indeed, both objects are structural simulacra of the sexual fetish. Here the two elements that signify the two genders are not disconnected but rather combined, and the effect is less an indeterminacy of sexual reference and an oscillation of subject position than an immobile contradiction of both terms. No longer suspended, desire is fixed in fetishistic substitutes that are "disagreeable" because each evokes castration—or the hostility produced by its threat—even as it wards it away. In the first *Disagreeable Object* the wedge from *Suspended Ball* is now clearly phallic, but in its penetration of the convex board it is also cut. The second *Disagreeable Object* is more complicated: here the phallic wedge has become an embryonic body replete with eyes, a body which, like the suspended ball, suggests its own chain of signifiers (penis, feces, baby . . .), a chain analyzed by Freud in terms of both separation or loss and its fetishistic defense (relevant here to a feminine subject). Recognition of castration is literally inscribed on this phallic substitute in the form of several spikes: in this way "hostility" for the fetish is mixed with "affection," the narcissistically disagreeable (the castrative) with the perversely desirable (the fetishistic).[77]

If fetishistic ambivalence is recouped as symbolic ambiguity in the "objets mobiles et muets," it is soon disarticulated, pulled apart. (Already in *Project for a Square* Giacometti appears to oppose genders in a more normative icono-

76. See my *Compulsive Beauty,* forthcoming.

77. These little spikes also allude to "tribal fetishes," and in fact both *Disagreeable Objects* are associated with Oceanic objects (see Krauss, "Giacometti", p. 522): the first with a Marquesan ear ornament, another sort of fetish; the second with an Easter Island club in the shape of a fish, which, though utilitarian, might be "totemic" in the Freudian sense (however discredited this sense now is). Moreover, the subtitle of the first, "to be disposed of," suggests not only the ambivalence but also the transience of the tribal ritual object. And the drawing of the second in "Objets mobiles et muets" includes a hand that barely touches it—as in the *prohibition* against touching that Freud regarded as essential to the totem, a taboo that belies a *desire* to touch . . . the penis. In fact, all these objects both attract and repel a tactile impulse. See *Totem and Taboo* (1913; translated into French 1924), trans. James Strachey (New York: W. W. Norton, 1950).

Giacometti termed some pieces "objets sans base," i.e., objects without a base and/or without value (see Brenson, *The Early Work,* p. 168). For Krauss these works perform a rotation to the horizontal crucial to postwar object-making. Could this turn to the ground, this double tropism to *bassesse* and baselessness, be partly permitted by a turn to the materiality, to the structure, of the "tribal fetish"?

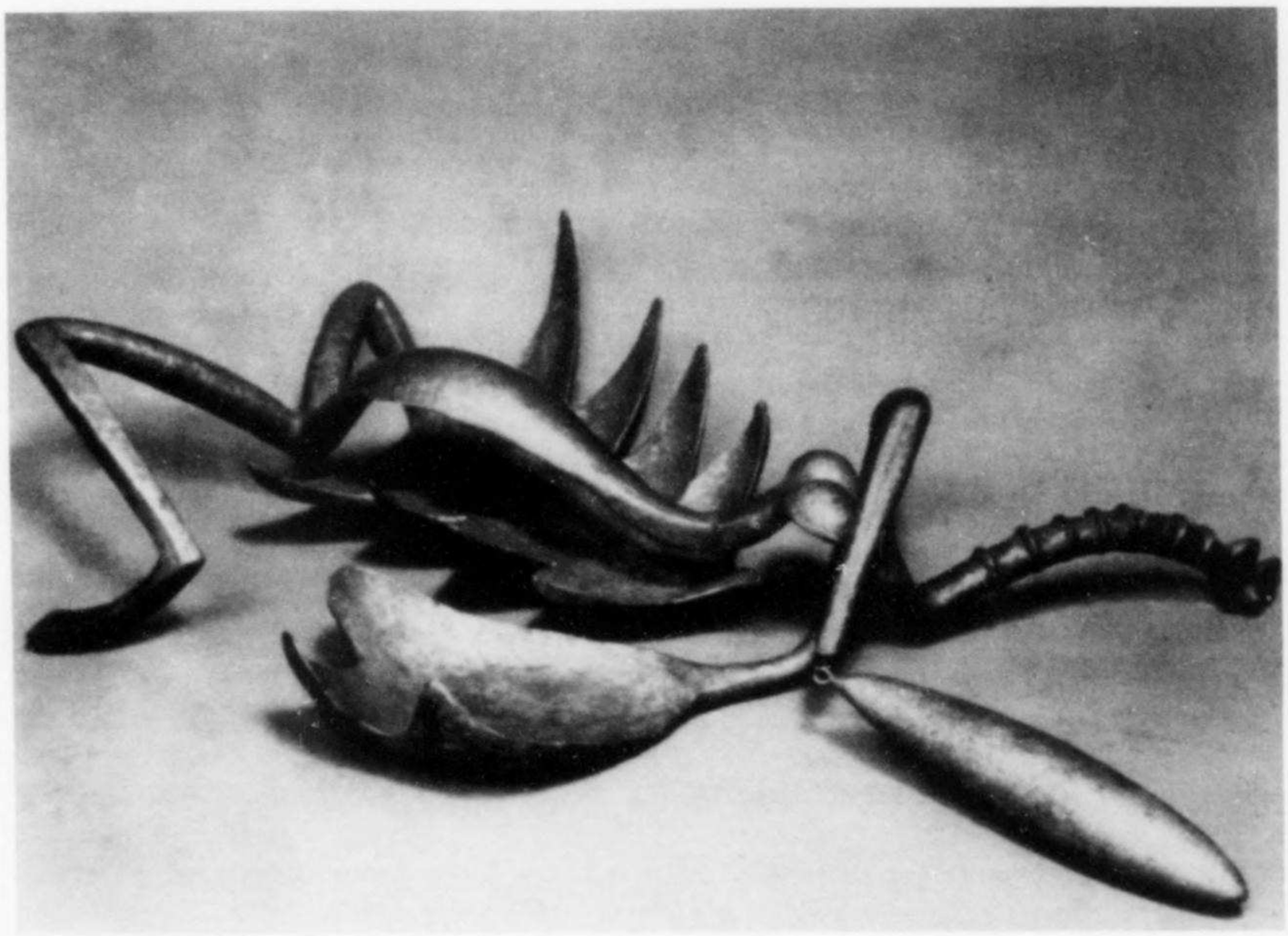
graphic way—negative, hollowed volumes versus positive, phallic forms.) It is as if the fetishistic structure of his work breaks down into its constituent parts, the sexual drive into sadistic and masochistic impulses. Some objects, such as *Hand Caught* and *Point to the Eye* (both 1932), figure castration threat alone; others, such as *Woman with Her Throat Cut* (also 1932), appear as symbolic acts of sadistic vengeance exacted on the figure of woman as representative of castration. Indeed, this splayed scorpion woman is the psychic complement of the devouring mantis of *Cage*: here the threat of castration is returned as a "horror of the mutilated creature or triumphant contempt for her."[78]

It is with such a fantasy that "Hier, Sables mouvants," the text that places fetishistic ambivalence at the center of the work, concludes:

> I remember that for months while a schoolboy I couldn't get to sleep unless I imagined first that I had gone through a thick forest at nightfall and reached a great castle rising in a most secluded and unknown place. There I killed two defenseless men . . . [and] raped two women, first the one who was thirty-two . . . and then her daughter. I killed them too, but very slowly. . . . Then I burned the castle and, satisfied, went to sleep.

This contempt for the feminine knows no bounds (mother, daughter . . .), but

78. Freud, "Some Psychical Consequences," p. 336.



Alberto Giacometti. Woman with Her Throat Cut. *1932.*

as the fantasy suggests, the contempt begins at home. That is, it concerns a lack in the masculine subject that the feminine subject only represents (it is Giacometti who was thirty-two in 1933): the self-contempt of a castratable subject violently resentful of a female other who, far from castrated, is uncastratable.[79] In any case, the sadism here appears as a turning round of a fundamental masochism; and this is how the ambivalence in Giacometti breaks down. With the difficulty of desire compounded by the volatility of sexuality, he finally rejects the psychic as the source of his art. From the fantasmatic he turns back to the mimetic—obsessively: "I worked with the model all day from 1935 to 1940."[80]

*

In these ways, then, primal fantasy informs the symptomatic depth of de Chirico paintings, the psychic coupling of Ernst images, and the affective ambivalence of Giacometti objects. If the surrealist object may be related to the metonymic order of desire, the surrealist image may be related to the metaphoric order of the symptom.[81] Of course, the surrealist image is not a direct trace of a psychosexual trauma, any more than the surrealist found object is a simple refinding of a lost one. Unconscious as they are, these terms cannot be intentional referents or literal origins of this art; rather, they help us to understand its structure. In this light we might grasp the contradictory nature of the surrealist image as an effect of a repetitive working over of fantasmatic scenes by a mobile subject, a working over that is never purely involuntary and symptomatic *or* controlled and curative.

However, we have not fully accounted for the other crucial aspect of the surrealist image: its simulacral quality, its paradoxical status as a representation without a referent, a copy without an original. Despite its call to disorder, staple surrealism is implicated in the partial restoration of mimesis in the *rappel à l'ordre* of the 1920s.[82] In subversive surrealism, however, representation becomes

79. This might be read into *Woman with Her Throat Cut,* partly inspired as it was by a memory of Michel Leiris, "the most painful of all my childhood memories," recounted in *L'Age d'Homme* (1939; trans. by Richard Howard as *Manhood* [San Francisco: North Point Press, 1984], pp. 64–65): "From this moment on I can remember nothing except the sudden assault of the surgeon, who plunged some kind of sharp instrument into my throat, the pain that I felt, and the scream—like that of a slaughtered animal—that I uttered."

80. Giacometti, "Letter to Pierre Matisse." According to Marcel Jean, Giacometti repudiated his surrealist work as so much "masturbation" (cited in Brenson, *The Early Work,* p. 190).

81. For Lacan on metaphor and symptom see "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason since Freud," *Écrits,* trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 166. For his revisionary relation to the surrealist definition of the image as juxtaposition, see pp. 156–57.

82. On this "tragic" restoration in the early 1920s and its "farcical" repetition in the late '70s, see Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Figures of Authority, Ciphers of Regression," *October* 16 (Spring 1981), pp. 39–68.

other, fantasmatic—as if, repressed in high modernism, it returns here uncannily, its distortion the mark of its repression.

Foucault points to this sea-change in his 1963 essay on Magritte.[83] For Foucault the privileged terms of traditional representation are affirmation and resemblance (or similitude): in such art an affirmation of the reality of the referent is made through the iconic resemblance of the image to it. In modernism this paradigm is eroded in two fundamental ways, which Foucault associates with Kandinsky and Magritte respectively. In his abstractions Kandinsky frees affirmation of the real from resemblance to it: resemblance or similitude is (mostly) abandoned. This account is accurate as far as it goes, but if the referent is eclipsed in Kandinsky, reality, now located *beyond* resemblance (as spiritual or Platonic), is still affirmed (as it is in Malevich, Mondrian . . .). And this fact renders such abstraction far less subversive to transcendental aesthetics than is usually thought, even by Foucault. In his simulations Magritte does the more radical converse: he frees resemblance from affirmation. Resemblance or similitude is here maintained, but no reality is affirmed: the referent, its reality, transcendental or otherwise, evaporates—significantly for us through devices of calligrammatic doubling and rhetorical repetition. "Magritte allows the old space of representation to prevail, but only on the surface . . . underneath, there is nothing."[84] In such surrealist art, representation only seems to reappear; instead, it returns uncannily as simulation. And it is this simulation that subverts the representational paradigm: in its cancellation of representation, abstraction preserves it, whereas simulation unfounds it, pulls the real out from underneath it. Indeed, simulation confounds the entire opposition of representation and abstraction conventionally considered to control modern art.[85]

But what does simulation have to do with fantasy? Both can confound origins, and both are repressed within modernism for doing so. In fact, it is in the despised realm of fantasy that our aesthetic tradition has imprisoned simulation—that is, until its partial release in surrealism. For Plato images were divided between proper claimants and false claimants to the idea, between good iconic copies that resemble the idea and bad fantasmatic simulacra that insinuate

83. Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe* (1963), trans. Richard Miller (Berkeley: University of California, 1984).

84. Ibid., p. 16. Also see *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel* (1963), trans. Charles Ruas (New York: Doubleday, 1986). For Foucault, Roussel performs a transformation in writing complementary to that of Magritte in painting. In his 1962 seminar Lacan used the "window paintings" of Magritte to illustrate the structure of fantasy.

85. See my "The Crux of Minimalism," in *Individuals* (Los Angeles: Museum of Contemporary Art, 1986). As Deleuze writes, "Between the destruction which conserves and perpetuates the established order of representations, models, and copies, and the destruction of models and copies which sets up a creative chaos, there is a great difference. . . ." ("Plato and the Simulacrum," trans. Rosalind Krauss, *October* 27 [Winter 1983], p. 56). This "chaos," however, may have its own function in the social field of advanced capitalism—where the delirious and the disciplinary are no longer mutually exclusive.

it. As Deleuze has argued, the Platonic tradition repressed the simulacrum not simply as a false claimant, a bad copy without an original, but because it challenged the order of original and copy, the hierarchy of idea and representation—the principle of identity, we might say after Ernst. In repression the fantasmatic simulacrum assumed a daemonic quality as well, and Deleuze describes it in terms similar to our "uncanny" definition of surrealist fantasy:

> The simulacrum implies great dimensions, depths, and distances which the observer cannot dominate. It is because he cannot master them that he has an impression of resemblance. The simulacrum includes within itself the differential point of view, and the spectator is made part of the simulacrum, which is transformed and deformed according to his point of view. In short, folded within the simulacrum there is a process of going mad, a process of limitlessness. . . .[86]

The subject is *in* the simulacrum, as it were, just as he is *in* the fantasy; but the similarity does not end there. Like the fantasy, the simulacrum is comprised of at least two different terms, series, or events ("it interiorizes a dissimilitude"),[87] neither of which can be fixed as original or copy, first or second. In a sense the simulacrum is also produced out of a deferred action, an internalized difference, and it is this difference that troubles the Platonic order of representation. It is also this difference that not only renders the fantasmatic art of surrealism simulacral, but structures the surrealist image as a signifier of an involuntary memory, a traumatic fantasy.[88]

86. Deleuze, "Plato and the Simulacrum," p. 49.
87. Ibid.
88. As Deleuze writes of Proust, "*The essential thing in involuntary memory is not resemblance, nor even identity, which are merely conditions, but the internalized difference, which becomes immanent.* It is in this sense that reminiscence is the analogue of art, and involuntary memory the analogue of a metaphor" (*Proust and Signs* [1964], trans. Richard Howard [New York: George Braziller, 1972], p. 59. It may be more accurate to think the surrealist image through this Proustian problematic than through the usual references to Lautréamont, Pierre Reverdy, etc.; certainly Benjamin seems to have thought so. For more on the connections between Freud on trauma, Benjamin on the image, and Deleuze on difference and repetition, see J. Hillis Miller, *Fiction and Repetition* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982), pp. 1–21. Also see Cynthia Chase, "Oedipal Textuality: Reading Freud's Reading of *Oedipus*," *Diacritics* 9, 1 (Spring 1979), pp. 54–68.

There's Always Tomorrowland: Disney and the Hypercinematic Experience

SCOTT BUKATMAN

The various attempts to integrate modern science into new myths remain inadequate.

—Ivan Chtcheglov

There's nothing so loathsome as a sentimental surrealist.

—Thomas Pynchon

1. Skyway to Tomorrowland

In the early days of Disneyland, one Tomorrowland attraction was the Autopia, where youngsters could drive actual, though miniature, automobiles. Disney intended these young citizens-to-be to thus learn traffic safety at an early age and hence to be prepared to enter the L.A. freeway system. Unfortunately, the children took "demented delight" in crashing the cars, and the ride had to be put on tracks.[1] One can hardly blame the kids for resisting the park's immaculately conceived system of guidance, but the Disney ethos could not tolerate these signs of technological breakdown.

Disneyland began as a park where Walt could extend his miniature train set within a framework of realistic landscape effects. A fascination with Americana further informed the project, and dioramas depicting historical periods and events (much like the tableaux of early film history) were placed along the train's route in a "coherent sequence." Finally, its design worked to construct a safe and clean environment, thoroughly distinct from the chaos and boorishness of the traditional amusement park. The result was an America reduced, frozen,

1. Randy Bright, *Disneyland: Inside Story* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1987), p. 88.

Walt Disney, Vice-President Richard Nixon, Pat, Julie, and Tricia Nixon at Disneyland. 1959.

and sanitized—a fortress against the dis-ease of '50s society. Walt announced that "Disneyland is going to be a place where you can't get lost."[2]

At Walt Disney World, whose Florida acreage is twice that of Manhattan, these tendencies are exaggerated. The Magic Kingdom and EPCOT Center are now supplemented by Typhoon Lagoon (a water theme park), Pleasure Island (discos and other "entertainment"), Fort Wilderness Campground, the Disney/MGM Studio Theme Park,[3] numerous hotels, and a convention center. It is no longer possible to "do" the entire facility in a week-long vacation, although many families frantically try. In the terminology of Arthur Kroker, Disney World has become a "panic vacation."[4]

Tomorrowland grows more wonderful with the passage of every year, as its parabolic, populuxe stylings give full and nostalgic voice to the aspirations of the New Frontiers exhibit of the 1964 New York World's Fair (although its concrete expanses also suggest a down-at-the-heels airport). Its boomerang-inflected balustrades stand in extroverted contrast to the imploded and anonymous mall-structures of EPCOT's Future World. EPCOT Center was Walt's dream of an Experimental Prototype Community Of Tomorrow: real futures, brought to you by real corporations. This latter-day ode to tomorrow could be any corporate plaza on the outskirts of any urban area. Its immaculate commons,

2. Ibid., p. 56.
3. This execrable addition attains new heights of commodity fetishism and ideological reification—but on the other hand, the notion of a simulation of Hollywood is almost embarrassingly appropriate to the era.
4. Arthur Kroker, Marilouise Kroker, and David Cook, eds., *Panic Encyclopedia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), p. 16.

The Monorail at EPCOT Center.

mirrored facades, and soaring fountains stand in proud affirmation of nothing in particular, while in Tomorrowland, each aerodynamically turned, turquoise-and-white-colored detail enshrines a visible yearning for flight, a thrusting beyond limits, and the hope and confidence in an unambivalently better tomorrow. It unintentionally becomes the most charming of retro-futures.

Tomorrowland—the very name carries a casual colloquialism. *Tomorrow* is, after all, not so far away, while *land* suggests the whimsicality of the fairy tale (it is an all-important suffix in conveying a childlike innocence or nostalgia). Its extension at EPCOT, however, is something more than an exercise in self-similarity: *Future World* is a state of mind rather than a spatial location; a corporate symbol of monadic inclusiveness.[5] The *future* is indefinite and permanent; the *world* is inescapable and boundless. Tomorrowland holds promise; Future World sounds like a threat. The expansiveness of the missions to Mars and exploration among the stars is replaced by the imploded concern with the cybernetic spaces of information management.

These Disney worlds bear an interesting relation to works of contemporary science-fiction literature and cinema in which ontologies of space and narrative combine and often contradict one another. Science fiction can be said to provide the referential dimension that is absent from the disembodied spaces of the electronic realm: the function of the genre, then, is to compensate for the loss of the human in the labyrinths of blip culture by transforming it into an arena susceptible to human control. Recent science fiction frequently posits a reconception of the human and the ability to interface with the new terminal para-

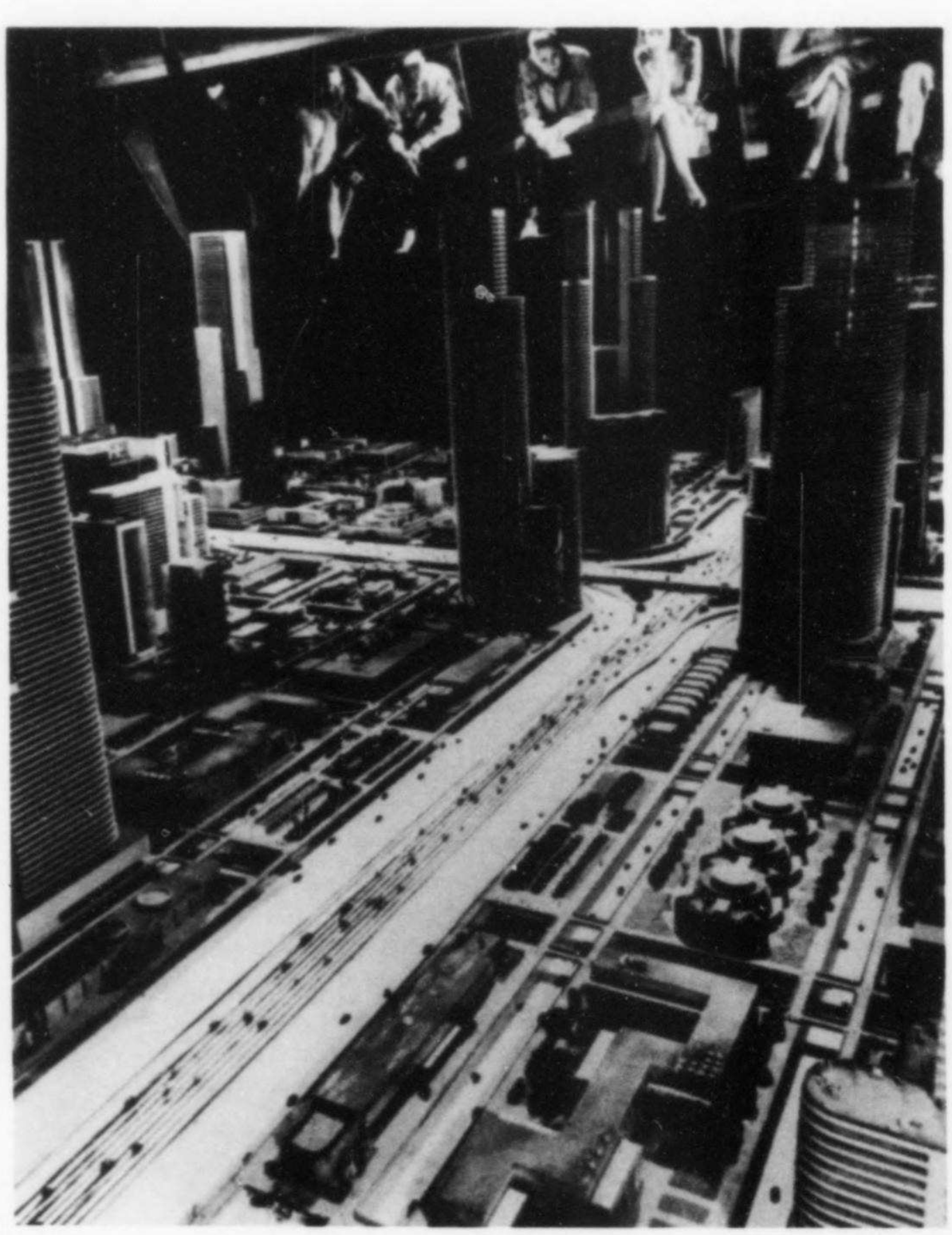
5. Thanks to Vivian Sobchack for this insight.

space. It generates a simultaneous grounding and dislocating of human bodily experience.

Referring to the 1939 World's Fair, H. Bruce Franklin has correctly noted that "A fair billing itself as the World of Tomorrow may be considered just as much a work of science fiction as a short story or a novel, a comic book or a movie."[6] This is surely also true of Tomorrowland or Future World—exhibitions that carry the visitor into an ambivalently defined future.[7] The Disney futures are simultaneously reactionary and progressive, nostalgic and challenging. They are also richly imbricated with the shifting experiences and metaphors of postmodern urbanism, electronic culture, and pervasive redefinitions of space

6. Bruce H. Franklin, "America as Science Fiction: 1939," in *Coordinates: Placing Science Fiction and Fantasy*, ed. George E. Slusser, Erik S. Rabkin, and Robert Scholes (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1983), p. 119.

7. Attractions in the Magic Kingdom's Tomorrowland and EPCOT Center's Future World include Horizons, The Land, Journey into Imagination, Mission to Mars, Universe of Energy, Space Mountain, The Living Seas, CommuniCore, Carousel of Progress, Spaceship Earth, Starjets, The Wonders of Life, WEDway People Mover, American Journeys, If You Could Fly, The World of Motion.

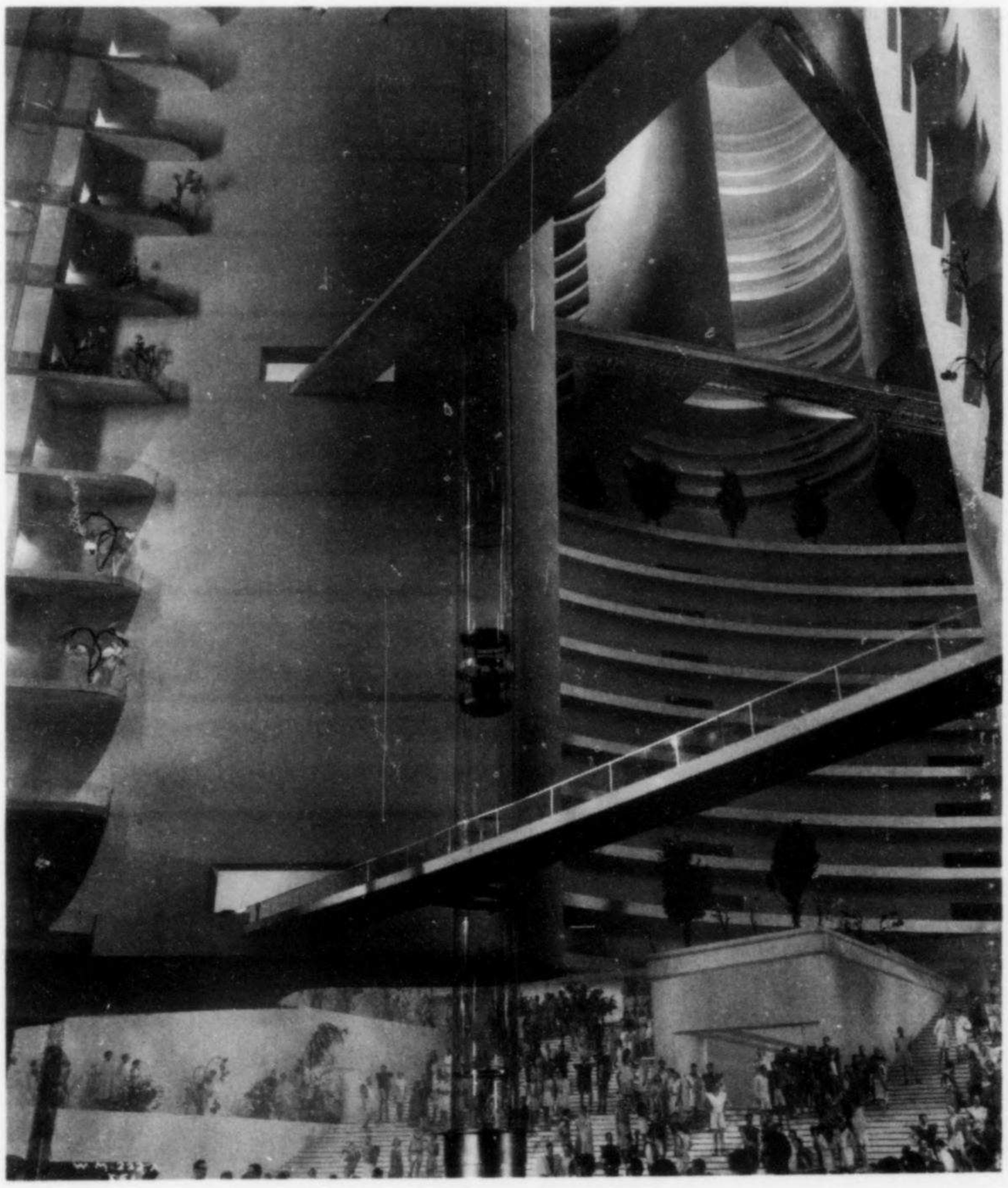


Norman Bel Geddes. Futurama. *New York World's Fair. 1939.*

and subjectivity, as the subsequent analyses will demonstrate. Please keep your hands inside the vehicle at all times.

2. Retro-Futures

The pervasive fear in the decade just past was a consequence of recognizing that we already inhabit the future. No longer was "The Future" a harmless fiction, a utopian era that, by its very definition, will never arrive; it was, instead, upon us, and with a vengeance. Our presence in the future has thus initiated an obsessive recycling of the past, a seemingly inexhaustible period of mega-nostalgia—a return to a period of (imaginary) mastery and an attempt to answer the question "How did I get here?" for cause and effect have vanished within the random intricacies of quantum reality. Even futures past are now exhumed and aired, their quaint fantasies simultaneously mocked and desired. *Wasn't the Future Wonderful?*, a collection of *Popular Mechanics* articles and illustrations, demonstrates the promise of an abundant, machine-aided existence, epitomized by the satisfied citizen calmly smoking his pipe amidst an array of vacuum-



Things to Come. *1936.*

tubed Rube Goldberg devices tirelessly servicing his every desire. The comic book character Zot lives in one of the wonderfully bulbous cities designed by Frank R. Paul for the cover of any issue of *Amazing Stories*. These are reveries of progress based upon *visibility*.

William Gibson's science-fiction short story "The Gernsback Continuum" is about the end of the future. A photographer engaged to capture images of the utopian architectures of Frank Lloyd Wright and other 1930s and '40s futurists enters one of those zones endemic in postmodern fiction ("Ever so gently, I went over the Edge"). In a giant ontological shift, he finds himself within this imaged, imagined, but never created retro-future. Gibson's description perfectly evokes the aspirations of another age, but it also sounds like a trip to Disneyland:

> They were white, blond, and they probably had blue eyes. They were American. Dialta had said that the Future had come to America first, but had finally passed it by. But not here, in the heart of the Dream. Here, we'd gone on and on, in a dream logic that knew nothing of pollution, the finite bounds of fossil fuel, of foreign wars it was possible to lose. They were smug, happy, and utterly content with themselves and their world. And in the Dream, it was *their* world. Behind me, the illuminated city: Searchlights swept the sky for the sheer joy of it. I imagined them thronging the plazas of white marble, orderly and alert, their bright eyes shining with enthusiasm for their floodlit avenues and silver cars.[8]

To exorcise these "semiotic ghosts," the narrator watches television until they go away.

If the retro-futures are structured through externalization and visibility, the architecture of Future World bespeaks the very erosion of the visible and dataist implosion behind the mirrors of anonymous techno-cultural interfaces. The rides behind these facades, however, are relentlessly, reassuringly, *human*, thanks to the simulation technologies of Audio-Animatronics™. The Horizons pavilion at EPCOT Center (presented by General Electric), for example, contains an exemplary retro-future exhibit entitled "Looking Back at Tomorrow." "People had some pretty mixed up ideas about the future," the narrator says (smugly) as "guests" are treated to the sweetly simulated futures of Jules Verne, Georges Méliès, Fritz Lang, Buck Rogers, Hugo Gernsback, and the Jetsons. The return to the retro-futures of the 1920s through the '50s speaks to a perceived loss of subjective comprehension of, or control over, the invisible cyber-histories and cyber-spaces of the present. This is the dataist era; the

8. William Gibson, "The Gernsback Continuum," in Gibson, *Burning Chrome* (New York: Arbor House, 1986), pp. 37–38.

disembodying spaces of the terminal era exist independently of direct human experience or control.

3. Narrative Strategies

"Disneyland," notes Thomas Hine in *Populuxe*, "was the first place ever conceived simultaneously with a TV series," and the park is assuredly notable for its overall narrative character. The Magic Kingdom was designed, not by architects, but by filmmakers, Hine continues—not as a group of buildings, but as an experience. It was "a movie that could be walked into."[9] One is led along Main Street, U.S.A., toward the pinnacles of Fantasyland's castles. At the central square, towering Starjets lead to Tomorrowland, while other monuments lead to further adventures. Philip Johnson has stated that the park's architecture was dedicated not to the design of space but to "the organization of procession."[10] A general *telos* operates whether one concentrates on the overall structure of the entire park, the features of the various lands, or the details on each of the buildings—an experience described by Hine as a sequence of establishing shots, medium shots, and close-ups. Several writers have observed the manner in which the rides mimic the proairetic and hermeneutic structures of narrative: "Each car is wired for stereophonic sound and turns electronically so that the occupant sees only what the designer has intended . . . exactly the way the movie camera sees."[11]

The topics of these rides are intensely narrative as well—Peter Pan's Flight recapitulates the entire narrative of the film, encounters with giant plastic sea creatures in 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea are narrated by an ersatz James Mason, and the famed Jungle Cruise provides a human guide pretending to steer the vessel while interacting with the real flora and pseudo-fauna. Even the roller coaster, whose *raison d'etre* is purely kinetic sensation, is narrativized in the Magic Kingdom. Space Mountain and Thunder Mountain are geographically specific simulated experiences (a space flight, a runaway train) which arguably add little to the basic pleasures of gravity.

Narrative provides a comforting paradigm for the physical experience. It is not a startling innovation, this commingling of kinesis and narrative—as Raymond Fielding pointed out in 1957, Disney's Trip to the Moon is only an updating of the Hale's Tours exhibits that were popular between 1904 and 1906. Audiences for Hale's Tours boarded a mock train carriage, and while a film of exotic locales played up ahead, the coach would be rocked, and a breeze might even play over them. Now retitled Mission to Mars, the Disney attraction

9. Thomas Hine, *Populuxe* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1986), p. 151.
10. Margaret King, "Disneyland and Walt Disney World: Traditional Values in Futuristic Form," *Journal of Popular Culture* 15 (Summer 1981), p. 127.
11. Ibid., p. 120.

features a preflight area, seats that move in a simulacrum of gravitational effects, a film view of the exotic Martian landscape through upper and lower "windows," and even a fictitious crisis for dramatic effect. This combination of simulation and transportation was, as noted, a basic principle of the park's conception. The WEDway (as in Walter E. Disney) People Mover has the distinction of being a ride with no purpose beyond demonstrating its own technology (it remains one of the most relaxing attractions at the park). As I shall show, the implications of the rides of Tomorrowland bear upon the ontological status of the subject in an era defined by an implosive and disembodying proliferation of electronic technologies.

4. Futurama

Seemingly opposed to the banality of the Disney narrative experience is the tough posturing of cyberpunk science fiction, a popular subgenre in the 1980s. John Clute, a science-fiction editor and critic, has described a crisis in science-fiction representation that is grounded in the passage from the thrusting promise of the space age to the invisible circulations and movements of the electronic age:

> No longer has information any tangible, kinetic analogue in the world of the senses, or in the imaginations of writers of fiction. Gone are the great arrays of vacuum tubes, the thousands of toggles that heroes of space fiction would flick *almost* faster than the eye could see as they dodged space "torpedoes," outflanked alien "battle lines," steered through asteroid "storms"; gone, more importantly, is any sustained sense of the autonomy, in space and time, of gross visible individual human actions. And if "actions" are now invisible, then our fates are likewise beyond our grasp. We no longer feel that we penetrate the future; futures penetrate us.[12]

Technological change has moved into the terminal spaces of the computer, the video screen, and the fiber-optic cable. Through its surreal yet plausible spatialization of electronic culture, cyberpunk science fiction achieved real importance. The invisible spaces of the computer are metaphorically "entered" by the physiologically enhanced "cyberspace cowboys" of William Gibson's *Neuromancer* (1984), for example, reinstating the possibility of "visible individual human actions."

Cyberpunk stages a rejection of the white towers of technocracy in favor of a street-level science fiction exemplified in cinema by the retrofitted urbanism

12. John Clute, "Introduction," in *Interzone: The Second Anthology,* ed. John Clute (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), p. viii.

of *Blade Runner* (Ridley Scott, 1982). Cyberpunk polemicist Bruce Sterling writes:

> Science fiction . . . has always been about the impact of technology. But times have changed since the comfortable era of Hugo Gernsback, when Science was safely enshrined—and confined—in an ivory tower. The careless technophilia of those days belongs to a vanished, sluggish era, when authority still had a comfortable margin of control.[13]

The measured forms of instrumental reason no longer dominate the technosphere which has now slipped, as Baudrillard continually notes, into a self-regulating and implosive state.

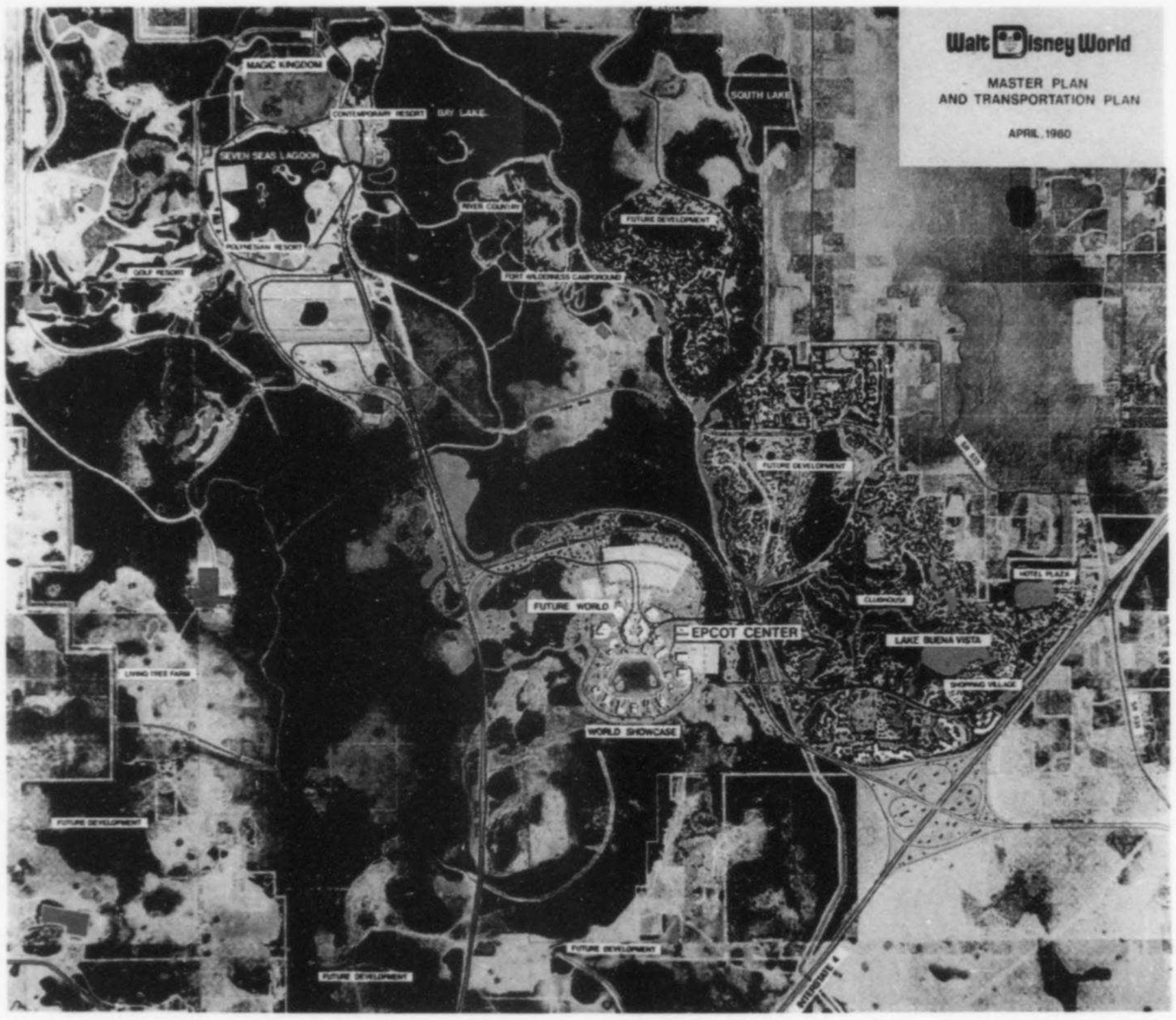
Cyberpunk is notorious for its repudiation of this ivory-towered confidence, this faith in a future that *works*: this is not quite true of Disney's Horizons. Following its reactionary retrospective of retro-futures, Horizons presents its own set of prognostications based upon the now-dubious premise of technological progress devoid of social implications. Improved urbanism, undersea farming (a Disney mania), colonies in outer space—nothing disturbs the stability of the white, heterosexual, middle-class, extended nuclear family. (Speaking of the nuclear, how *is* all this powered?) Indeed, tranquillity is improved, as holographic videophones permit instantaneous communication.

The simple but unavoidable irony of this Audio-Animated diorama is that it involves not even the gesture toward a social reality to be found in Lang's *Metropolis* or the poetry of his *Frau du Mond* or Méliès's *Voyage dans la lune*. The *outmoded* futures retain a special vibrancy: the Disney version is at once more utopian, more banal, and more ignorant. Only the citizens, in their homogenized glory, are revealed and encountered, their lives conveniently (and conventionally) narrativized. The central planning apparatus (corporate? governmental?) remains invisible, functioning as the omniscient narrator of this future world and its successes. Franklin has described Futurama as "the corporation that plans and builds, while the people are purely passive, comfortably watching the creation in motion as mere spectators."[14]

5. Situationist cities

Of course, Disneyland and Disney World are the best exemplifications of their future vision on Spaceship Earth. Disney's contemporary future is domi-

13. Bruce Sterling, "Preface," in *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology,* ed. Bruce Sterling (New York: Arbor House, 1986), p. xi.
14. Franklin, "America as Science Fiction," p. 121. While I want to demonstrate that there is more going on here than Franklin's ideological reading suggests, I think his conclusion is nevertheless largely correct.



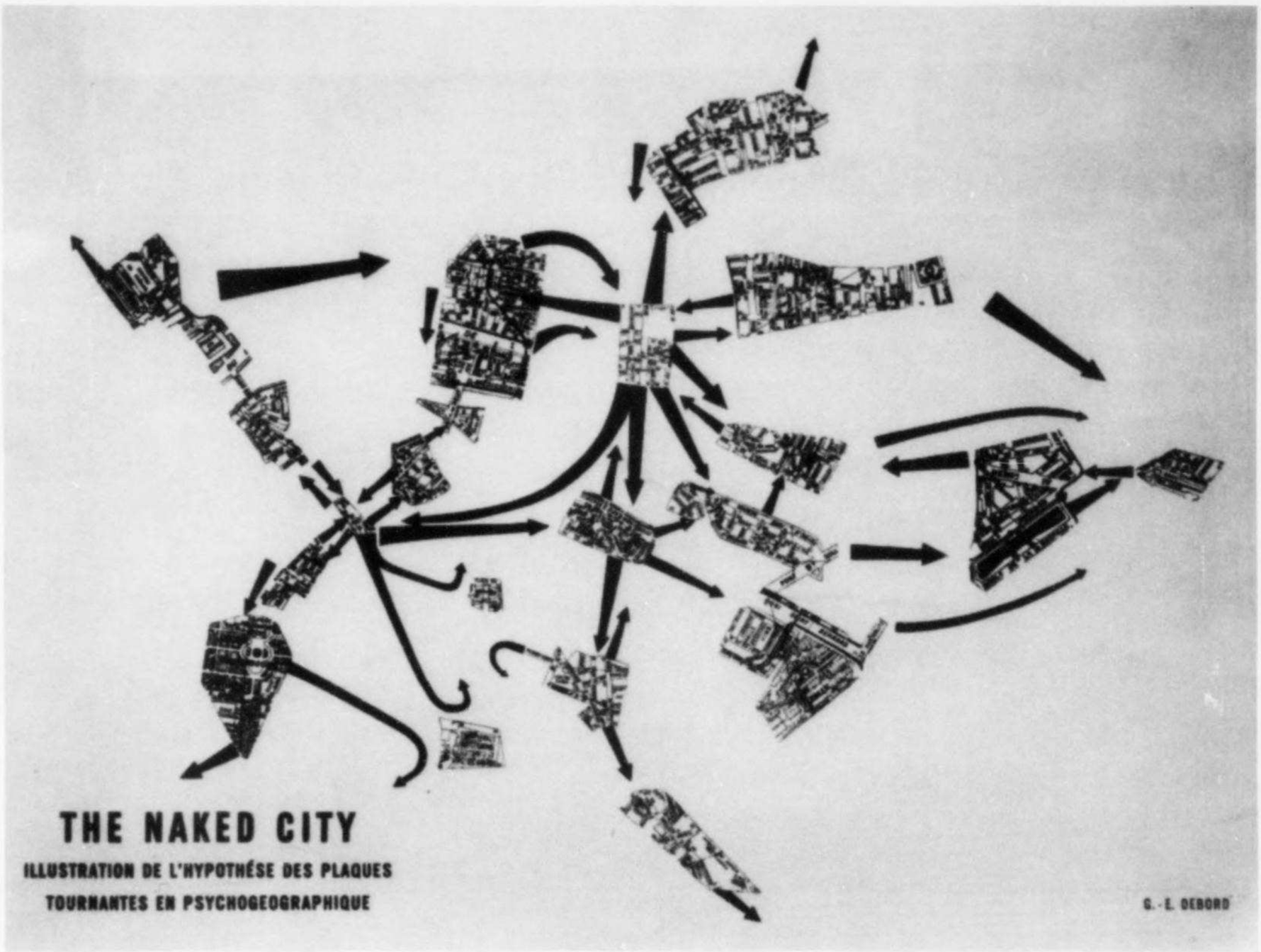
nated by a benign corporate sponsorship providing effective population control, abundant consumer goods, and the guarantee of technological infallibility.[15] These "theme parks" have long aroused admiration for their skillfully designed spaces. City planner James Rouse declared Disneyland "the greatest piece of urban design in the U.S. today. . . . Think of its performance in relation to its purpose."[16] Margaret King argues that Disneyland/World humanizes its technology through architecture:

> The Disney town is a kind of stage based on architectural symbols for romanticized, stylized human interaction. . . . The example of the parks may provide an alternative vision of what people seek in urban environments: everyday life as an art form, with entertainment, fantasy, play-acting, role-playing and the reinstatement of some of the values which have been lost in the megalopolis.[17]

Guy Debord's projection of the ideal Situationist city anticipates the division of the theme parks into separate monadic "lands" or "worlds":

15. However, Exxon's Universe of Energy pavilion was "down" one day while I was conducting research—an ironic counterpoint to the "real world" Valdez disaster. H. Bruce Franklin has similarly observed "deep historical ironies" at the 1939 World's Fair—an ode to technology performed in a period of rampant unemployment and stagnation (Franklin, "America as Science Fiction," p. 118).
16. Richard Schickel, *The Disney Version,* rev. ed. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1985), p. 23.
17. King, "Disneyland and Walt Disney World," p. 127.

Walt Disney World Master Plan.



> In each of its experimental cities unitary urbanism will act by way of a certain number of force fields, which we can designate by the classic term "quarter." Each quarter will tend toward a specific harmony, divided off from neighboring harmonies; or else will play on a maximum breaking up of internal harmony.[18]

The Situationist's division of the city also echoes the psychologist's topology of the brain. "The districts . . . could correspond to the whole spectrum of diverse feelings that one encounters *by chance* in everyday life," Ivan Chtcheglov proposes, listing the Bizarre and Happy Quarters as examples.[19] Souvenir maps of Disneyland in fact suggest such a model: the different-colored lands echo the diagrams of cerebral lobes, while Main Street mimics the stalk of the central nervous system leading into the central hub (the *corpus calossum*) that links these different regions. One might take this idea further—it's surely interesting that the rough-and-ready macho pragmatism represented by Frontierland and Adventureland are located in the left brain, while the whimsy of Fantasyland and

18. Guy Debord, "Report on the Construction of Situations and on the International Situationist Tendency's Conditions of Organization and Action, in *Situationist International Anthology,* ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), p. 23.
19. Ivan Chtcheglov, "Formulary for a New Urbanism, in Knabb, ed., *Situationist International Anthology,* p. 4.

Guy Debord. Naked City. *1957.*

the fantastic science fiction of Tomorrowland are strictly right brain "functions."[20]

The Situationists demanded a revolution of everyday life—the dual communist/capitalist reliance upon labor was rejected in favor of a more total liberation of the individual from the repressive reason of the state. Situations were designed to provoke a recognition of alienation and permit the perception of the reifications of spectacle. The division of urban space would produce maximal harmonies and disharmonies, a notion exploited in science fiction (Samuel Delany's *Triton* features an anarchic, libidinal, "unlicensed zone." Theater groups roam the zone, abruptly staging performances for "micro-audiences" of one). Can one perceive, in these Situationist texts of 1953–58 (Disneyland opened in 1955), an impulse towards a *politicized* Disneyland—the theme park as Situation and unitary urban field? "That which changes our way of seeing the streets is more important than what changes our way of seeing painting. . . . It is necessary to throw new forces into the *battle of leisure.*"[21]

6. Imploded Fields

The "guests" circulate through the "lands" of the Magic Kingdom or the "worlds" of EPCOT Center. When Disneyland first opened, there was no analogue for this aimless travel, this *dérive,* but now the shopping mall endows these environments with phenomenological and sociological familiarity. Malls aspire to the same monadism as the Disney worlds,[22] and their designs echo that of the parks with varying explicitness. Parking is relegated to vast outside areas, leaving the "real world" invisible beyond the boundaries of the commercial kingdoms (and one must note Baudrillard's wonderful caveat that the real world only *seems* real against the background of Disneyland's explicit simulations). Perhaps, as in the hypermall in Edmonton, Alberta, there is even an amusement park. The spectacle has even come full circle: the national shopping pavilions and restaurants of EPCOT's World Showcase (opened in 1982) recall the kiosks and "food courts" of countless suburban malls, while the malls incorporate the rides and themes of the Disney parks. The World Showcase represents a peculiar implosion of American tourism: foreign lands are further reduced and domesticated, rendered safe while remaining absurdly picturesque (with *actual natives).*[23] Welcome—with apologies to Professor McLuhan—to the global *mall.*

20. Thanks to Caitlin Kelch for this valuable insight. This layout is identical in all versions of the Magic Kingdom, from California to Tokyo, from Disneyland to the new Euro-Disneyland.
21. My emphasis. See Debord, "Report," p. 24.
22. This monadism is presented and simultaneously critiqued in George Romero's witty *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), a film which plays like a pulp version of Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment.*
23. Citizens, usually teenagers, of the various countries represented at EPCOT work at the park for year-long periods.

William Kowinski proposes that strolling through a mall is analogous to walking around inside a giant TV. One chooses from among an abundance of selections (stores equal channels), solicited by an array of colorful enticements and standardized slickness, overwhelmed by the overall electronic *buzz*. Arthur Kroker makes the same comparison, but in post-cyberpunk language: "Shopping malls are liquid TVs for the end of the twentieth century. . . . Shopping malls have this big advantage over TV, they play every sense. . . . A whole image-repertoire which, when successful, splays the body into a multiplicity of organs, all demanding to be filled." The body implodes within the cyberspace of the shopping mall.

Here history demands the recognition of Disney's achievement in the 1950s as the first film producer to exploit the medium of television. "Disneyland" was a gigantic promotional piece for this new park: the behind-the-scenes footage, old films, and new productions ("Davy Crockett," for example) were all geared toward selling the new attraction (Richard Schickel even argues that Disneyland represented a uniquely new *medium*). ABC financed the new park by buying over one third of the shares of Disneyland, Inc.[24] If William Thompson, calling the park a "technological cathedral," noted in 1971 that "Disneyland itself is a kind of television set,"[25] then it is worth stressing that the mutually reinforcing symbiosis of the Disneyland/world/mall and the implosive reality of television is not coincidental, but designed.

6A. "Great Moments with Mr. Lincoln"

The opening ceremonies of Disneyland were telecast live; among the hosts was Ronald Reagan, who would one day be represented by a simulacrum therein.[26]

7. Terminal Tactics

From Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*:

> I call a *strategy* the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a *place* that can be delimited as its *own* and serve as the

24. Schickel, *The Disney Version*, p. 313.
25. William Irwin Thompson, "Looking for History in L.A.," in *At the Edge of History* (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), pp. 21 and 18.
26. Mark Crispin Miller has noted that while Reagan was an undistinguished film actor because "his celluloid image was basically too dim and vacuous . . . this very emptiness has made him perfect for TV" (Mark Crispin Miller, *Boxed In: The Culture of TV* [Evanston, Il.: Northwestern University Press, 1988], p. 81). Reagan presided over a Disneyfied version of America—the Audio-Animatronic president.

> base from which relations with an *exteriority* composed of targets or threats . . . can be managed.[27]

De Certeau's researches are pertinent to the strategic spaces of Disney World and Disneyland ("a business, an army, a city, a scientific institution").[28] As Robert Venturi has noted of all utopias, the Disney spaces exist in relation to the hostile environments lying beyond their gates. These are protected environments, sustained only by a massive infusion of capital on a daily basis. Citizenship in the Magic Kingdom costs about thirty dollars per day, per park. The populist, apolitical, futuristic perfection is thus an illusion dependent upon the commodity's denial of its exchange-value and its pretense to a pure use-value (EPCOT becomes an educational experience, rather than a gimmicky amusement park). The thirty-dollar "passport" purchased at the gates permits the visitor to circulate "freely" through this delimited, manageable world.

For de Certeau, "tactics" refers to the set of practices performed by subjects upon and within these controlled fields:

> I call a "tactic," on the other hand, a calculus which cannot count on a "proper" (a spatial or institutional localization), nor thus on a borderline distinguishing the other as a visible totality. The place of a tactic belongs to the other. A tactic insinuates itself into the other's place, fragmentarily, without taking it over in its entirety, without being able to keep it at a distance.[29]

A tactic is equivalent to a speech act, which "is at the same time a use *of* language and an operation performed *on* it."[30] It is temporal, a trajectory across the spaces of strategic control. If the Disney empire is a strategic space, then it is one that seems particularly susceptible to the trickster tactics of its visitors. When Disneyland opened, its designers waited to see where people actually walked before the layout of paths and park areas was finalized. The parks actually *assimilate* the tactical trajectories of its visitors, returning them in the form of strategies. Walking across the grass loses its subversive appeal—it's easier and more efficient to keep to the walkways. Subversion is rendered pointless or even, as in the case of the infamous Autopia, impossible.

Thus, what one finds at Disneyland, or Disney World, are *simulations of tactics*: simulations of the *dérive*, that aimless traversal of the complexities of urban space so cherished by the Situationists; and simulations of *walking*, in the specific sense of inscribing oneself upon the territories of strategic power. There

27. Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 35–36.
28. Research into agricultural technologies, for example, occurs at the Kraft-sponsored exhibit, The Land, at EPCOT Center.
29. Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life*, p. xix.
30. Ibid., p. 33.

is no discovery to which one is not led, no resolution which has not already occurred, no possibility of revealing "that man behind the curtain," the Wonderful Wizard of O(rlando) Z(one). This space is unique in that it impedes the tactical enunciations characteristic of everyday life while remaining an unfailingly popular vacation destination.

8. Radiant Cities

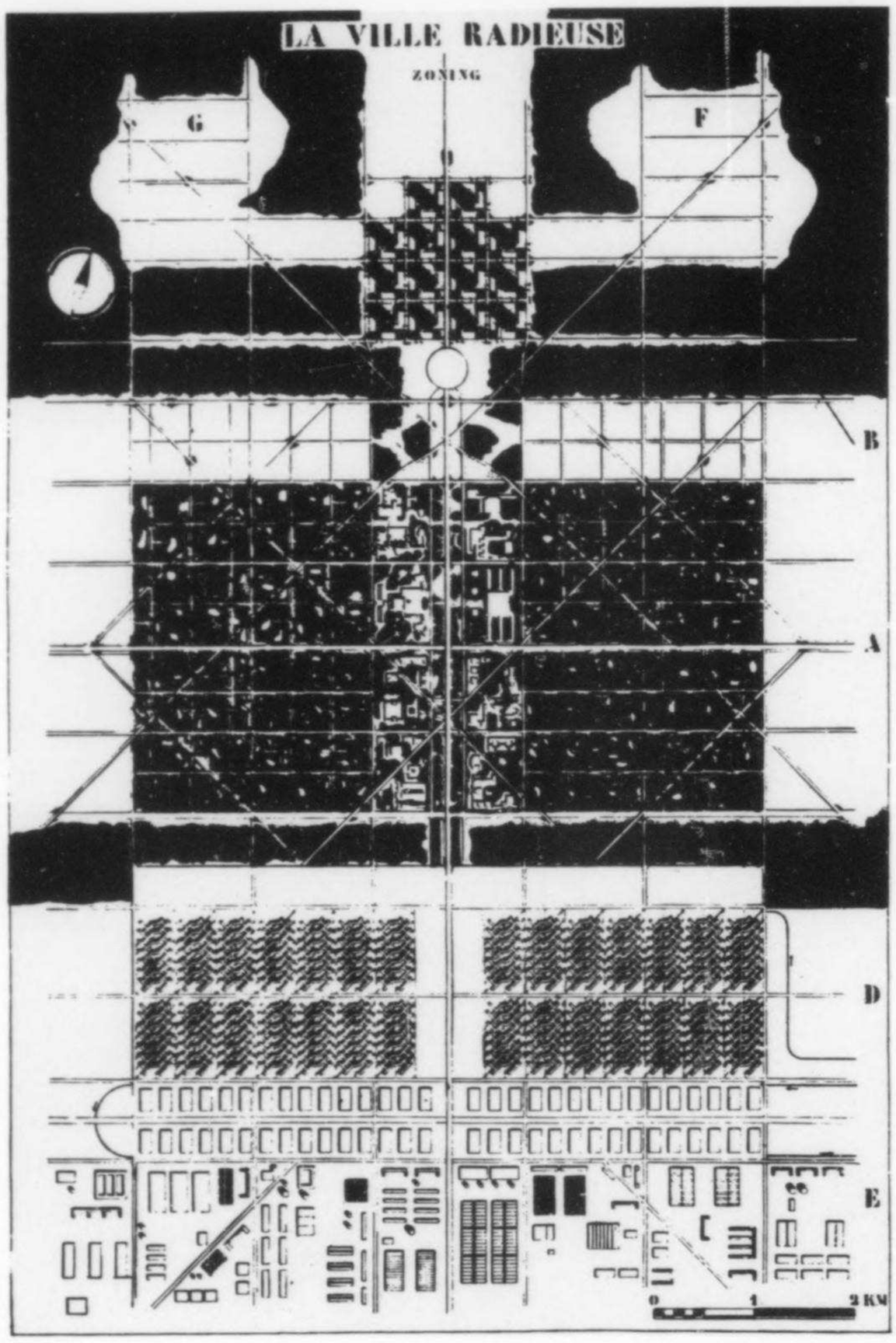
The World of Motion ride at EPCOT Center (presented by General Motors) concludes with a large model of a future city replete with gleaming white spires, pneumatic transport, hovercars, and an overall expansiveness that never, ever sprawls. The resemblance of this metropolis to GM's Futurama, that delightful city of the future (1960!) from the 1939 World's Fair, is obvious. A vision of the future still survives at EPCOT Center, then, based on central management, urban planning, and continuing technological progress. Disney World becomes a final haven for a purely technocratic projection of the future—the last bastion of instrumental reason (a "Futurama-induced administrative competence," as novelist Richard Powers put it).[31]

Perhaps Disneyland/World is Radiant City. Le Corbusier's urban dreamscape represented the apotheosis of his concern with centralized management. The corporation was unfit to organize the public realm on its own. Neither was government. The "hierarchy of administration has replaced the state."[32] The zones of Radiant City constitute a geometry of instrumental reason—the rationality of design transcending the competing economic ideologies of capitalism and communism. Like Disneyland, the Radiant City enshrined a "value-neutral" dedication to the technologies of rationalism. Robert Fishman uses terms that strongly suggest the now-mythic role of Walt Disney himself:

> Le Corbusier's concept of the planner combines two distinct images. One is the planner as scientist, surgeon, "technician"—the man of reason, a disinterested lover of humanity who studies the problems of the city, formulates clear solutions, and carries them out with an unswerving will. The second is the planner as artist, the isolated man of vision whose insights are the most profound record of his nation's spiritual life.[33]

In the comic book *Mr. X*, the designer of Somnopolis, a/k/a Radiant City, returns to destroy his corrupted creation. The city had been designed through *psychetecture* (an appropriation of the Situationists' *psycho-geography*?), but his

31. Richard Powers, *Prisoner's Dilemma* (New York: Collier Books, 1988), p. 83.
32. Robert Fishman, *Urban Utopias in the Twentieth Century: Ebenezer Howard, Frank Lloyd Wright, Le Corbusier* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1982), p. 228.
33. Ibid., p. 210.



Le Corbusier. Plan of the Radiant City. 1935.

utopian vision has been altered. The flat, dark artwork illustrates an urbanism of competing anachronisms where no two clocks agree, figures fling themselves to the ground below, and humans and robots coexist in a perpetual *ennui*. The architect, Walter Eichmann, is devastated, but others criticize his obsession: "You became one of those robots that you hated. You became a machine. . . . You became the city, Walter!"[34] Central planning is advanced as an outmoded vehicle of megalomaniacal control, a misguided attempt to impose order on a chaotic, surreal existence. Radiant City is the dream, but Somnopolis represents the worst nightmares of Le Corbusier and Disney. Postmodernism usually rejects these master-narratives of centralized power.

34. Further, the character's name, Walter Eichmann, may be an allusion to Walter E. Disney. See Jaime Hernandez, et al., *The Return of Mr. X* (Fullerton, CA: Graphitti Designs, 1986), p. 61. Similarly, Umberto Eco called Disneyland an "immense robot" (Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality* [New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985], p. 46).

9. Cyberpunks and Hippie-Hackers

Cyberpunk's resistance to the authoritarian mythos of Radiant City has been noted. Bodies in cyberpunk fiction and performance are invested in technology at street/skin level. "For the cyberpunks," author/editor Bruce Sterling writes, "technology is visceral. . . . it is pervasive, utterly intimate . . . under our skin; often, inside our minds."[35] In gentler language, cyberpunk is "about how our increasingly intimate feedback relationship with the technosphere we are creating has been, is, and will be altering our definition of what it means to be human itself."[36] The body is inscribed and defined as it is paradoxically extended and delimited by these pervasive, invasive technologies. It is a matter of *interface*.

Drawing from the work of Xerox's Palo Alto Research Center, Steven Jobs and the engineers at Apple Computer designed their Macintosh for maximum user-friendliness. Alienating keyboard commands were replaced by an intuitively based system: point, click, access.[37] The goal was to empower the individual against the forces of central control. Their *1984* commercial, directed by

35. Sterling, *Mirrorshades,* p. xi.
36. Norman Spinrad, "The Neuromantics," *Isaac Asimov's Science Fiction Magazine* 10 (May 1986), p. 186.
37. Post-Macintosh developments in the quest for a perfect interface include voice-activated systems and touch-sensitive screens.

Mr. X.

Ridley Scott, featured a most spectacular projection of the Orwellian vision, but now the proles were controlled by the "Big Blue," IBM (unnamed). Personal computing with a friendly interface was "why 1984 won't be like *1984*." Toffler: "Instead of merely receiving our mental model of reality, we are now compelled to invent it and continually reinvent it. This places an enormous burden on us. But it also leads toward greater individuality, a demassification of personality as well as culture."[38] Telematic power would be anticorporate, decentralized, *personal*: such was the mythos.[39]

Thus, in the 1980s, two techno-myths arise: *cyberpunk* and *hippie-hacker.*[40] Both are opposed to technocratic mythologies of centralized control, but while hippie-hacker substitutes an ethos of personal control and individual empowerment, cyberpunk enacts the end of controls in its depiction of a world where technology circulates more or less freely and even has its own agenda, as in *Neuromancer.* Baudrillard, whose prose aspires to the condition of science fiction, is quintessential cyberpunk, while the Media Lab at MIT preserves the hippie-hacker ambition. Both acknowledge our inevitable imbrication in the new state of things, what Toffler has called "blip culture." The comforts of Disneyland and Disney World reveal a paradox of control by presenting the highest degree of user-friendliness in a human-technology interface while situating it within a massively centralized apparatus.

10. Terminal Theme Park

Scientific American describes the cutting edge of new interface technologies in terms familiar to students of cinema—as a quest for realism. *Brainstorm* notwithstanding, however, cinema has nothing to rival the virtual reality systems of contemporary electronics. One NASA system, designed by VPL Laboratories, features a head-mounted apparatus using two color monitors (Eyephones) to create an analogue of depth perception through a simulated parallax. Sensors respond to head (and even eye) movement: "the user can enjoy the illusion of scanning an artificial panorama as he turns his head."[41] With the addition of the Dataglove, which translates hand movements into electric signals, the user can grasp and manipulate the objects in the virtual environment.[42] Voice recognition completes the interface, and the user can thus handle "objects" in the

38. Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave* (New York: Bantam Books, 1981), p. 186.
39. Of course, more recent advertising revealed Apple's desire to compete for the centralized business market dominated by IBM.
40. Although his work serves as invaluable reference material for the cyberpunks, Alvin Toffler's vision is pure hippie-hacker with a procapitalist slant—he is a favorite lecturer at Silicon Valley corporations.
41. James D. Foley, "Interfaces for Advanced Computing," *Scientific American* 257 (October 1987), p. 129.
42. A version of the Dataglove is already available as part of the Nintendo game system for children.

computer-generated environment. For Timothy Leary, this virtual realm is the ultimate way to "tune in": according to one of the developers, "the computer literally knows where your head's at."[43] To be installed into such an apparatus would be to exist on two planes simultaneously: while one's objective body would remain in the real world, one's *phenomenal* body would be projected into the terminal reality. Sterling observes: "Eighties tech sticks to the skin."[44] *To* the skin and *under* the skin—Marvin Minsky, cofounder of MIT's Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, muses about wires inserted into the nerves that will allow Dataglove users the sensation of touch.

The narrative strategies of the Disney worlds constitute another kind of virtual reality system, one which is largely conditioned by the narrative strategies that move guests through a technologically informed yet fundamentally conservative and historically bound vision of "the future."[45] At the same time, however, the theme parks are remarkably effective, albeit less explicit, visible projections of terminal space. Disneyland/World is a retro-future, a narrative, a Radiant City, but it is also a gigantic piece of installation art that spatializes the structures of a computer system.

Each of the rides and attractions—files—are gathered into the subdivisions of the different Lands—folders. "Utilities" punctuate the array in the form of food and service kiosks. The pervasive transportation systems (monorail, horse-carriage, railroad, paddleboat, double-decker bus, WEDway People Mover) that shuttle the "guests"/users from function to function form an extremely efficient operating system. All the technology remains hidden behind the tropical plants and architectural facades of the attractions, just as the ubiquitous beige shell of the personal computer disguises the micro-circuitry within. Finally, the blips being processed and circulated within this cybernetic paraspace—are us. The computer becomes a site of bodily habitation and experience in the theme parks—a technological interface so effective that most users are unaware of the interface at all.

In its structure and geography, EPCOT easily suggests a spatialization of its own computerized functions, while cyberpunk's defining trope has been its own representation of the nonphysical, electronic spaces of the terminal realm, as prefigured by the 1982 film *TRON* (Steven Lisberger, a Disney production). *TRON* used vector and raster graphic programs to dramatize its cybernetic arenas, as designed by Syd (*Blade Runner*) Mead and the comic book artist Moebius (Jean Giraud). In this saga of an evil corporate takeover of a small individualistic computer company, a battle fought largely in terminal space, one

43. Comments by Minsky, Leary, and the nameless developer, as well as information on the Eyephones, are from a news report on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," August 8, 1989. "What world am I in?" the reporter asks his guide through virtual space.
44. Sterling, *Mirrorshades,* p. xi.
45. Many thanks to J. P. Telotte for this concise restatement of my position.

sees a collision of cyberpunk and hippie-hacker formations.[46] The film also extends the historical relation between cinema and emergent technology.

The motion picture camera has been invariably attached to subjective vision, but equally pervasive has been the linking of cinematic vision to new technologies.[47] In René Clair's *Paris Qui Dort*, the camera, mounted on the elevator of the Eiffel Tower, demonstrates the intricacy of that monument to modernity as nothing else could, while Eisenstein's appropriation of a factory conveyor in *Strike* (1925) creates a space at once phenomenal and polemical.[48] The cinema has thus produced coincident analogues of subjective interiority and technological exteriority. Cinema is a cyborg apparatus—part human, part machine. When Christian Metz declares that the fundamental identification that the spectator has is "with the camera," the historical significance of this ought to be understood: the "double movement" of projection and introjection, presented by Metz in primarily phenomenological terms,[49] can clearly be seen in terms of the *projection* of a purposive human consciousness, but the *introjection* is of a particularly technologized space—a space that the camera mediates and assimilates to the terms of human vision. The crisis of the subject in postmodern electronic space, then, is a crisis frequently represented in terms of an ambiguous and shifting vision, which may or may not be subjective.[50]

TRON oscillates between the familiar, character-oriented subjectivity of "classical" Hollywood cinema and the terminal identity generated by the hyperbolic trajectories of a computer-simulated camera position. Here there are no literal point-of-view structures. "Camera" movement, simulated by the computer's graphics capability, is partly tied to vehicular movement, but is also somewhat autonomous, swinging from high angles to low in a giddy display of its own cybernetic power. *TRON* not only constitutes an early narrative about virtual reality, it also provides a taste of the VR experience in which the camera finally serves to give the viewer a *place* in this computerized world, a place defined almost solely in terms of spatial penetration and kinetic achievement.

46. The film, released at a time of well-publicized transition at Disney Studios, is also unmistakably reflexive, down to the benign programmer/founder named Walter whose spirit finally "animates" the computer world with warm colors.

47. See films by Méliès, Keaton, Clair, Vertov, Kubrick, and Cronenberg for examples of this tendency.

48. On Clair's entirely reflexive treatment of technology, see Annette Michelson's excellent "Dr. Crase and Mr. Clair," *October* 11 (Winter 1979), pp. 31–53. Michelson has also written extensively about Eisenstein and Soviet cinema; see, for example, "Camera Lucida, Camera Obscura," *Artforum* 11 (January 1969), pp. 30–37.

49. Christian Metz, *The Imaginary Signifier* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1977), pp. 49–51.

50. This ambiguous vision is presented effectively in David Cronenberg's film *Videodrome* (1982). See my "Who Programs You: The Science Fiction of the Spectacle," in *Dystopia and Desire*, ed. Annette Kuhn (New York: Verso, 1990).

11. Docile Bodies

Margaret King has argued that Disneyland presents "traditional values in a futuristic form." She may, however, have missed a more interesting aspect: the strategic narratives of the park prepare its "guests" for the future, and for the technologies to come, by grounding them in heavily *traditional forms.* The sophistication of the Audio-Animatrons is used to present singing bears and presidential simulacra; anthropomorphism is as prevalent as in any Disney film, and the narrative *telos* of the architecture and rides further serves to acclimate the subjects to the technologies around them. The entrance to the park is a crucial part of this process: "Main Street is not an end in itself but the entryway into other less familiar realms."[51] Recalling the above discussion of Disney World as Disney mall, Anne Friedberg has noted that "the mall creates a nostalgic image of town center as a clean, legible, safe place," and this is an image fostered even more hyperbolically by Main Street, U.S.A.[52] The narrative process of technological accommodation is heightened in Future World, where the rides narrate the histories of the technologies of communication, transportation, electricity, and energy. The "pre-shows" include tricked-up industrial films for such companies as United Technologies, Exxon, and General Electric (connections to the defense industry remain unstressed), while the shows feature the more traditionally entertaining Audio-Animatrons to illustrate the technological histories.

But the rides do more than narrate. The combination of simulation and transportation seems an urgent part of the agenda. The body is put *in motion* in Disneyland—real movement of the subject's actual body occurs. Inevitably, however, this is supplemented by a further, *simulated* kinesis. The wraparound movie screens inevitably feature helicopter drops into the Grand Canyon (handrails are provided for queasy participants). The Carousel of Progress (GE) rotates its audience around a series of Audio-Animated historical tableaux, a variation upon the nineteenth-century form of the diorama. The Disney version, here and elsewhere, transforms the real *spatial* movement of the spectator into a simulated *temporal* trajectory. Further kinetic play is encountered in the narratively conservative Horizons, as the four-person vehicle moves laterally across an enormous IMAX screen. As a whirling molecular shape rotates outward to apparently engulf the visitors, the car tilts against the direction of the vortex. The kinesthesia is intense and effective, enhanced (as in Hale's Tours) by the "horizon" of the vehicle. The World of Motion propels its cars through a tunnel of frantically surging, projected images which includes the vertiginous passage into cyberspace originally used in *TRON*. In the meantime, artificial breezes, sounds, and even smells extend the sensory address (the Universe of Energy's

51. Richard V. Francaviglia, "Main Street USA: A Comparison/Contrast of Streetscapes in Disneyland and Walt Disney World," *Journal of Popular Culture* 15 (Summer 1981), p. 156.
52. Anne Friedberg, "Les Flaneurs Du Mal(l): Cinemas and the Postmodern Condition," *PMLA* (May 1991), p. 14.

dinosaur show includes a change in humidity). Paul Virilio, confronted with the hypercinematic experience of Omnimax, notes that "we can no longer separate film from auditorium."[53] How much more true at Disney World, as the "auditorium" of George Lucas's Star Tours bucks and tilts to augment the onscreen action (the audience is seated in a flight simulator)![54]

Tom Gunning has asserted that such prototypical technological attractions as Hale's tours gave "a reassuring context to this experience. . . . The desire to provide a place for the spectator related to the movement within the spectacle reveals the enjoyable anxiety the audience felt before the illusion of motion."[55] Lynne Kirby notes that this anxiety is hardly innocent, and she has convincingly argued that Hale's Tours was a symptomatic response to an urban-induced "hysteria," and that the simulated transport served to equip its audience with an illusion of mastery over, or at least accommodation to, the mighty technological forces which were being increasingly deployed. Kirby refers to Walter Benjamin on the role of cinema in a dramatically technologized world:

> The film is the art form that is in keeping with the increased threat to his life which modern man has to face. Man's need to expose himself to shock effects is his adjustment to the dangers threatening him. The film corresponds to profound changes in the apperceptive apparatus.[56]

The same is true for the *hyper*cinematic simulations of Tomorrowland and Future World.[57] A catharsis of technological breakdown is humorously, kinetically present in Star Tours, the most popular ride these days, in which your robot pilot malfunctions and sends you careening through space.

Kinesis is thus fundamentally bound to narrative, from Hale's Tours to Star Tours. The conjunction of space and story is similarly, although less evidently, played through in science fiction. Cyberpunk acknowledges the supercession of individual bodily experience in its hyperbolic, overdetermined prose, but ultimately the traditional operations of narrative firmly assert them-

53. Paul Virilio, "Cataract Surgery: Cinema in the Year 2000," trans. Annie Fatet and Annette Kuhn, in *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema,* ed. Annette Kuhn (New York: Verso, 1990), p. 171.

54. One might note Annette Michelson's 1969 analysis of *2001: A Space Odyssey,* in which she compares the bodily experiences of spectators and astronauts. The curvature of the Cinerama screen mimics the shape of the space helmets themselves (Annette Michelson, "Bodies in Space: Film as 'Carnal Knowledge,'" *Artforum* 7 [February 1969], pp. 54–63).

55. Tom Gunning, "An Unseen Energy Swallows Space: The Space in Early Film and Its Relation to American Avant-Garde Film," in *Film Before Griffith,* ed. John Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 363.

56. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations,* ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken Books, 1969), p. 250.

57. One peculiarity is encountered at Spaceship Earth (AT&T). As narrator Walter Cronkite begins to proclaim the wonders of tomorrow, the cars turn around so that the "guests" proceed backwards into the future. Inexplicable, yet somehow fitting.

selves. The decentering of the human subject performed by cyberpunk in its presentation of these *other spaces* existing beyond human intervention is undermined by the transformation of these spaces into arenas of dramatic action. Cyberspace is entered by the cyberspace cowboys, and thus human will and determination are brought to bear upon this terminal realm. At its best, a symbiosis is proposed, but in practice the final recentering of the human subject within the cybernetic cosmology is beyond dispute.

12. Terminal Flesh

While Disney produces a simulation of tactical resistance, cyberpunk still engages in tactical warfare. Both theme park and cyberpunk are concerned with what de Certeau calls "the status of the individual in technical systems," as "the involvement of the subject diminishes in proportion to the technocratic expansion of these systems." The subject, increasingly unable to control these proliferating structures, "can henceforth only try to outwit them, to pull tricks on them, to rediscover, within an electonicized and computerized megalopolis, the 'art' of the hunters and rural folk of earlier days."[58] These are uncanny statements when juxtaposed with *Neuromancer,* a work quite evidently concerned with "the status of the individual *in* technical systems."

Cyberpunk is a narrative of tactics—corporations and military control the space of cyberspace, while outlaw c-space cowboys revel in their outsider status, becoming kinetic infiltrators, deceptors, and tricksters. At EPCOT Center the visitors are also kineticized outsiders, but this time only as tourists who are, literally, just along for *the ride.*

What finally occurs through all of the intensification of sensory experience on the rides of Tomorrowland and Future World is nothing less than an inscription *of* the body, *on* the body. These journeys into technologically complex zones ultimately serve to guarantee the continuing presence and relevance of the subject. You have a body, the rides announce, you exist. The body, and thus the subject, penetrates these impossible spaces, finally to merge with them in a state of kinetic, sensory pleasure. The visitor is thus *projected* into the datascape, and is *incorporated* by the technology quite as fully as the cyberspace cowboys of *Neuromancer.* The inscription on the body announces the human-machine interface, and technology thereby creates the conditions for its own acceptance.

Merleau-Ponty has written of the complex interface between world and subject, and of the fundamental physiognomic process whereby the "subject" is created at all:

> The normal subject penetrates into the object by perception, assimilating its structure into his substance, and through this body the object

58. Certeau, *Practice of Everyday Life,* p. xxiii.

> directly regulates his movements. This subject-object dialogue, this drawing together, by the subject, of the meaning diffused through the object, and, by the object, of the subject's intentions—a process which is physiognomic perception—arranges round the subject *a world which speaks to him of himself, and gives his own thoughts their place in the world.*[59]

What Disney and the cyberpunks permit, then, is nothing less than the process of "physiognomic perception" amidst the previously inconceivable spaces of the telematic era. This engagement with a new world produces a new subjectivity, a new "terminal identity."

Despite its conservative narration of a benign, centralized technocracy, then, the Disney version is finally not so different from cyberpunk fiction in its presentation of a technological and overwhelming spatiality which is physically *penetrated* by the body of the subject. Future World dazzles its guests with dislocating *other spaces* in the manner of science-fiction text. And within such a narrativization, now augmented by a bodily address, these rides locate and center the human, further reifying the perceived power of the subject. The popularity of these theme parks bespeaks the massive need for reassurance and resituation which many continue to feel in the face of the invisible and hence unknowable spaces of terminal culture. The parks present technology with a Mouse's face.

All this occurs within the most protected, centralized, and technocratic of environments: complex spaces that raise pertinent questions for the understanding of techno-cultural formations; spaces that present both a traditionally grounded humanization of technology and the disembodying postmodern experience of a technological sublime; an installation which is the most extensive and explicit of strategic spaces, but which assimilates visitor tactics in the process of building a technological interface. Here Baudrillard's most euphoric *and* despairing pronouncements both find continual figuration. Safely cocooned by the implosive architecture of the parks, the subject is itself assimilated and finally reconstituted by the extensive narrational *telos,* the evocation of a totalizing and benevolent urban experience, the hypercinematic engagement with a technologized phenomenology, the commodification of Being, and by the strategic usurpation of the everyday tactics of individual survival. In Future World, technology indeed seems to possess its own agenda and engages in an endless process of writing itself on the bodies of its "guests" while permitting them illusions of assimilation and mastery—illusions that are, at the same time, real bodily experiences. The enormous paraspatial and cybernetic realm of Walt Disney World constitutes a massive and self-regulating interface in which terminal space is rendered visible, malleable, and perhaps even adorable.

59. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception,* trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962), p. 132.

"*Makulakul'tura*": Reprocessing Culture*

NANCY CONDEE AND VLADIMIR PADUNOV

> *A singer who sells her song for her own account is an unproductive laborer. But the same singer commissioned by an entrepreneur to sing in order to make money for him is a productive laborer; for she produces capital.*
>
> —Karl Marx, *Theories of Surplus Capital*

The gradual suspension since 1985 of most authoritarian controls over the culture industry in the USSR has resulted in a fundamental redefinition of official culture.[1] At the same time, the search by cultural producers for an authoritative voice has led to a radical expansion of the entire cultural field in the Soviet Union. Together this redefinition and expansion have destroyed the teleological underpinnings of the very concept of a "cultural process." Deprived of an externally imposed unilinear trajectory and an internally enforced representational system, the "cultural process" of official culture has been replaced by the "cultural chaos" of the marketplace.

On the most superficial level, this redefinition and expansion have been characterized by the emergence into official culture (both "high" and "low") of new cultural producers, new cultural subjects, and new cultural forms. The fact

* "*Makulakul'tura*" is a telescoping of two Russian words: "*makulatura*" and "*kul'tura* [culture]." "*Makulatura*" refers to the recyclable paper products that Soviet citizens bring in to exchange for a variety of incentives. Since the bulk of recyclable paper products consists of newsprint and undesirable books sold in state stores, and since the standard incentive consists of books (so many kilograms of paper for a novel by Alexander Dumas or Jack London), the resulting situation is often paradoxical: unread but available books are pulped in order to receive desirable but unobtainable books.

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that many of these producers, subjects, and forms are "new" only from the point of view of official culture—for most of them have an established reputation, history, and tradition within unofficial, alternative, or émigré culture—is less important than the enormous diversity they introduce into that official culture. Thus the long-delayed recognition accorded by the world of Soviet music, for example, to figures as varied as classical composer Alfred Shnitke,[2] émigré conductor and cellist Mstislav Rostropovich,[3] rock composer and performer Boris Grebenshchikov,[4] jazz composer and performer Igor' Bril';[5] to phenomena as diverse as the suppressed recordings by popular singers of the 1930s and 1940s (Vadim Kozin, Petr Leshchenko),[6] the work of suppressed

2. Shnitke has undergone a total "rehabilitation" in the last few years: his compositions are performed by Soviet musicians abroad, the State Symphony Orchestra of the USSR Ministry of Culture plans to perform his five symphonies in one cycle, and he has been nominated for a Lenin Prize (Rodion Shchedrin, "'Ritual' Al'freda Shnitke," *Literaturnaia gazeta,* Feb. 21, 1990; Gennadii Rozhdestvenskii, "Bol'shoi sezon Shnitke," *Moskovskie novosti,* Feb. 25–Mar. 4, 1990). Shnitke has also composed the score to an opera based on Viktor Erofeev's story "Zhizn' s idiotom," scheduled to premiere in Amsterdam with Mstislav Rostropovich conducting (Vladimir Solov'ev, "'Vsenarodnyi Bobok': ili Parodiia parodii," *Novoe russkoe slovo,* Feb. 7, 1990).

3. Though Rostropovich continues to reside in the West, he was reinstated into the Union of Composers (*New York Times,* Feb. 9, 1989), had his Soviet citizenship restored (*New York Times,* Jan. 17, 1990), and undertook a triumphant series of concerts in Moscow and Leningrad (*New York Times,* Feb. 14, 1990).

4. Grebenshchikov—or "St. Bob" as he is known among the Soviet rock culture devotees—has spent much of 1989–90 in the United States. For a discussion of his influence and the role of his group, Aquarium, in contemporary Soviet rock music, see Timothy W. Ryback, *Rock Around the Bloc* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pp. 212–31; for a discussion of Grebenshchikov's extraordinary status in youth subculture, see John Bushnell, *Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture* (Winchester, Mass.: Unwin Hyman, Inc., 1990), chapter 3.

5. Though jazz has ceded its consumer primacy to rock 'n' roll, it remains in high demand. See S. Frederick Starr, *Red & Hot: The Fate of Jazz in the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); Aleksandr Medvedev and Ol'ga Medvedeva, ed., *Sovetskii dzhaz: Problemy, sobytiia, mastera* (Moskva: Sovetskii kompozitor, 1987). Over the last few years Melodiia has issued dozens of albums tracing the history of Western and Soviet jazz. In 1989 Bril' gave several performances in Moscow's prestigious Chaikovskii Concert Hall.

6. Kozin: "Starinnye romansy i pesni" (1985), "Pesni i romansy" (1987), and "Pesni i romansy" (1988). Leshchenko: "Poet" (1988), "Poet Leshchenko 2" (1988), "Poet Leshchenko 3" (1989), "Poet Leshchenko 4" (1990).

"B[oris] Grebenshchikov"; "Villi Tokarev."

bards of the 1970s and 1980s (Iurii Vizbor, Vladimir Vysotskii; the émigrés Aleksandr Galich and Villi Tokarev),[7] cabaret from the early decades of the twentieth century[8] has developed along with the introduction of innovative music genres and performance models: songs by the *afgantsy*,[9] rock charity concerts,[10] strip-tease,[11] and a Slavonic Mass—"The Sealed Angel," by Rodion Shchedrin, until 1988 the First Secretary of the RSFSR Union of Composers.[12] Virtually the same quantitative explosion can be traced in each of the other cultural industries.

The expansion of the Soviet cultural field, however, has not been limited to an increased number of producers, subjects, and forms; the field has undergone a major qualitative expansion as well. The three most significant developments in the field are the commodification of cultural objects, the aestheticizing of everyday objects, and the "cultural re-marking" of cultural and everyday objects.

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The commodification of cultural objects marks the single most revolutionary event in Soviet cultural politics since the abolition of all competing cultural organizations and groups by the decision of the Central Committee on April 23, 1932.[13] This development testifies to a recognition that information—in whatever cultural form it takes—is a commodity constantly entering into and circulating within Soviet society, frustrating the state's attempts to regulate it.

7. Vizbor: "Napolnim muzykoi serdtsa" (1985). Vysotskii: "Na kontsertakh Vladimira Vysotskogo" is a seventeen-record set started in 1987, of which sixteen have appeared to date. Galich: "Kogda ia vernus' . . ." (1989), "Aleksandr Galich 1" (1989), "Aleksandr Galich 2" (1989), "Nochnoi dozor" (1990). Tokarev had a phenomenally successful concert tour of the Soviet Union in early 1990.

8. The Bat [Letuchaia mysh'], one of the major cabaret-theaters of the early twentieth century, was revived in Moscow in 1989. Founded in 1908, the cabaret had been disbanded in 1920. See Francis X. Clines, "Russian Life is a Cabaret Again with New Chums," *New York Times*, Aug. 16, 1989; John Freedman, "New Life for an Old Idea: The Reappearance of Moscow's Bat," *Soviet and East European Performance: Drama, Theatre, Film*, vol. 10, no. 2 (1990).

9. Selections from the "Festival of Non-Professional Songs by [Afghan] Veterans," held in November 1987 in Ashkhabad, were released by Melodiia in a four-record set, "Vremia vybralo nas" (1988).

10. Rock charity concerts were initiated with the 1986 concert to benefit the victims of Chernobyl. A recent concert—held in Lenin Stadium on August 12, 1989—was sponsored by the State Committee for the Defense of Peace. It included both Soviet and Western "heavy metal" bands (*New York Times*, Aug. 13, 1989).

11. Understandably, the entertainment and floor shows provided in hard-currency restaurants have been, as a rule, more suggestive than in soft-currency establishments. The cooperative restaurant "U kamina" on Chernyshevkii Street in Moscow, however, provides a nightly striptease for its privileged diners.

12. Craig Whitney, "Performance of Mass is Act of Affirmation for Soviet Composer," *New York Times*, Jan. 10, 1989.

13. "On the Reformation of Literary-Artistic Organizations," in C. Vaughan James, *Soviet Socialist Realism: Origins and Theory* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1973), p. 120.

The inevitable consequence of the unmonitored exchange of these commodities is to undermine the authority of the state apparatus and to deprive the culture industries of revenues.

This recognition produced immediate results in the information media: the tolerance and active encouragement extended to the "yellow press" (*Ogonek, Moskovskie novosti, Argumenty i fakty*);[14] the greater latitude accorded to television to cover news stories (*Vremia*) and to conduct discussions of burning issues (*Vzgliad, Piatoe koleso, 600 sekund*).[15] The jamming of Western radio broadcasts into the Soviet Union (BBC, Voice of America, Radio Free Europe) was stopped, and, despite the genuine paper shortage, all limits and restrictions on subscriptions to journals were lifted.[16] Numerous projects were launched by Soviet libraries and cultural organizations for the exchange of bibliographic information—in hard and soft copies—for Western technology.[17]

14. Official attacks on the "yellow press" should not be taken at face value. Gorbachev's personal attack on Vladislav Starkov, editor-in-chief of *Argumenty i fakty,* on October 16, 1989, and his suggestion that Starkov resign occurred almost simultaneously with the dismissal of the conservative editor-in-chief of *Pravda,* Viktor Afanas'ev (*New York Times,* Oct. 17 and 20, 1989; *Radio Liberty: Report on the USSR,* October 27, 1989, pp. 29–30 and 32–33). The furor surrounding the attack on Starkov effectively deflected attention from Afanas'ev's dismissal. Starkov remains, while Afanas'ev, who had been appointed by Brezhnev in 1976, does not.

15. The director of Lenteleradio, Boris Petrov, was suspended from his post by the reformist City Soviet on April 5, 1990, when he interfered with the broadcast of an interview with former investigator Nikolai Ivanov. The interview was aired on April 6. See *Radio Liberty: Report on the USSR,* April 20, 1990, p. 26; *Moskovskie novosti,* April 22, 1990.

16. In their article "Literaturnaia kul'tura: protsess i ratsion," Lev Gudkov and Boris Dubin point out that whereas in the USA 137 tons of paper were produced per 1,000 cubic meters of wood in 1982, only 27.3 tons were produced from the same amount in the USSR in 1985 (*Druzhba nardov* 2 [1988], p. 173). Furthermore, while the USA produced 62 kilograms *per capita* of stationery and book paper in 1982, the USSR produced only 5.3 kilograms (p. 177).

The consequences of the contradiction between an acute paper shortage and unlimited subscriptions to journals began to manifest themselves in 1990. Many of the "thick journals" have fallen significantly behind in their publication schedules: the December 1989 issue of *Voprosy literatury* had still not come out in March 1990; the March issue of *Druzhba narodov* appeared at the very end of May. In a letter to *Literaturnaia gazeta,* the editor-in-chief of *Novyi mir,* Sergei Zalygin, complains that as of mid-May almost 200,000 copies of the January issue, 700,000 copies of the February issue, and 1.7 million copies of the March issue had still not been printed because of the paper shortage. *Novyi mir*'s monthly printing for 1990 is 2.7 million copies. See "Kak zakryli *Novyi mir,*" *Literaturnaia gazeta,* May 16, 1990.

17. Foremost among these is the Bibliography, Information Retrieval, and Documentation (BIRD) project between, on the one side, the Social Science Research Council, the American Council of Learned Societies, the Modern Language Association, and the International Research and Exchanges Board, and on the other side, the USSR Academy of Sciences. The project undertakes the photocopying of archival materials, with the Americans providing technological assistance and the Soviet side providing personnel, facilities, and (naturally) the archives. A second project, organized by the Gor'kii Institute for World Literature (Academy of Sciences), is attempting to find Western partners (specifically, providers of personal computers and software) to assist in establishing a bibliographic data base of Russian-language serial publications located in the periphery (through the 1920s). A third, more mediated example is provided by the USSR Cultural Fund, whose slick bimonthly journal *Nashe nasledie* (started 1988) is published in England by Robert Maxwell, but which can be subscribed to only through Moscow.

The commodification of cultural objects can be observed in the flood unleashed by the cultural industries from 1986 on, producing changes that are significant in both quantity and quality. Thus, underground publications—*samizdat, tamizdat,* and material taken "from the drawer"—not explicitly prohibited are being rushed into print by official journals and publishing houses.[18] Selections from "informal" periodicals and interviews with editors of "informal" publications appear in the official press.[19] Private citizens are now permitted to resell rare and secondhand books directly through state bookstores at prices they set themselves, and public auctions of rare books are sponsored by publishers and by the Writers' Union.[20]

Rock albums—recorded on *magnitizdat* and circulated as cassettes for years within the alternative culture—are now issued by Melodiia and sold in official stores at substantially lower prices.[21] At the same time, Melodiia is printing an increasing number of albums by Western rock groups, both "oldies" (The Beatles, Rolling Stones, Doors, Credence Clearwater Revival, etc.) and newer recordings (Bon Jovi, Frankie Goes to Hollywood, Peter Gabriel), while Soviet groups are recording albums abroad.[22]

18. This has led to the introduction of "instant books" [*ekspress izdaniia*] and vanity press publications, which though printed by official publishers (Khudozhestvennaia literatura, Knizhnaia palata, Moskovskii rabochii, etc.), are not subject to the years-long blockade caused by the publishers' current five-year plan. Many of these instant books are financed by investments from a variety of cooperatives.

19. *Iskusstvo kino* 6 (1989) carried a large selection of articles from the "informal" journal *Cine Fantom. Teatr* 11 (1989) also published selections from *Cine Fantom* and interviews with editors of other "informal" journals—Dmitrii Volchek of *Mitin zhurnal,* Aleksandr Serzhant and Vladimir Linderman of *Tret'ia modernizatsiia. Rodnik* 11 (1989) also carried an interview with Volchek. *Iunost'* 11 (1989) included a selection of material published in "informal" journals and an "Announcement" (advertisement) for several "informal" almanacs.

20. *Katalog knig pervogo moskovskogo antikvarno-bukinisticheskogo auktsiona, 11 aprelia 1987* (Moskva, 1987); or, to cite another example, the sixth auction of books and works of art conducted by the Central House of Architects and the Union of Architects on May 26, 1990 (*Knizhnoe obozrenie,* May 18, 1990).

21. Prices of *magnitizdat* cassettes start at approximately 10 rubles; the cost of a Melodiia album is 2.50 rubles. Among Melodiia's 1988–90 vinyl releases of established *magnitizdat* "albums" are: Alisa's *Energy* (1985) and *Block of Hell* (1987), Aquarium's *Radio Africa* (1983) and *Equinox* (1987), Aleksandr Bashlachev's *Time for the Little Bells* (1986), Strange Games's *Watch Out!* (1985), and Zoo's *White Line* (1984).

22. The album released by Zvuki mu (Warner Bros.) was recorded in Moscow in November 1988 and mixed in London in January 1989; the group disbanded after its lead singer, Petr Mamonov, left the group to concentrate on acting in films (see Pavel Lungin's *Taxi Blues,* 1990). Grebenshchikov's album *Radio Silence* (Columbia, 1989)—without Aquarium, which he dissolved en route to the United States—was recorded and mixed in the U.S. and England. Stas Namin's group, Gorky Park, recorded and released an album of the same name in 1989 in the U.S. (PolyGram). Joanna Stingray continues to release in the U.S. albums recorded by Soviet rock groups back home: Kino's *Blood Group* (Gold Castle, 1989) and Vasily Shumov's *My District* (Gold Castle, 1989). Kino lost its dynamic and highly popular lead singer, Viktor Tsoi, who was killed in an automobile accident outside Leningrad on August 15, 1990.

Paintings by nonconformist and conceptual artists who were unofficial even a few years ago are now routinely released for exhibition in the West. The Ministry of Culture has sponsored the auction in Moscow by Sotheby's of works by avant-garde painters, and *Literaturnaia gazeta* has arranged an official exhibition of paintings by émigré Mikhail Chemiakin at the Central House of the Artist [Dom khudozhnika].[23]

The Disputes Commission of the Filmmakers' Union and Goskino has cleared the release of more than a hundred films shelved for decades,[24] and those that were shelved prior to completion are now being edited and screened.[25] Soviet coproduction projects are actively seeking the investment of Western capital and technology; video- and film-production cooperatives are financing and releasing a series of feature films and documentaries.[26]

The sheer quantity of cultural objects released into Soviet society over the

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Melodiia has begun to reverse the process—that is, it is releasing albums in the Soviet Union that were recorded abroad (in part or whole) by Soviet rock groups: Autograph's song "I Love" (from the album *Stoney Land,* 1989) was recorded at TRAX Studios in Los Angeles; true to its title, Shumov's group, Center, recorded the album *Made in Paris* (1989) at Ferber Studios in 1988.

23. *Literaturnaia gazeta,* Mar. 29, 1989. Simultaneous with the retrospective exhibition in Moscow, there was a second exhibit in Leningrad of works Chemiakin left behind when he emigrated in 1971 (Francis X. Clines, "Exiled Artist Now a Star in Moscow," *New York Times,* Apr. 1, 1989).

24. Andrei Plakhov, "Soviet Cinema into the 90s," *Sight & Sound* 58 (Spring 1989), p. 81.

25. The dramatic precedent for this was the invitation in late 1988 to director Boris Frumin to return to Lenfil'm Studios to complete work on his film *The Errors of Youth* (shot in 1978). Frumin emigrated from the Soviet Union in 1979 and currently teaches filmmaking at New York University. The film was given preliminary screenings in Moscow in January 1989, and received simultaneous premieres in Moscow (at Dom kino) and New York (at the "New Directors/New Films" series at the Museum of Modern Art) in March 1989.

26. Vladimir Dvinskii's film *Peace Unto You, Shalom* (1989) was shot by Lad'ia, a cooperative studio attached to the Gor'kii film studio, in collaboration with the West German company Kronos (Bella Ezerskaia, "'Mir vam, shalom,'" *Novoe russkoe slovo,* May 5–6, 1990). After Lenfil'm studios refused to finance Aleksandr Sokurov's *Save and Protect* (1989), an adaptation of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary,* the project was totally subsidized by Videofil'm, which at the time had no program, staff, or equipment at its disposal (Mikhail Iampol'skii, "Voskhozhdenie k obrazu," *Literaturnoe obozrenie* 7 [1989], p. 74).

"Glasnost'"; "*What Is To Be Done?*"; "Perestroika."

last few years overwhelms even the most diligent scholar of contemporary Soviet culture, let alone the average *intelligent* or factory-worker.[27] It is simply impossible for any one individual to read, see, and hear everything that is now being released. As a result, cultural objects are more discussed than consumed or assimilated, so that *glasnost'* may be said to have had a deafening impact on Soviet society; cultural producers of both the left and the right are convinced that they are not getting a "fair hearing." In literature, conservative established writers such as Iurii Bondarev, Petr Proskurin, and Iurii Kuznetsov, as well as those of the avant-garde, including Viktor Erofeev, Aleksei Parshchikov, and Tat'iana Shcherbina concur in this complaint. They are joined by members of the "lost generation" of so-called "forty-year-olds": Vladimir Makanin, Vladimir Krupin, Aleksandr Prokhanov, and "newcomers" Gennadii Golovin, Sergei Kaledin, Mikhail Kuraev. Andrei Bitov has gone so far as to assert that "*glasnost'* exists, journals exist, but there is no literary process" because "freedom of speech and freedom of the press are entirely different things."[28]

The artificial drought that characterized official Soviet culture during the period of stagnation has been replaced under *glasnost'* by an equally artificial flood of cultural objects. This flood has effectively confused the differences between "newly written" and "newly published," "newly filmed" and "newly released," "newly painted" and "newly exhibited," etc.[29] While the determining consideration during the drought years was a control over cultural production backed by massive subsidies from the state to cultural industries, the determining consideration during the flood years has been the economies of cultural production backed by a relationship of greater tolerance between the state and the cultural industries. The attempt to exercise direct ideological control *over* culture has been replaced by an intense struggle to achieve economic independence *within* culture. The driving mechanism for this change has been the

27. Perhaps the clearest example of the extent of this deluge is provided by the contents of a single issue of one of the most popular Soviet journals: *Novyi mir* 12 (1988). In addition to contributions by writers recognized as "official" even during the Brezhnev years, this issue contains (i) sonnets by Genrikh Sapgir, a Moscow poet who has published virtually everything in *tamizdat* since 1975; (ii) the second published story ("Nochnoi dozor") by Mikhail Kuraev, considered to be one of the most talented "new" Soviet writers; (iii) a "dialogue" by Liudmila Petrushevskaia, one of the most popular but underpublished Soviet playwrights; (iv) a selection of poems by the late Ivan Elagin, the major poet of the "second wave"; (v) three poems-prison songs by Iuz Aleshkovskii (including the infamous "Comrade Stalin, You Are a Great Scholar"), a writer of the "third wave"; and (vi) a review article of all the dystopian novels published in Soviet journals during 1988, novels that had been banned during the entire period of Soviet power.

28. Andrei Bitov, "Poeziia i proza kooperativnoi epokhi," *Literaturnaia gazeta,* May 2, 1990.

29. In discussing the impact on the literary process of the simultaneous publication of works from the 1920s, '30s, '40s, etc., Feliks Svetov remarks:

> Their publication 20, 30, 50, even 70 years after they were written makes the present-day life of these books complex, at times inauthentic. At any rate, they can in no way be included in today's on-going literary process; they remain completely alien to it.

The ensuing "cultural hash" is merely a "testimony to the abnormality and inauthenticity of the contemporary literary process" (*Literaturnaia gazeta,* May 23, 1990).

imposition of self-financing and cost-accountability within each of the cultural industries.

The immediate consequence has been the granting of unprecedented power to cultural consumers. The inherited model of cultural production in the Soviet Union is characterized by a dialectical relationship between a specific cultural producer and the state, represented by a specific sector of the culture industry. Because competition within the culture industry and between cultural producers did not exist (except in highly mediated terms), this relationship was always expressed ideologically, whether as propaganda or as opposition. The impact of self-financing and cost-accountability has shattered this overdetermined and overly stable model, introducing competition within each of the industries and between all producers. This, in turn, has led to a frantic search for consumers: readers, viewers, audiences, ratings, subscriptions, renters, purchases, investors, etc.

In this very commodification lies the paradox of the present period: the cultural *perestroika* has been a qualified success; the economic *perestroika* has been an unqualified failure. And yet a decade from now, when we compare the differences and similarities between *perestroika* and the preceding Thaw period, foremost among the differences will be precisely how the *economic* changes under *perestroika*, catastrophic though they might have been in their broadest parameters, have redefined the nature of labor *within* the cultural sphere: how books are printed, how films are shot, how music is recorded, how exhibits are arranged, how productions are staged.

As this commodification proceeds, we are seeing the increasing accumulation of terms such as "*bestseller*," "*kopirait*," "*roialtis*," "*reitings*," and "*press-relizy*"—which ascend to their rightful inheritance alongside the calques of the Stagnation Era: "*esteblishment*," "*Boss*," and "*Kheppi end*." This process of linguistic change is paralleled in other professions as well: in the field of sociology, with

"*After Us—Even* Perestroika!"; "*Whoever Does Not Work Does Not Eat!*"; "*Grab the Moment!*"

its concern for "*respondent*" and "*imprinting*"; in the legal profession, with its "*prezumtsia nevinnosti*" ["presumption of innocence"]; and in computer science, which increasingly communicates English vocabulary, spoken with a Russian accent and a stress change.

The fact that "literary process" is a term little used in the West is not due to the absence of such a process; the overdetermined presence of mercantile rhetoric under capital prefers the "literary marketplace," or, in a metaphor representing a further stage of historical inevitability, "the publishing industry."

Within the evolving marketplace, we now see a decrease in publication of a particular kind of hack writing that represented the norm: the sturdy, *faux*-leather-bound monograph on Socialist Realism, the ideological *Tyrannosaurus rex* of literary scholarship. But we are also seeing the gradual disappearance of other species: the rare find from an obscure press, produced in typewritten reduction in a print run of five hundred copies, with a title apparently innocuous and modest, were it not for a single word that signals other allegiances (*From the History of Soviet Literary Critical Thought of the 1920s*)[30] or the abstract, relegated in its publishing history to some "Specialty 10.01.08" or "10.01.01" because it had risked shattering some shibboleth of twentieth-century Soviet Marxism. These worn relics may be reissued as new volumes, but as cultural objects they will be stored alongside their old enemies, whose binding paste has never been cracked. As bibliographic genres, they are an equally dying species.

They are dying species not because Soviet literature has now graduated to some illusory international—i.e., Western—standard of literary meritocracy, some International Monetary Fund of good taste, but rather because the Soviet publishing industry has begun to take a more directive role in defining and filling consumer needs. Consequently, "the Twenties" as cultural object will not only be reasonably available at last for the consumption of its cultural value;

30. G. A. Belaia, *Iz istorii sovetskoi literaturno-kriticheskoi mysli 20-kh godov* (Moscow: Izdatel'stvo Moskovskogo universiteta, 1985).

"Mafia Is Immortal"; "Wowee!"; "Get Off My Back!" [*literally: "Don't Push the Psyche Button!"*].

the topic will also in turn be devalued as that consumer need becomes temporarily sated.

While we think of cultural *perestroika*, as opposed to economic *perestroika*, as a process of greater sensitivity to consumer needs in the realm of culture, it would be naive to ignore the role of emergent capital in channeling those consumer needs to conform to the interests of commodification. We will thus continue to discover, usually in retrospect, the 1990s equivalent of *Mozaika* [*Mosaic*]—the early thin volume of poems by a little-known poet, whose work appears in a print run of 8,000 copies. The reasons for its marginal status, however, will be entirely different. As Bitov put it most painfully, "it is forbidden" has already been replaced by "why bother."[31] New and difficult answers to this "why bother" will have to be sought by publishing houses and leading literary journals as they confront the choice of abandoning their institutional affiliation and explore other sources of support.

"Nikita Sergeevich, we have come a long way since the time when only the grave straightened out humpbacks," the poet Evgenii Evtushenko was once said to have remarked to Krushchev.[32] It is now clear that we have also come a long way since the time when writers had no choice but to sustain a dialogue with the Party First Secretary in hopes of an alternate cure. Nowadays, indeed, it is not even clear who is the humpback and who is not.

The term "literary process" had referred in the past to the mediating bureaucratic system of secretaries, editors, publishers, and censors responsible for the day-to-day administration of literary production, including, as well, the internalized censor. Only the muse was exempt, though not necessarily so. Preserved and transformed under *perestroika*, the literary process emancipates contemporary writing in certain respects, only to enslave it anew. Every aspect of the literary process is subjugated to economic redefinition, so that the censor, external and internal, figures in the new landscape of the marketplace, aware of what will sell and censorious of what will not. Thus the "*sami ponimaete*" ["surely you understand"] of the stagnation era became the "*sami ponimaete*" of the marketplace. The fact that this system, with all its flaws, may be preferable to its predecessor, the command-administrative system, does not diminish the fact that the censor still lives, just as in the West.[33]

31. Bitov, *Literaturnaia gazeta*, May 2, 1990.

32. See Priscilla Johnson and Leopold Labedz, *Khrushchev and the Arts: The Politics of Soviet Culture, 1962–1964* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1965), p. 121.

33. To be sure, fresh examples of old-style cultural repression are legion: the difficulties surrounding the publication of Andrei Mal'gin's compilation of contemporary poetry (Andrei Mal'gin "Kniga, kotoroi net," *Novoe russkoe slovo*, March 23, 1990); the refusal on April 4, 1990, to permit poet Naum Korzhavin a reading at the House of Culture (Scientific Research Institute for the Production of Precise Instrumentation) in Klimovsk, outside Moscow, even after his triumphant appearances in Moscow and Leningrad (Georgii Fedorov, "Muza i nachal'nik po rezhimu," *Moskovskie novosti*, April 22, 1990); the extensive survival of *spetskhrany* [closed archives], despite protesta-

In the short term, the old repressive traditions continue in peaceful coexistence with newer forms of repression, curious precisely because of their impermanence. The reluctance, for example, on the part of Soviet publishers to permit scatological language, a vestige of the, perhaps falsely, elevated glory of "Russian Literature," is bound to give way as the pressure to coordinate publishing projects with the West produces economic incentives to change. Language unprintable in the Soviet press has recently been reluctantly tolerated in Soviet cinema, witness the furor around Kira Muratova's *The Asthenic Syndrome* (1989), with its extensive scatological sequence near the end of the film.

While the battle over Muratova's right to use scatological language was fought and lost by the film industry's conservatives, this conflict, if located on the literary battlefield, would have been won by conservatives.[34] Thus, to choose

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tions to the contrary by censorship officials (Grigorii Nekhoroshev, "Spetskhranov bol'she net?" *Novoe russkoe slovo,* April 5, 1990). Relevant in this regard are novelist Daniil Granin's remarks about the Writers' Union as a whole:

> For a long time already, it [the Union of Writers] has not suited the writers themselves because it preserves the ossified structure of the 1940s, which is strengthening and hardening into a ministerial form. *Perestroika* has not affected it. . . . The USSR Writers' Union exists as an administrative office, to which people come with requests (Ivan Podshibalov, "Daniil Granin: pravosudie eshche ne svershilos'," *Moskovskie novosti,* February 2, 1990).

34. The outcome of cultural battles and the identity of victors can rarely be predicted. Though *Asthenic Syndrome* can be seen throughout the Soviet Union, it is allowed to be screened only in cinema clubs, which are smaller, more informal, and less profitable than movie theaters. It has, in effect, become the first film in many years to be "shelved" by Goskino, a decision that cannot be appealed now that the liberal Disputes Commission has refused to defend the film (see Mikhail Iampol'skii, "V zashchitu krepkogo sna," *Sovetskii fil'm* 5 [1990], p. 6). The fact that the film can be screened at all marks another revolutionary moment in the economics of Soviet cultural production and distribution: to offset the losses involved in making the film, Odessa Film Studios sold all rights to *Asthenic Syndrome* (and fifty prints) to the Society of Friends of the Cinema, which has control of the nationwide film clubs. Should the Moscow City Council approve the Society's petition for permission to screen the film in public theatres, the power of Goskino in shelving films will be dramatically diminished.

The printed side of film production, however, suffers from the same paralysis that exists in literature. The winner of the first Dina Merrill–Ted Hartley (RKO Productions) prize of $10,000—conducted in the Soviet Union by the American-Soviet Kino-Initiative (ASK)—for best screenplay for a joint production was the director and author Irakli Kvirikadze. His screenplay, *Amerikanskaia bliad'* [*American Slut*], was not published in 1990 because of the unprintable second word. Nonetheless, much was written in the Soviet press both about the contest and the prize-winning screenplay; the latter was always cited as *Amerikanskaia shliukha* [*American Tramp*]. The screenplay, using *bliad',* was advertised on the back cover of *Iskusstvo kino* 12 (1990) as forthcoming in 1991; yet when the text appeared (*Iskusstvo kino* 1 [1991]), *shliukha* took its place. And yet there *are* several instances of the word *bliad'* appearing in print without even the traditional deletion (*bl . . . d'*); see, for example, Dmitrii Prigov's poem "V polufabrikatakh dostal ia azu" in *Slezy geral'dicheskoi dushi* (Moscow: Moskovskii rabochii, 1990), pp. 9–10.

The prevailing situation with regard to "unprintable words" is best summarized by the disingenuous editorial note that opens the publication of Vladimir Sorokin's play, *Pel'meni,* in the special (youth) issue of *Iskusstvo kino* 6 (1990) devoted to popular culture:

one example from that turf, the almanac *Gondvana* ran into difficulties with a submission by émigré prose writer Eduard Limonov for its (literally) unprintable language. Remarks by *Gondvana*'s compiler, Vladimir Salimon, about Limonov's language characterize the current ambivalence regarding printed *mat* [obscenity]. Comparing East and West, Salimon remarks:

> It is no secret that frivolous speech is widespread in Western literature at present—not merely all kinds of slang, but also what is referred to as obscene language. . . . I believe that we shall try to deceive the censor in *Gondvana,* but we would prefer not to flood the pages of the almanac with an unending stream of "unprintable" curses. It is a pity, however, that we had to reject a rather sympathetic story by that same Edward Limonov for this very reason. It's about our Russian life and is structured in the form of a dialogue between construction workers and their foreman. So, surely you understand.[35]

Here Salimon sounds just like an old-fashioned Soviet bureaucrat, complete with the traditional ("surely you understand") invitation to complicity in the process of cultural stagnation. While not arguing the transcendent value of scatological language per se—so fuck you, ok?—reliance on the old rhetorical devices of the stagnation period is indicative of the paralysis of Soviet literature with regard to printed obscenity. Until the taboo against obscenity in mainstream literary journals is consistently broken, everyday life in all its complexity will continue to suffer from linguistic whitewash.[36] To break this taboo will require the publication of Limonov's semi-autobiographical *It's Me, Eddie!*—the *Precocious Autobiography* of émigré sexuality.[37] If Soviet culture is to progress beyond the now repressive model of the Thaw period, this charming and vulgar citizen of the world, as self-absorbed and provocative to the sensibilities of the early

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> Taking into account that this is an experimental issue, the editorial board decided not to tamper with the author's text and not to thwart the author's will. In publishing the "unprintable expressions" used by the author, we in no way consider that they should be admitted into the practice of literary publications.

35. T. Rasskazova, "Pleiada iz Gondvany," *Literaturnaia gazeta,* April 4, 1990.

36. It is curiously appropriate that the battle over scatology should be fought primarily around Limonov rather than Sorokin or Viktor Erofeev, prose writers just as talented as Limonov. Limonov is a "badder boy" than Erofeev or Sorokin for reasons that have nothing to do with a quantitative analysis of the textual frequency of unprintable words. He is worse because he is being bad *in the West,* where the worst punishment that can befall him is the censorious cluck-clucking of émigré culture. Moreover, Limonov has no *Metropol'* or *A-Ia* in his past. He did not grow up reading Solzhenitsyn in secrecy. On the contrary, according to Limonov (an unreliable narrator, to be sure), it is Solzhenitsyn's children who read Limonov in secrecy. See Olga Matich with Michael Heim (ed.), *The Third Wave: Russian Literature in Emigration* (Ann Arbor: Ardis, 1984), pp. 277–79.

37. Limonov, *Eto ia—Edichka!* (New York: Index, 1979). In early 1991 the first issue of the almanac *Konets veka* carried an announcement that it had signed an agreement with Limonov to publish *Eddie* in the Soviet Union.

eighties as Evtushenko, that "bard of dirty bedclothes," was to the early sixties, must be published in his own country.[38]

Described by Boris Kagarlitskii as the "revenge of the Sixties,"[39] *perestroika*'s early years drew heavily on the example of the Thaw. A continued reliance on the Thaw model is, therefore, counterproductive to an understanding of the left-liberal investment in *perestroika*. The Soviet "Sixties," which began in the early years of the decade, were at least as idealistic as our own, but they were not *only* idealistic. This was simply their most prominent feature. More interesting in retrospect was their circumspection.

The publication of a second issue of *Pages From Tarussa* is scheduled for 1991. It will celebrate the seminal role of the first collection (1961) in the literary history of the Thaw. Of all the important pieces in the first volume—prose by the young Bulat Okudzhava and Vladimir Maksimov; poems by Arkadii Steinberg, Vladimir Kornilov, and Korzhavin; the emergence of the late Nikolai Zabolotskii and Marina Tsvetaeva; sketches by Frida Vigdorova—the most interesting writing of the volume is to be found on pages five and six in a piece entitled "From the Publisher":

> The Program of the CPSU, discussed at the XXII Congress states: "The main line in the development of literature and art . . . is the inspired and vivid reproduction of what is new and genuinely communist, and the indictment of everything that impedes the forward progress of society." This expresses both everything that our people expect from artistic literature and everything that Soviet writers strive for in their work.[40]

38. Note Salimon's further description of Limonov, written with no intended reference to Evtushenko:

> [He] strives to be a cosmopolitan writer in the best sense of the word, that is, "to belong" to the whole world. It seems to me that he is equally interested by what is happening in Russian literature, in French literature . . . but most of all, by what is happening in the literature of Edward Limonov.

39. Boris Kargarlitsky, "The Importance of Being Marxist," *New Left Review* 178, p. 29.
40. "Ot izdatel'stva," *Tarusskie stranitsy* (Kaluga: Kaluzhskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, 1961), p. 6.

"Sexual Democrat"; "Sex Instructor/First Lesson Free"; "No AIDS in Our Kolkhoz."

Risking the charge of *Komarandmelamidism,* we suggest that this introduction is an unusually coherent expression of the Thaw period. The introduction's bland assertiveness, its insincere allegiance to the politico-cultural monolith, and its circumspect use of political orthodoxy as a screen for deviance are as redolent of the "spirit of the times" as the early prose of Okudzhava. Its aesthetic pleasure derives unintentionally from its stunning articulation of the Thaw mentality. Without this introduction, the reader loses a sense of how very far the Thaw and *perestroika* have grown apart from one another.

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The search for cultural consumers intersects with a much more familiar feature of Soviet socioeconomic reality: the citizenry's daily search for consumer goods and services. Just as the introduction of self-financing and cost-accountability in the cultural industries resulted in the commodification of cultural objects, the legitimation of cooperatives and incentives to individual initiative have resulted in intense competition both within the private sector and between the public and private sectors. The result of this competition, from the point of view of consumer goods and services, is not so much an increase in the number of objects available to the consumer as the aestheticizing of everyday

"Free the Waistline"; Key chain; bottle opener.

objects. While the duplication of keys continues to be a time-consuming chore, key-chains attached to laminated photographs of rock stars or miniature "ruble notes" are easily available for 1.50 real rubles; while the purchase of alcoholic beverages still requires forethought, patience in line, and substantial funds, attractive lightweight "all purpose" bottle-openers and corkscrews can be obtained for three rubles.[41]

Cooperative building contractors readily undertake the restoration and remodeling of living and business spaces, guaranteeing both the time of labor and the quality of workmanship. Cooperative fashion designers have begun to provide a range of clothing styles (and even sizes!) unseen for more than half a century in the Soviet Union. Cooperative restaurants offer a range of foods, decors, and entertainments that have been missing from state restaurants for as long. Cooperative "domestic industries" have begun to manufacture a range of products that have never been in state stores: designer candles, public toilet and restaurant maps, store and shopping guides, etc.

The aestheticization of everyday objects can also be observed in those industries that continue to be state-controlled and free of competition from the private sector. Whereas, for example, cooperative automobile-repair businesses present a challenge to the mismanaged official repair centers, no such competition is possible in automobile manufacturing.[42] Nevertheless, repeated calls in the press for the introduction of a greater range of car models, styles, colors, and options reflecting the widespread popular dissatisfaction with the status quo have elicited the automobile industry's announcements of forthcoming

41. Members of the Theatre-Studio at the Moscow Institute for Steel and Alloys (MISiS), formerly led by Viacheslav Spesivtsev, make a particularly effective one.
42. While automobile manufacturing continues to remain a state monopoly, several recently created cooperatives specialize in importing and delivering Western automobiles (primarily Volvo and Mercedes-Benz) to Soviet and Western businesses located in Moscow.

"Have You Joined the Cooperatives?"; "Time's Money"

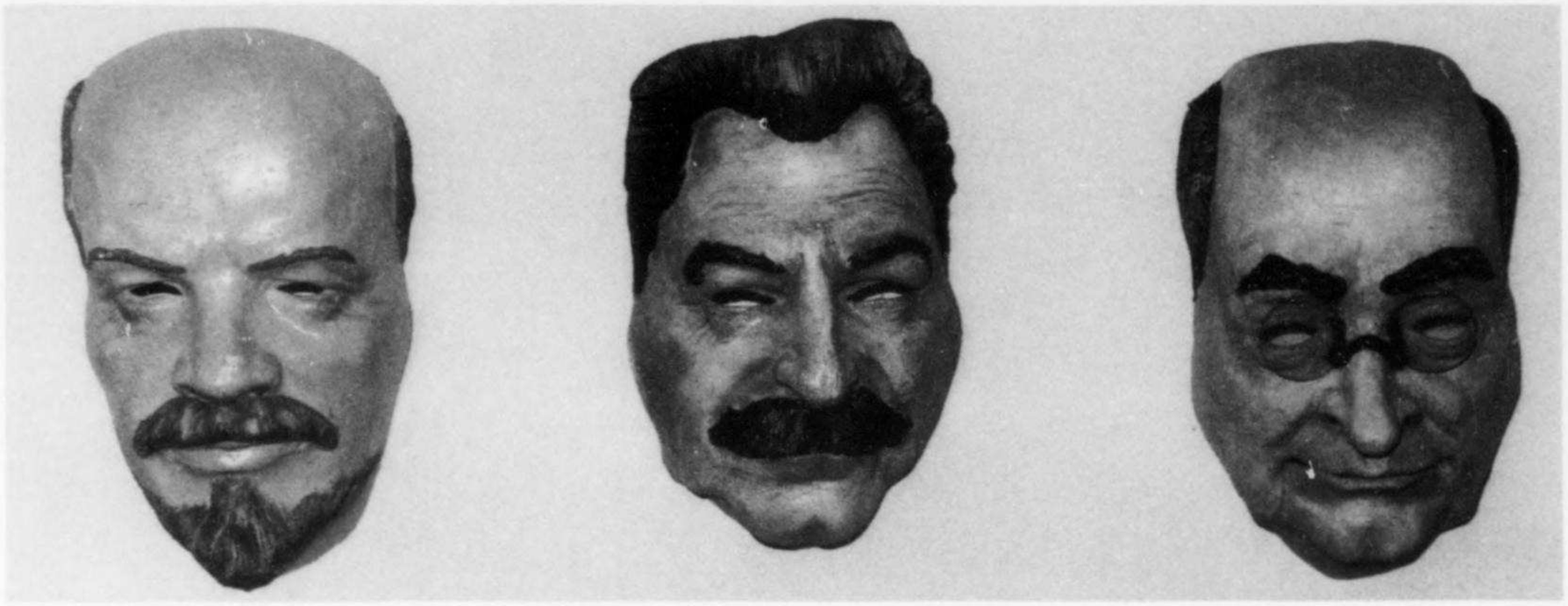
changes, thus reflecting acceptance of greater variety in consumer goods. Similarly, while Aeroflot's monopoly remains unthreatened (except in the Baltic republics), there is increasing pressure on the industry to upgrade sharply the goods and services it provides: luggage carts, seats, food, design of terminals, schedules, personnel, information, etc.

An analyst of contemporary Soviet culture confronts the following major paradox, among others: if the political controls over the cultural process in the pre-*glasnost'* years resulted in a highly politicized culture, then the dismantling of those controls during *glasnost'* has produced (at least so far) an even more intensely politicized culture. The more oblique the *political* mechanisms of repression have become since March 1985, the more openly and self-declaredly *politicized* the cultural process in turn becomes.

This intensification can be traced most precisely in the aestheticization of everyday objects. The sweatshirts and T-shirts (items of clothing for which the Russian language still lacks adequate analogues) manufactured by cooperatives are emblazoned with charged political messages such as "*Glasnost'*-Democratization-Socialism," "All Power to the Soviets," "We Are Not Slaves—Slaves Are Mute." Or they may carry images: positive ones of Gorbachev and El'tsin, negative ones of Gorbachev and Ligachev. The infamous black T-shirts of the "Pamiat" [Memory] group bear the tsar-bell and logo of the group. Cooperative-made aprons are decorated with reproductions of ROSTA illustrations that date back to the Civil War; cooperative-produced dish- and hand-towels replicate Constructivist designs. Piggybanks [*kopilki*] in the image of Brezhnev, with the coin slit between the throat and the puffed-up chest, are available in a variety of colors. Three-dimensional, multi-media wall hangings include images of a geriatric Brezhnev, Gorbachev as a "Statue of Liberty," Gorbachev pointing toward the viewer and asking "Have you restructured yourself?!"

The range of aesthetically marked consumer goods is best represented at the fair held on weekends at Izmailovskii Park in Moscow. Perhaps the most widely reproduced image of the fair is the set of masks sold by one enterprising craftsman: horror-masks displayed and sold side-by-side with masks of Soviet

"Down with Stalinism!"; "So, What Didn't You Have, Churbanov?"; "Strike While Gorbachev's [*hot*]."



political leaders.[43] While the cost of the masks doubled in the fifteen months from December 1988 to March 1990 (from 25 rubles to 50 rubles), the spectrum of political masks increased six-fold, providing an amusing aesthetic commentary on the reinterpretation of Soviet political history.

In 1988—that is, as the public "unmasking" of stagnation was winding down—only a Brezhnev mask was available. By January 1989—with the renewed anti-Stalin campaign well underway—masks of Stalin and Beria appeared; the Khrushchev mask went on sale just as the official reappraisal of his role in Soviet history was started in the mass media. Strikingly absent from this spectrum were the alpha and omega—Lenin and Gorbachev—of Soviet political leadership, thereby emphasizing the continued existence of two cultural taboos: the founder of the state and the reigning General Secretary were equally "off limits" to cultural mockery *even when* it was not necessarily intended. By early 1990 both taboos were nervously lifted, and masks of Lenin and Gorbachev appeared virtually at the same time.[44]

43. Photographs of the masks have appeared on the pages of *Ogonek*, *Time*, and the *New York Times Magazine*, as well as in programs broadcast on CBS and PBS.

44. The fragility of the suspended anti-Gorbachev taboo was underlined by the consequences of

Lenin; Stalin; Beria; Khrushchev; Brezhnev; Gorbachev.

These examples—the Soviet slogan T-shirts, the ROSTA aprons, the Constructivist towels, the Brezhnev piggybanks, the Stalin masks—share a common set of attributes. They are mundane objects of everyday life; they are elevated in mock fashion to a status akin to artwork despite their mundane function; they are politically charged. The elements of the mundane, aesthetic, and political become fused in a single cultural object. That object serves in a variety of ways to debunk the aesthetic system of the stagnation period, which had assigned specific values—some positive, some negative—to Soviet slogans, ROSTA, Constructivism, Brezhnev, and Stalin. That value system is trivialized through reproduction in the form of everyday objects.

While the art of Socialist Stagnation had derived its aesthetic value from, among other things, its loftiness and political correctness, much of the art of *perestroika* derives its value from being mundane and politically questionable.

This tendency is not confined to the realm of everyday objects, however. The transcendent genres of the *perestroika* period are precisely those marginal art forms traditionally seen as mundane debasements of mainstream art: publicistic as opposed to artistic prose; documentary film as opposed to feature film. In each case, aesthetic value is derived from the debunking of lofty and politically "correct" untruths of the past and the advancing of contemporary truths both mundane and politically "incorrect."

The overriding need for an alternative politicization of literature was most clearly evident in the March 1990 appointment of Fedor Burlatskii as editor-in-chief of *Literaturnaia gazeta*. As one of the letters submitted in support of Burlatskii's candidacy asserted in this regard:

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the demonstration on Red Square for the May Day Parade. On May 12, 1990, the Supreme Soviet almost passed a law making it a criminal offense, punishable by up to six years in prison, to engage in "insulting or slandering" the President (Bill Keller, "Moscow Lawmakers Considering Outlawing Insults to Gorbachev," *New York Times,* May 13, 1990). The law approved by the Supreme Soviet on May 21, 1990, while allowing for political criticism of the President, carries a six-year sentence for any criticism directed at him "in an insulting way" (Celestine Bohlen, "Insulting Gorbachev Now Illegal, But It All Depends on the Tone, *New York Times,* May 22, 1990).

"I Don't Drink"; "I'm First [in line] for Beer"; "I Don't Smoke"; "Who Swiped the Soap?"

> The broad politicization of society requires that every publication—and *Lg* is no exception—participate in discussing the burning issues of the day, problems relating to sociopolitical, societal, and economic life. Given the conditions of polarized opinions . . . the unifying role of *Literaturnaia gazeta* becomes primary and the personality of its editor-in-chief, his sociopolitical profile, his political experience acquire a special significance.[45]

A similar search for alternative politics is evident in the internal struggles of the Union organization "April": the more its members attempt to extricate literature from the politics of the past, the more politicized their activities become. Despite laments on the left ("what sort of organization is forming before our eyes—a political one or a creative one, after all?")[46] or sneers on the right,[47] politicization—that is, the seizure of politics' "means of production"—has proved to be the only effective mechanism of liberation from the oppressive politics of the past.

Laments of the left and sneers of the right are, however, united in the recognition that, for literature, politics per se is a false master, albeit the preferable choice to a devalued one. Within the emerging cultural marketplace in the Soviet Union, the devaluation of the *littérateur* is an inevitable development as other professions suitable to the aspirations of the urban intelligentsia open up to draw the university-educated into the fields of advertising, stockbrokering, financial consulting, international law, and foundation management.[48]

This shift in professional aspirations may not alleviate the glut of writers eager for the privileges of Union membership, but it will inevitably entail market-related changes in the demand for *certain kinds* of specialization within the Union. As the intense self-referentiality of Soviet literary culture wanes, the need for contextualization becomes more apparent in an international (and, therefore, increasingly segmented) literary culture. And with these two trends, poetry will no longer find the broad, appreciative audience it has enjoyed in decades past. Deprived of its two overweight suitcases, one stuffed with politics, the other equally bloated with lyricism, poetry will undergo a radical internal reorganization, seeking not only new themes, but new social functions as well.

45. "V sekretariate pravleniia SP SSSR," *Literaturnaia gazeta,* March 14, 1990.
46. Tat'iana Rasskazova and Boris Kuz'minskii, "'Aprel': predvaritel'nye itogi," *Literaturnaia gazeta,* May 9, 1990. See also T. Rasskazova, "I snova—voprosy politicheskie," *Literaturnaia gazeta,* April 18, 1990.
47. See the objections by Aleksandr Mikhailov, First Secretary of the Board of the Moscow Writers' Organization, about funding this organization's April 1990 conference (G. P. "Osoboe mnenie," *Literaturnaia Rossiia,* April 13, 1990).
48. For a further discussion of the background, see John and Carol Garrard, *Inside the Soviet Writers' Union* (New York: Free Press, 1990), p. 4.

Children's literature and animated films will lose even the vestigial memory of having served, on occasion, as havens for *inakomysliashchie* [renegade thinkers]. At the same time, the field of translation, with all its diversified potential for contextualizing new information, will be flooded.

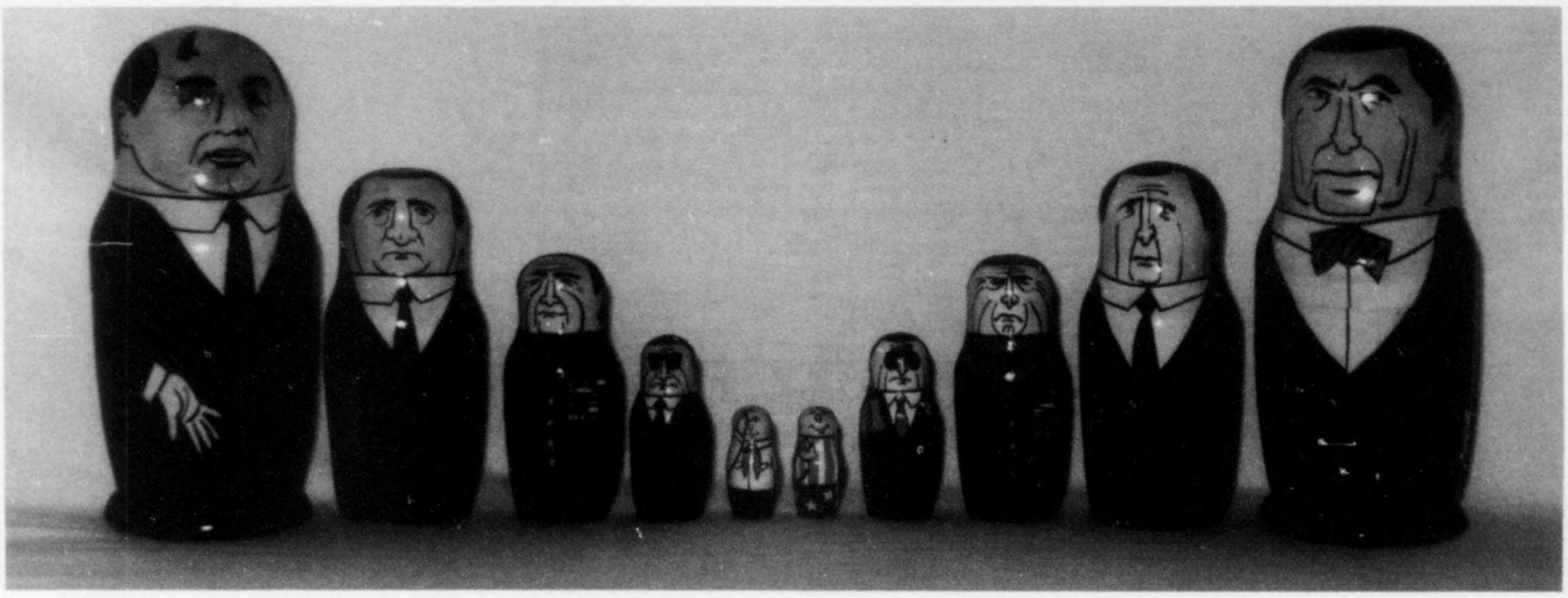
Literature as a profession is thus currently under colossal strain as it undergoes shifts not only in its internal status quo (personnel and bureaucratic structure; artistic value and literary genres), but also in its external status vis-à-vis other newly emerging (and lucrative) professions. Not only has it lost its aesthetic centrality in a monolithic theory of cultural production; the monolith itself has finally disintegrated completely, and with it the old coordinates of centrality. Not only has literature's old, Brezhnev-era right to circumspect political commentary been claimed by ardent new competitors; circumspection itself has become a historical oddity. The ambiguity necessary for political survival has been superceded by the ambiguity of aesthetic play.

*

A more mundane example of the interplay between the aesthetic marking of everyday objects and the aesthetic commentary on sociopolitical changes occurring in the Soviet Union can be discerned in the kinds of *matrioshki* [stacking dolls] available at the Izmailovskii fair. In the summer of 1988, craftsmen were selling sets of handmade and hand-painted *matrioshki* for prices that started at 200 rubles. Though these sets were more intricate in their decorations and more expensive than the ones sold in official stores, they were essentially similar in design: diminishing wooden dolls of identically painted peasant women wearing native costumes. The occasional deviation from the traditional norm—variations in costumes or facial expression—merely functioned as a sign that the dolls were *not* produced as part of the quota in official workshops, where many of the craftsmen were employed. The unusual aesthetic marking served as proof of homemade or cooperative production.

By late 1988, however, aesthetic marking was displaced by "cultural re-marking": the peasant women became nuns or martyrs, native costumes became religious habits, bread-and-salt became Orthodox crosses. The introduction of a new representational system, while at the same time retaining traditional form and structure, resulted in a classic example of "the same but different." Not surprisingly, prices for these religious *matrioshki* were even higher, starting at approximately 300 rubles.

Once "cultural re-marking" was underway, the *matrioshki* quickly moved into other forbidden zones: by January 1989 the first "contemporary" *matrioshki* went on the market—the Gorbachev-Reagan summit dolls. Sold as a pair for 350 rubles, these dolls contained a deliberate imbalance. Whereas the Soviet set (Gorbachev-Shevardnadze-Iazov-Chebrikov-Young Pioneer) was recognizable though highly stylized, the American set (Reagan-Schultz-Weinberger-Casey-



Young Pioneer[!]) was stylized and generic. It must be stressed that the unrecognizability of the Americans was not a result of ignorance (unfamiliarity with appearance) or incompetence (viz., the Soviet set). Indeed, images of these particular Americans had been a staple of the Soviet mass media for several years already. The American set was *so unrecognizable* precisely *because* the Soviet set was *so recognizable;* the identity of the American political figures was established *analogically, not representationally,* and it was successful because the Soviet political figures were so identifiable (hence the American pioneer). There was no taboo on the representation of foreign dignitaries or politicians, but there were stringent taboos in regard to contemporary Soviet figures.[49]

By March 1990 the "cultural re-marking" of the *matrioshki* took another step forward: *matrioshki* of General Secretaries (Gorbachev-Brezhnev-Khrushchev-Stalin-Lenin) now as a "Super Rock Group." There are a number of

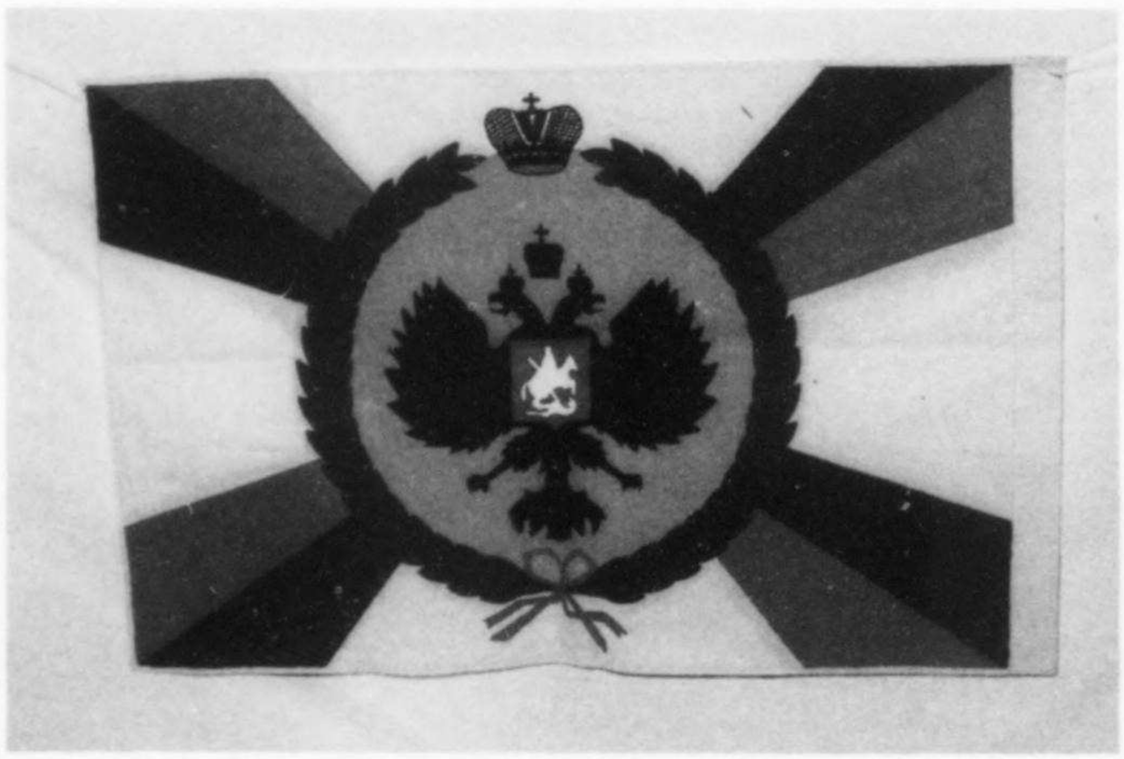
49. Compare this to the old joke, in which an American chides a Soviet for the absence of freedom of speech in the Soviet Union. "I can walk up to the gates of the White House," he says, "and shout 'Down with Nixon!' at the top of my lungs and nothing will happen to me." The Soviet calmly replies that this proves the existence of freedom of speech in the Soviet Union because "I, too, can walk up to the walls of the Kremlin and shout at the top of my lungs 'Down with Nixon!' and nothing will happen to me."

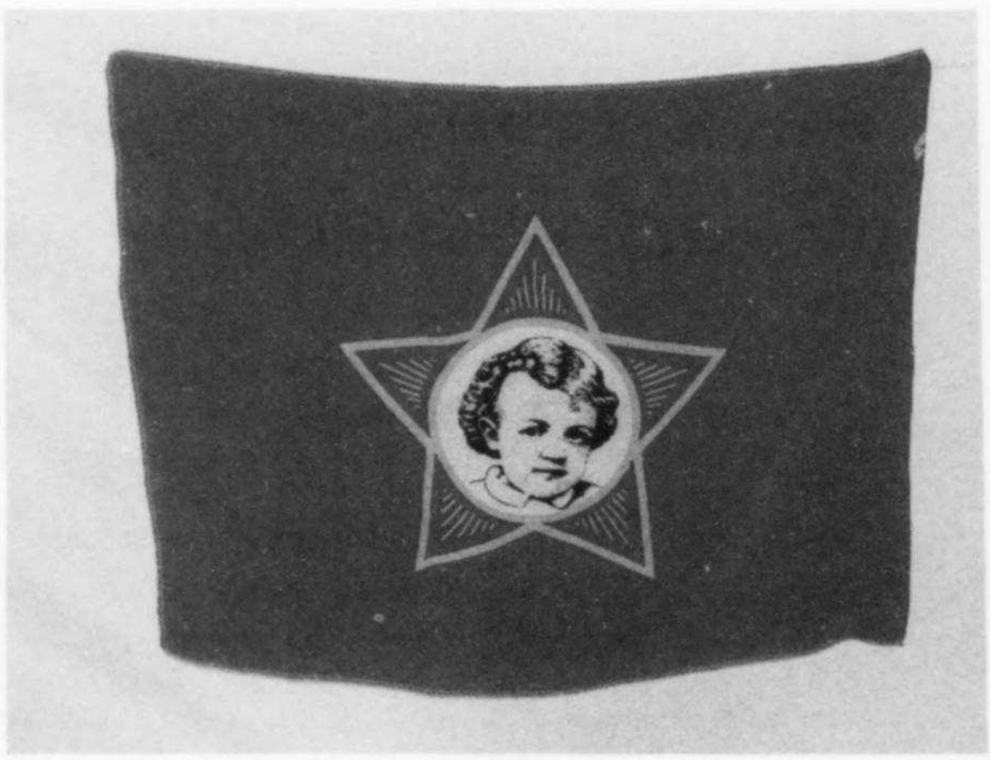
Gorbachev-Reagan summit dolls; General Secretary dolls (Gorbachev, Brezhnev, Khrushchev, Stalin, Lenin).

arresting features in this set: the "inappropriate" links between political leaders and rock music, the inclusion of Lenin, the emphasis on Stalin-as-butcher. Most striking, however, is the purposefully disrespectful attitude toward Gorbachev: the singer of *glasnost'* and *perestroika* as demon. "Cultural re-marking" has very quickly moved beyond the dangers posed by the choice of images and the accuracy of representation. It is already engaging a far greater and more abstract danger: the relationship of both producer and consumer to the represented image.

This "re-marking" of cultural and everyday objects is to be seen in a variety of ways and places. Frequently, it does not have an explicit political component. The traditional art of lacquer-painting on boxes and broaches (invariably identified by a specific workshop or location—Palekh, Fedoskino, Mstera, etc.) is now extended to jewelry, especially earrings and pendants. And yet, even such an innocent example (just like the *matrioshki*) contains several *implicit* political components: the deliberate deviation from traditional objects and modes of representation, the introduction of contemporary subjects, the absence of a monopolistic designation.

More frequently, however, this re-marking is explicitly political. The sanctity of the Soviet (and Republican) flag is being openly taunted by the reappearance of the Romanov flag with its double-headed eagle, the St. Andrew's flag, the independent (that is, pre-incorporation) flags of the Republics. Indeed, flags have once again become banners. Though made in the privacy of the home or workshop, they become public rallying points for the airing of private and national grievances as soon as they are unfurled on Red Square or Gor'kii Street. If the official flags maintain their monopoly both inside and outside state buildings, then unofficial flags and banners are increasingly taking control of the streets; if official flags continue to be sold exclusively in the dingy halls of state stores (Voentorg, etc.), then unofficial ones are available in any public gathering place (Izmailovskii, Ryzhskii Station, etc.).





Romanov flag; St. Andrew's flag.

While official state newspapers maintain their monopolistic control over the glass-enclosed, fortress-like kiosks, unofficial "informal" newspapers (the anarcho-syndicalist paper *Volia,* the anarcho-communist paper *Solidarnost',* the social-democratic paper *Novaia zhizn',* Republican papers like *Atmoda,* monarchist and anti-Semitic papers like *III-ii Rim,* or entrepreneurial ones like *Delovoi mir*) have taken over the public, open spaces at Pushkin Square, the Arbat, entrances to the metro, street-crossings, etc.

Even the uniquely Soviet obsession with *znachki*—those ubiquitous pins commemorating everything from "Poetry Day" to "Machine-Gunner, First Class," from the Komsomol to the Party Congress, from specific individuals to the Soviet people-at-large—has undergone a significant "cultural re-marking." Prior to the period of *glasnost', znachki* lacked an analogue in Western popular culture. *Znachki,* which signaled an individual's collective allegiance, occupied a socio-cultural space that was quite distinct from that of Western "buttons," with their highly idiosyncratic, often iconoclastic messages ("Question Authority," "Super Slav," "Eat the Rich") or straightforward assertions of individual convictions ("I Like Ike," "Fuck War," "Boycott Grapes"). The closest phenomenon in the U.S. to *znachok*-culture was the occasional (somewhat whimsical) collector of political-campaign buttons or rock-logo pins.

Although contemporary Russian still fails to make a distinction, since the onset of *glasnost', znachki* have now moved to a new sociocultural space, substantially closer to and analogous with Western button-culture, offering portraits of rock stars (Grebenshchikov, Zhanna Aguzarova, Kostia Kinchev, Victor Tsoi), political slogans ("Boris—Struggle!" "Egor, You're Not Right" "MISHA—I Don't Hear Any Self-Criticism"), expressions of personal conviction ("We'll Figure it Out! " "Help Materially," "Good People Must Reproduce!"), ironic assertions ("Bug Off," "I'm Not Waiting For You," "Don't Teach Me How to Live," "There! Bought Myself this Button"), etc.

Three features distinguish these new, individually made *znachki* from the older state-made ones. First, they cost approximately ten times as much: while official *znachki* sell (on the average) for 15 to 20 kopeks, the new ones range from 1.5 to 3 rubles. Second, unlike the stamped metal of the earlier *znachki,*

"*Viktor Tsoi* [*of Kino*]; [*Kostia Kinchev of*] *Alisa; Zhanna Aguzarova* [*of Bravo*].

the new ones consist for the most part of a plastic backing with an appliqué of words or images. Last, and most important, no matter what their messages, the new *znachki never* signal an individual's collective allegiance. On the contrary, the new *znachok* is a sign either of the wearer's deviation from the reigning sociopolitical norms or of the wearer's commitment to an alternative set of cultural ones. The message (image or logo) is irrelevant; in a peculiar echo of Marshall McLuhan, the medium is the message.

It is precisely this last feature that socially, politically, and culturally demarcates these entrepreneurial *znachki* from the new, more "orthodox" ones produced either by state-endorsed charity cooperatives ("Building a Home for Afghan Vets") or by the Church ("Millenium of a Christian Rus'"), which has been granted a monopoly over the production and distribution of religious objects. The *znachki* issued through these two channels are virtually indistinguishable in form, function, or distribution from the older ones: colored, stamped-metal pins that proclaim an individual's collective allegiance in con-

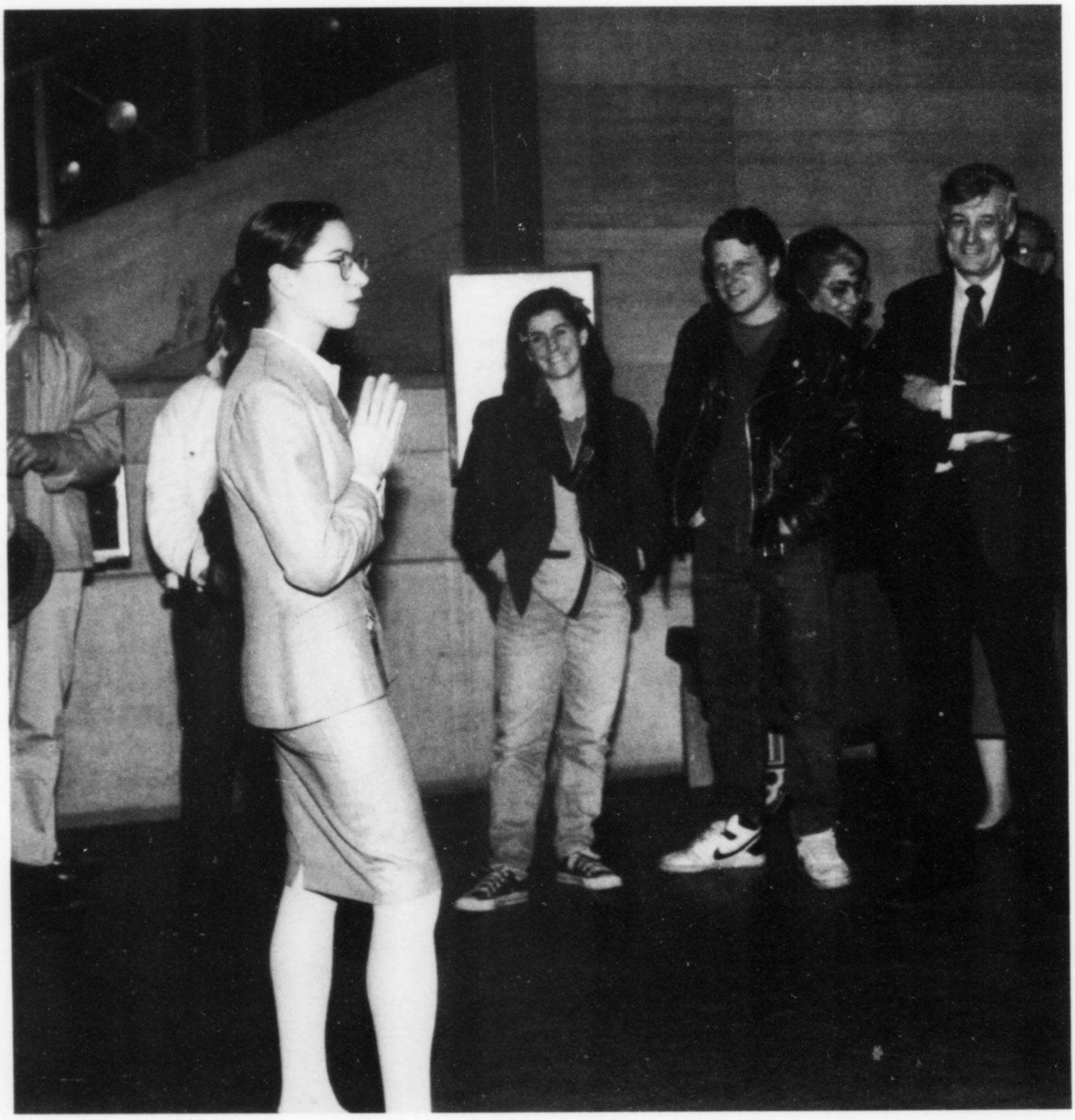
"Boris—Struggle!"; "Egor [Ligachev], You're Not Right"; "MISHA—I Don't Hear Any Self-Criticism"; "We'll Figure It Out!"; "Help Materially"; "Good People Must Reproduce"; "Bug Off"; "Don't Teach Me How to Live"; "I'm Not Waiting For You"; "There! Bought Myself This Button."

ventional visual and verbal formulas, and sold in enclosed spaces (kiosks, the sale counter inside the Danilovskii monastery). They are, however, more than twice as expensive as the *znachki* produced by the informal cooperatives and sold on the streets: the "*afgantsam*" *znachok* costs seven rubles, the Church's five.

Although both the state-endorsed charity organizations (the veterans' projects, the Cultural Fund, the Society for the Preservation of Monuments, etc.) and the Russian Orthodox Church are essential components of the transformation taking place within the Soviet cultural process, each runs the risk of being "left *inside* in the cold." At issue here is not merely their respective dependence on conventional images, established means of production and distribution, and traditional concepts of cultural objects. The stakes are much higher.

The dissolution of the inherited models of "cultural process" and its transformation into a "cultural marketplace"—characterized by the commodification of cultural objects, the aestheticizing of everyday objects, and the "cultural remarking" of everyday and cultural objects—is not reducible to the mechanistic emergence of mercantile capitalism. Inseparable from this development is the search by *all* cultural producers for an independent, authoritative voice within a radically redefined and expanded cultural field. This search carries but a single prohibition: do not seek to reproduce this authority amidst the rubble of discredited authoritarianism. To do so is to search among the dusty, empty shelves of the ideological *gastronom* [state food store] for the bounty that the open-air *rynok* [private marketplace] does not, or does not yet, provide.

"Building A Home for Afghan Vets"; "Millennium of a Christian Rus'"; "His Holiness Pimen, Patriarch of Moscow and All Rus'."



Museum Highlights:
A Gallery Talk

ANDREA FRASER

Posters, placards, signs, symbols must be distributed, so that everyone may learn their significations. The publicity of punishment must not have the physical effect of terror; it must be an open book to be read. Le Peletier suggested that, once a month, the people should be allowed to visit convicts, "in their mournful cells: they will read, written in bold letters above the door, the name of the convict, his crime and his sentence . . ." Let us conceive of places of punishment as a Garden of the Laws that families would visit on Sundays . . . a living lesson in the museum of order.

—Michel Foucalt, *Discipline and Punish*, 1977

In every home in Philadelphia, youth will be taught to revere the things that are housed here.

—Mayor Harry A. Mackey, at the opening of the new Pennsylvania Museum building, March 27, 1928

The West Entrance Hall of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, February 5, or 11 or 12 or 18 or 19, 1989. Two or three dozen museum visitors are waiting in the southeast corner of the visitor reception area; some are waiting for a Contemporary Viewpoints Artist Lecture by Andrea Fraser; some are waiting for one of the museum's many guided tours; some are just waiting for friends.

At three o'clock, Jane Castelton enters the West Entrance Hall and begins to address whoever appears to be listening. She is dressed in a silver-and-brown houndstooth check double-breasted suit with a skirt just below the knee in length, an off-white silk button-down blouse, white stockings, and black

pumps. Her brown hair is gathered into a small bun held in place with a black bow:

Good afternoon, uh . . . Everyone? Good afternoon. My name is Jane Castelton, and I'd like to welcome all of you to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. I'll be your guide today as we explore the museum, uh, its history, and its collection.

Our tour today is a collection tour—it's called Museum Highlights—and we'll be focusing on some of the rooms in the museum today, uh, the museum's famed period rooms; dining rooms, coat rooms, etcetera, rest rooms, uh—can everyone hear me? If you can't hear me, don't feel shy, just tell me to speak up. That's right. As I was saying, we'll also be talking about the visitor reception areas, and various service and support spaces, as well as this building, uh, this building, in which they are housed. And the museum itself, the museum itself, the "itself" itself being so compelling.[1]

Of course, we'll only be able to visit a small portion of the museum on our tour today; its over two hundred galleries contain hundreds of thousands of art objects spanning the globe and centuries. But, just to give you a general idea, uh, to help you orient yourself, this may be your first visit, your very first visit to the museum today—welcome again.

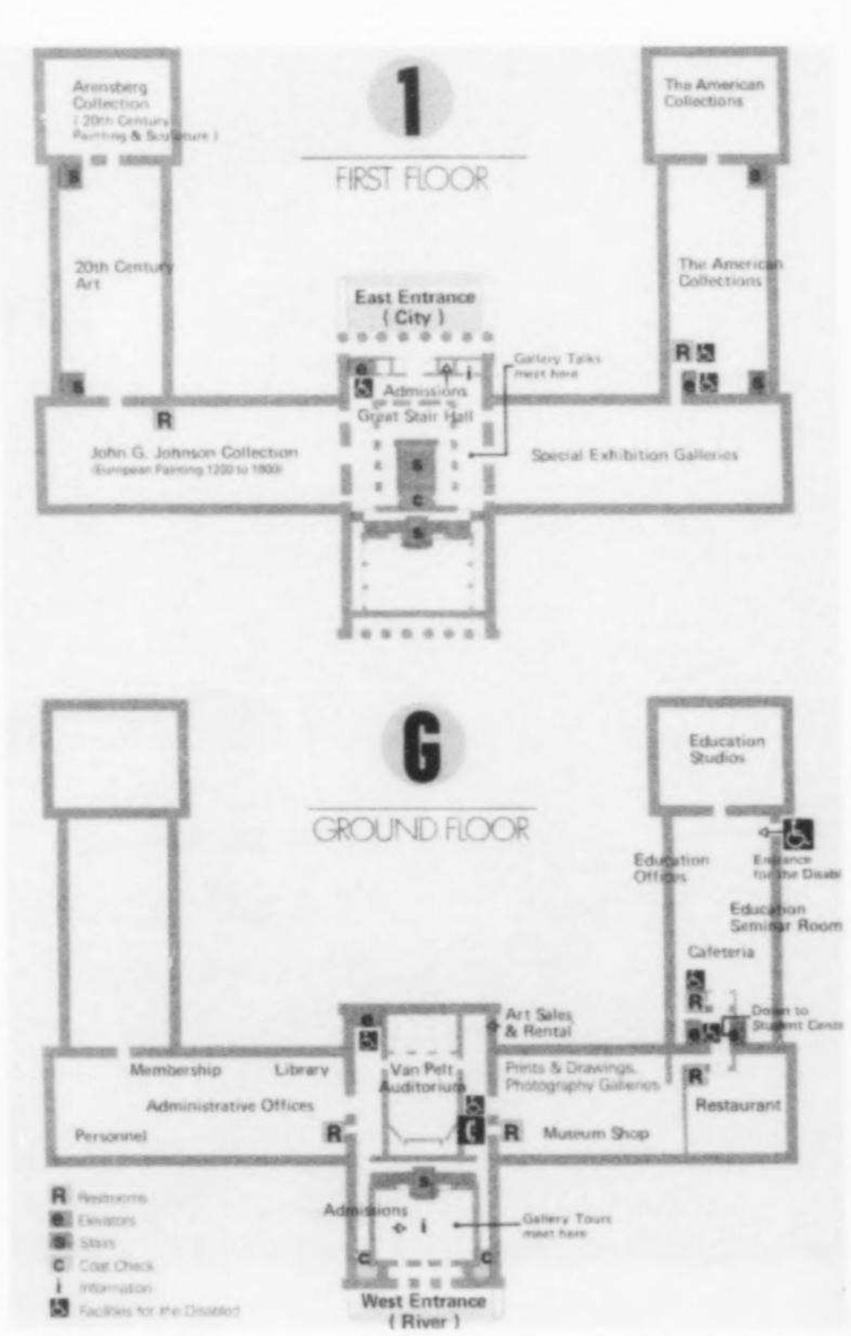
This is the West Entrance Hall. Uh. Opposite, of course, is the East Entrance, where we'll be going shortly. This is really the center of the museum which —as you can see on these maps here—consists of a long central building with wings extending back at each end. It's four stories high including a basement.

This West Entrance Hall provides access to the ground floor of the South Wing which houses some of the museum's public facilities that we'll be visiting uh, later on today . . .

Jane walks to the information desk in the center of the West Entrance Hall:

It also houses the museum's brand new combination information desk, admissions desk—I hope that all of you have paid your admission fee—and, uh, membership desk. If you're a museum member, of course, you don't have to pay an admissions fee.

1. "Museum Highlights" was developed as part of the Contemporary Viewpoints Artist Lecture Series, which was organized by the Tyler School of Art of Temple University, and funded by the Pew Charitable Trusts. The performance owed its existence to Hester Stinnett, the director of Contemporary Viewpoints, who invited me to Philadelphia, and to Danielle Rice, the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Curator of Education, who sponsored the performance from within the Museum. I would also like to thank Donald Moss for his comments on various drafts of this script; Allan McCollum, for first calling the activities of docents to my attention; and Douglas Crimp, at whose request this script was first prepared for publication in *October*.



Membership, you know, "plays a vitally important role in the life of the museum. Many members indicate that they joined the museum because they perceive it to be an institution of the highest quality, one of the world's great repositories of civilization. They see it as a place apart from the mundane demands of reality where an individual can fortify his or her linkage with the creative forces of the world, old and new."[2]

And, uh, if you're a museum member, you'll also be able to use the Members Only Lounge located on the balcony directly above my head and to the right, as you see . . .

I myself did not pay an admission fee. Uh. I'm not a museum member, nor am I a museum employee. I'm a visiting lecturer, a guest of the Division of Education. Uh, I am also, like the Board of Trustees and the Museum Guides, a volunteer.[3] It is thus my privilege, my privilege, as a guest, as a volunteer—and, shall I say, as an artist—to be able to express myself here today simply as a unique individual, an individual with unique qualities.

And I sincerely hope that I express my best qualities—as do we all, if I may say so. That's why we're here.[4]

Let's move on to the East Entrance, shall we. Follow me if you will.

Jane leads the group to the elevators:

Uh, here we are. We're going to the second floor.

When the group reassembles on the second floor in the Great Stair Hall, Jane continues:

Is everyone here?

This is the Great Stair Hall, and, as you can see, we're on the second floor, just inside the East Entrance. As I said earlier, this is really the center of the museum, and it provides access to the museum's collections. To my right is the South Wing where the American art is generally kept to itself on the first floor, with the South Asian, Near and Far Eastern, and Medieval art on the second floor. To my left is the North Wing where you'll find European and twentieth-century art on the first floor and, on the second floor, more European art and the period rooms that we'll be talking about later today.

2. Robert Montgomery Scott and Ann d'Harnoncourt, "From the President and the Director," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Magazine* (Spring 1988).

3. This is partly true. For the first performance I received an honorarium from Contemporary Viewpoints. The following four performances were "voluntary."

Providing the services of a guide in the galleries and at the information desk, a volunteer docent is not just someone who gives tours for a small percentage of the museum's visitors; she is the Museum's representative. Unlike the members of the museum's nonprofessional maintenance, security, and gift shop staff that visitors come in contact with, the docent is a figure of identification for a primarily white, middle-class audience. And unlike the museum's professional staff, the docent is the representative of the museum's voluntary sector.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art, like many municipal or civic museums in the United States, is a hybrid of public and private nonprofit, volunteer and professional. The city owns the building and provides municipal employees for its security and maintenance; volunteer trustees own everything in the building and govern a private nonprofit corporation which engages other volunteers and hires a professional staff. While docents are usually trained by the professional staff, I would say that they aspire less to professional competence than to what Pierre Bourdieu calls the "precocious," "status-induced familiarity" with legitimate culture that marks those to whom the objects within the museum belong(ed); an "imperceptible learning" that can only be "acquired with time and applied by those who can take their time" (Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgment of Taste,* trans. Richard Nice [Cambridge: Harvard University Press. 1984], pp. 71–72).

4. While Jane is a fictional docent, I would like to consider her less as an individual "character" with autonomous traits than as a site of speech constructed within various relations constitutive of the museum. As such, Jane is determined above all by the status of the docent as a nonexpert volunteer. As a volunteer, she expresses the possession of a quantity of the leisure and the economic and cultural capital that defines a museum's patron class. It is only a small quantity—indicating rather than bridging the class gap that compels her to volunteer her services in the absence of capital; to give, perhaps, her body in the absence of

Uh. The Philadelphia Museum of Art is one of the oldest art museums in the United States. It was originally the Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, and it was established in 1877, 1877. Uh, that was in Memorial Hall, not this building.[5] This building opened to the public in 1928. It wasn't originally supposed to be the new home of the Pennsylvania Museum. It was first envisioned about 1907 as, uh, just as a, as "a great building [to be the] terminal feature of the [Benjamin Franklin] Parkway. The purpose of the building was secondary."[6]

But an art museum is not just a building, not just a collection of objects. An art museum—particularly a municipal art museum like our own—is a public institution with a mission, with a mandate. And the Philadelphia Museum of Art, uh, like all public institutions, was the product of a public policy.

What was that policy?

Well, writing about *The New Museum and Its Service to Philadelphia in 1922*, the museum wrote that, uh, they wrote: "We have come to understand that to rob . . . people of the things of the spirit and to supply them with higher wages as a substitute is not good economics, good patriotism, or good policy."[7]

Like the other municipal institutions of the day—uh, the Zoological Garden and the Aquarium, also, of course, in Fairmount Park; the new free library on the Parkway; the new municipal stadium; Camp Happy, "for undernourished children"; Brown's Farm, for "dependent and abandoned children"; the new House of Correction; the new Hospital for Mental Diseases at Byberry; the new General Hospital at Blockly; the Hospital for Contagious Diseases at Blockly; the Hospital for the Feeble-Minded at Blockly; the Home for the Indigent at Blockly;[8] the Commercial Museum next to Blockly, where homeless men were sometimes housed, "dedicated to economic education"—now the Philadel-

art objects. Yet it is enough to position her in identification with the museum's board of trustees, and to make her the museum's exemplary viewer.

5. The Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art was a product of the Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia in 1876. In 1893 the School of Industrial Art moved to a "property formerly belonging to the Institution for the Deaf and Dumb." The Pennsylvania Museum maintained a large study collection of decorative arts. By 1910 it began to be derided as a "mixed up collection of industrial exhibits and curiosities, as well as art, in . . . the cluttered gloom of Memorial Hall" (Nathanial Burt, *Perennial Philadelphians* [Boston: Little Brown, 1963], p. 344). "Occupied by specimens of Industrial Art," Memorial Hall was considered unsuitable "for the exhibition of paintings and fine art" (*Report of the Commissioners of Fairmount Park for the Year 1912, p. 9*).

6. George and Mary Roberts, *Triumph on Fairmount* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1959), p. 24.

7. Anonymous, *The New Museum and Its Service to Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: The Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, 1922), p. 19. Art museums began to be established in numbers in the United States in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. At that time there was a general movement, spearheaded by bankers and industrialists, to tighten public relief and reorganize public policy. The primary aim of this movement was to eliminate all direct outdoor or extra-institutional public relief which, Francis Fox Piven and Richard Cloward write, "was making it possible for some of the poor to evade the new industrial assault" by providing an alternative to the choice between work under any conditions and starvation (Fox Piven and Cloward, *The New Class War* [New York: Pantheon, 1982], p. 64). Direct material relief would be limited to the poorhouse, where "'discipline and education' should be 'inseparably associated with any system of relief'" (Michael B. Katz, quoting Josephine Shaw Lowell, *In the Shadow of the Poorhouse* [New York: Basic Books, 1986], p. 71).

8. According to the *Report of the Committee on Municipal Charities of Philadelphia* (1913), Blockly was "a reproduction on a large scale of conditions often found in country almshouses," an overcrowded and "unscientific massing of several types of dependents" (p. 11).

phia Civic Center; the poorhouses of Germantown, Roxborough, and Lower Dublin . . .[9]

Called living tombs and social cemeteries, vile catchalls for all those in need, squalid warehouses for the failures and castoffs of society,[10] no one would enter the poorhouse voluntarily. The receipt of public assistance was made into a ritual of public degradation so abhorrent that even the meanest work for the meanest wages was preferable.[11]

Jane walks to a window and leans against the grand piano standing in front of it:[12]

The Municipal Art Gallery "that really serves its purpose gives an opportunity for enjoying the highest privileges of wealth and leisure to all those people who have cultivated tastes but not the means of gratifying them." And for those who have not yet cultivated taste, the museum will provide "a training in taste."[13] But, above all, the Municipal Art Gallery should be "generous enough to fitly symbolize the function of art as the expression of all that is noblest in either the achieve-

In 1928, the year that the new Pennsylvania Museum on the Parkway opened to the public, Philadelphia's Home for the Indigent was described in municipal reports as follows: "In this division of the bureau is the City's poor of both sexes; some who have served their apprenticeship in crime and shady transactions, as lax in caring for their bodies as their morals, acquainted with the usages and customs of reformatories and prisons, graduates from the House of Correction and similar institutions, having 'sold their birthright for a mess of pottage,' and when unable to continue the customary mode of existence owing to age or infirmities, have drifted into the home and become a public charge. . . ." (*The Fourth Annual Message of W. Freehand Kendrick, Mayor of Philadelphia, Containing the Reports of the Various Departments of the City of Philadelphia for the Year Ending December 31, 1927*, p. 244).

9. This list was compiled from the *First Annual Message of Harry A. Mackey, Mayor of Philadelphia, Containing the Reports of the Various Departments of the City of Philadelphia for the Year Ending December 31, 1928.*

10. Nineteenth-century descriptions of nineteenth-century poorhouses quoted in Walter I. Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State* (New York: Free Press, 1984, p. 59).

11. The establishment of public institutions, particularly poorhouses, as deterrents to their use and goads to work at menial jobs at below subsistence wages is an idea that was perhaps first codified in England in the 1834 *Report from His Majesty's Commissioners for Inquiring into the Administration and Practical Operation of the Poor Laws*: "Into such a house no one will enter voluntarily; work, confinement, and discipline, will deter the indolent and vicious; and nothing but extreme necessity will induce any to accept . . . the sacrifice of their accustomed habits and gratifications." (Quoted in Frances Fox Piven and Richard Cloward, *Regulating the Poor* [New York: Random House, 1971], p. 35).

12. Where Mrs. Robert Montgomery Scott is wont to give impromptu recitals.

13. The Museum Fund, *A Living Museum: Philadelphia's Opportunity for Leadership in the Field of Art* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania Museum and School of Industrial Art, 1928), pp. 2, 17.

With the idea that material relief caused the problems of unemployment and poverty by indulging the character defects of the poor, late nineteenth-century bourgeois charity organizers and "scientific philanthropists" ar-

ments or the aspirations of humanity . . . 'where there is no vision the people perish . . .'"[14]

Jane throws open the curtains covering the window and reveals a perfect vista of the Benjamin Franklin Parkway:

And just look at this view! Magnificent!

gued that the proper aim of public assistance was to build character. While some scientific philanthropists lobbied to limit direct material assistance to the punitive and disciplinary poorhouse, others complemented the antiwelfare effort by establishing a new kind of public institution. Like charity organization societies, these libraries, colleges, and museums would work to "regenerate character, which involved the direct influence of the kind and concerned, successful and cultured, middle- and upper-class people" on the masses. In opposition to the poorhouse, they would provide only things of the mind and spirit, not things of the body. (Trattner, *From Poor Law to Welfare State,* p. 97.)

While subsidized directly or indirectly with public funds, the publicity of these new institutions, and particularly art museums, would be concealed by the much more highly publicized privacy of the bankers and industrialists who held them in trust. Their status as public institutions would not be a function of their identification with a public sector. Rather, it would be a function of public address. Their publicity would work to create a public for them; to oblige this public to enter them; to identify this public with the culture they contain and the interests they represent—not as its own, but as that to which it should aspire.

14. Fairmount Park Art Association, *Forty-Second Annual Report of the Board of Trustees* (1914), p. 18.

I would like to consider the art museum, then, as one term in an organization of public institutions, and of publicity, into a system of incentives and disincentives, goads and deterrences. As coupled ideas, paired and opposing representations, this system might function similarly to what Michel Foucault described in *Discipline and Punish* as the tactics of eighteenth-century penal reform: "Where exactly did the penalty apply its pressure, gain control of the individual? Representations: the representations of his interests, the representations of his advantages and disadvantages, pleasures and displeasures . . . By what instruments did one act on the representations? Other representations, or rather couplings of ideas (crime-punishment, the imagined advantages of crime–disadvantages of punishment); these pairings could function only in the element of publicity: punitive scenes that established them or reinforced them in the eyes of all." (Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison,* trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: Vintage Books, 1979], pp. 127–28.)

"If we do not possess art in a city, or beautiful spots in the city, we cannot expect to attract visitors to our home town."[15]

Jane gestures toward the group:

"Because young people in particular are drawn to the area, Philadelphia attracts a huge labor pool of college-educated and -trained technical people. And, due to its old manufacturing traditions, skilled laborers are also plentiful."[16]

Jane leaves the window and walks through and past the group. She gestures generally as she walks:

"The climate is healthy. Quality space is available and affordable. . . . The systems for success are in place and working well. But even more important, Philadelphia is livable.

"You can choose from five professional sports teams, a world-class symphony, 100 museums, the largest municipal park system in the country, and a restaurant renaissance the whole world is talking about."[17]

Plus: "Eight million square feet of new commercial office space . . . High-tech, Health Care, Medical Publishing and Printing, General Business Services, Financial Services, Heavy Manufacturing [and] Fashion . . ."[18]

I'd like to move on now to the galleries where we'll be talking about some of the museum's period rooms, uh, as I mentioned earlier, the museum's famed period rooms. If you'll just follow me, please.

Jane leads the group through the European Art galleries to one of the museum's period rooms:

This is the Grand Salon from the Chateau de Draveil. It's French, uh, eighteenth century . . .

Few eras in history were more preoccupied with "living in style" than eighteenth-century France . . .

Notice "the chaste style, characteristic of the later years of Louis XVI's region . . . revealed here in the simplicity of the broad surfaces, in the slender proportions of their frames, and in the classical ornaments . . . carved with the most extreme crispness and brilliance . . . of great beauty and refinement . . . unusual interest . . . of the utmost delicacy . . ."[19]

Next, I'd like to talk about another period room. It's just across the gallery. If you'll follow me, please . . .

15. Joseph Widener, "Address," in Fairmount Park Art Association, *Fifty-Sixth Annual Report of the Board of Trustees* (1928), p. 44.
16. Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, "How a Unique Combination of Location, Lifestyle and Low Costs is Sparking a Regional Economic Boom in the Nation's Birthplace," *Business Week,* April 18, 1986, p. 27.
17. Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, "Philadelphia is a decision you can live with," *Business Week,* April 18, 1986, p. 13.
18. Philadelphia Industrial Development Corporation, "Unique Combination of Location, Lifestyle and Low Costs," p. 27.
19. Fiske Kimball, "Six Antique Rooms From the Continent," *The Pennsylvania Museum Bulletin* 24 (Oct./Nov. 1928), p. 7. (Kimball was the Parkway Museum's founding director.)

Jane walks across the gallery to another period room, entered through a short, narrow corridor that also contains the door to the Men's Room:

Ah, this is a Paneled Room from England, dating from 1625. It contains seventeenth-century Dutch paintings, and was installed in the museum in 1952 . . .

And in here, this is the Men's Room.

"What a difference there may be on opposite sides of a thin partition-wall! On this side of the wall is a family inclined to dirt and disorder because of its unperfect social education. . . . Cleanliness of persons or rooms is wholly forgotten. The floors become littered with filth, for no one feels the desire or obligation to have it otherwise. The rights of property are disregarded or are only respected through fear and personal force.

"On the other side of the wall only a few inches away, the floor, neatly carpeted, is spotless. The center-table holds a . . . lamp, [and] a vase with fresh grasses . . . There are pictures on the walls, of . . . landscapes [and] the family . . . One may find a bureau turned into a shrine.

"It stands to reason that slovenly and destructive occupants are not accorded the same attention that is given to . . . those who are clean and careful and prompt in their payments."[20]

Jane leaves the Paneled Room:

"The public, who buy clothes and table china and wallpaper and inexpensive jewelry, must be forced to raise their standards of taste by seeing the masterpieces of other civilizations and other centuries."[21]

Here for example . . .

Jane gestures around the gallery:

"Imposing architectural installations provide noble settings within the museum's . . . galleries."[22]

Jane walks north into the next gallery. Then, addressing The Birth of Venus *by Nicolas Poussin:*

"Resplendently . . . amazingly flawless . . . sumptuous . . . This figure is among the finest and most beautiful creations . . . An image of exceptional rhythm and fluidity . . ."[23]

20. Octavia Hill Association of Philadelphia, *Good Housing that Pays* (Philadelphia, 1917), p. 83.

21. Anonymous, *The New Museum and Its Service to Philadelphia,* p. 5.

22. The following descriptions (except those otherwise footnoted) were taken in the order that they appear from the *Introduction to the Philadelphia Museum of Art* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1985).

23. I would like to consider the following descriptions as representations not of paintings, but of the museum's ideal visitor—representations of her interests, representations of her advantages and disadvantages, pleasures and displeasures. They are representations less addressed to than constructing the museum's audience—constructing out of a heterogeneous field of different, conflicting interests, a homogenous public. They would do so by taking hold of those interests, wants, needs, desires; taking hold of them and representing them, reforming them, directing them and determining the space, the language, and the logic in which they can be articulated.

Jane walks across the room to address Saint Luke *by Simon Vouet:*

"This is the most spectacular . . . prized for their clear bold patterns and relatively few yet strong and harmonious . . . of the more than one thousand works collected by celebrated Philadelphia lawyer . . . monumental, sculptural . . . in an austere setting . . ."

Jane walks north into a gallery containing The Four Seasons *attributed to Augustin Pajou. As she walks:*

"Steady, thrifty, forehanded and domestic in their habits . . . independent and self-helpful . . . quietly self-assured."[24]

Addressing The Sacrifice of the Arrows of Love on the Altar of Friendship *by Jean Pierre Antoine Tassaert:*

"One of the most jarring and emotionally effective interpretations . . . The writhing, enchained, muscular . . . majestic, frenzied . . . vast and vigorous . . . perfectly complemented Europe's opulent palaces and churches . . ."

Let's move on to the next gallery, shall we . . .

Jane walks north into the next gallery. Gesturing generally:

"One of the most complex and graceful compositions of the seventeenth century . . ."

Addressing Cabinet *attributed to Adam Weisweiler:*

"This charming group of dancing maidens . . . graceful, life-size, mythological . . . a creation of almost visionary splendor. The sweeping and surging . . . exaggerated, lunging . . . at once so splendidly theatrical and so obviously individualized . . ."

Jane walks back into the gallery containing The Four Seasons. *She addresses the group:*

"Though she was from 'out of town' her background was similar to theirs, and she fit into the routine of afternoons 'at home,' the Tuesday box at the Academy of Music, the opening night of the Oil Painting Show . . ."[25]

Speaking generally:

"Where the best qualities of taste were sustained until late in the century . . .

24. Descriptions of Philadelphians are from Burt, *Perennial Philadelphians,* p. 108, and John Lukacs, *Philadelphia: Patricians & Philistines 1900–1950* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1981), p. 72.

25. A description of Mrs. Eli Kirk Price. Price, according to George and Mary Roberts, was responsible for getting the new Fairmount Museum building on the city plan. See Roberts, *Triumph on Fairmount,* p. 21.

Addressing a guard's stool in the corner of the gallery:

"In scale and complexity . . . the most ambitious undertaking . . . in the great European tradition . . . abundance and grace . . . free from time and change . . ."

Addressing The Four Seasons: Autumn as Bacchus:

And here . . . "American, mother, three brothers distinctly subnormal, herself mentally deficient, violent, undisciplined and lacking in every qualification of motherhood, shiftless, irresponsible . . . Her second husband is one of the most degraded, of a low and vicious family . . . extremely backward and incorrigible . . . father being of less than average intelligence . . . generally . . . regarded by all who have dealt with her as weak . . . and a dangerous character on account of her immoral propensities . . . grossly low condition . . . unable to learn . . . of no service in the home, and constantly . . . given to self-abuse . . . almost entirely nude . . . stretched out on the floor with a dirty, blackened pan . . ."[26]

Addressing group:

I want to be graceful.

Rituals of family and love and orderliness . . .

Jane walks back to the gallery with The Birth of Venus. *Speaking generally:*

"Gentle, private . . . charm and originality . . . Total restraint . . . utilitarian . . . rectilinear . . ."[27]

Addressing The Birth of Venus:

"Lower-class culture: there is a substantial segment of present-day American society whose way of life, values, and characteristic patterns of behavior are the product of a distinctive cultural system which may be termed 'lower class.'"[28]

Jane walks back into the gallery between The Grar d Salon *and the Paneled Room. Speaking generally as she walks across the gallery:*

"Plain grace . . . harmony and perfection . . . impressive . . . severely formal, yet tender . . . vigorous . . . humble . . . joyful . . ."[29]

"Shiftless, lazy, unambitious . . . chronic poor . . .

Addressing Rape of the Sabines *by Luca Giorgano:*

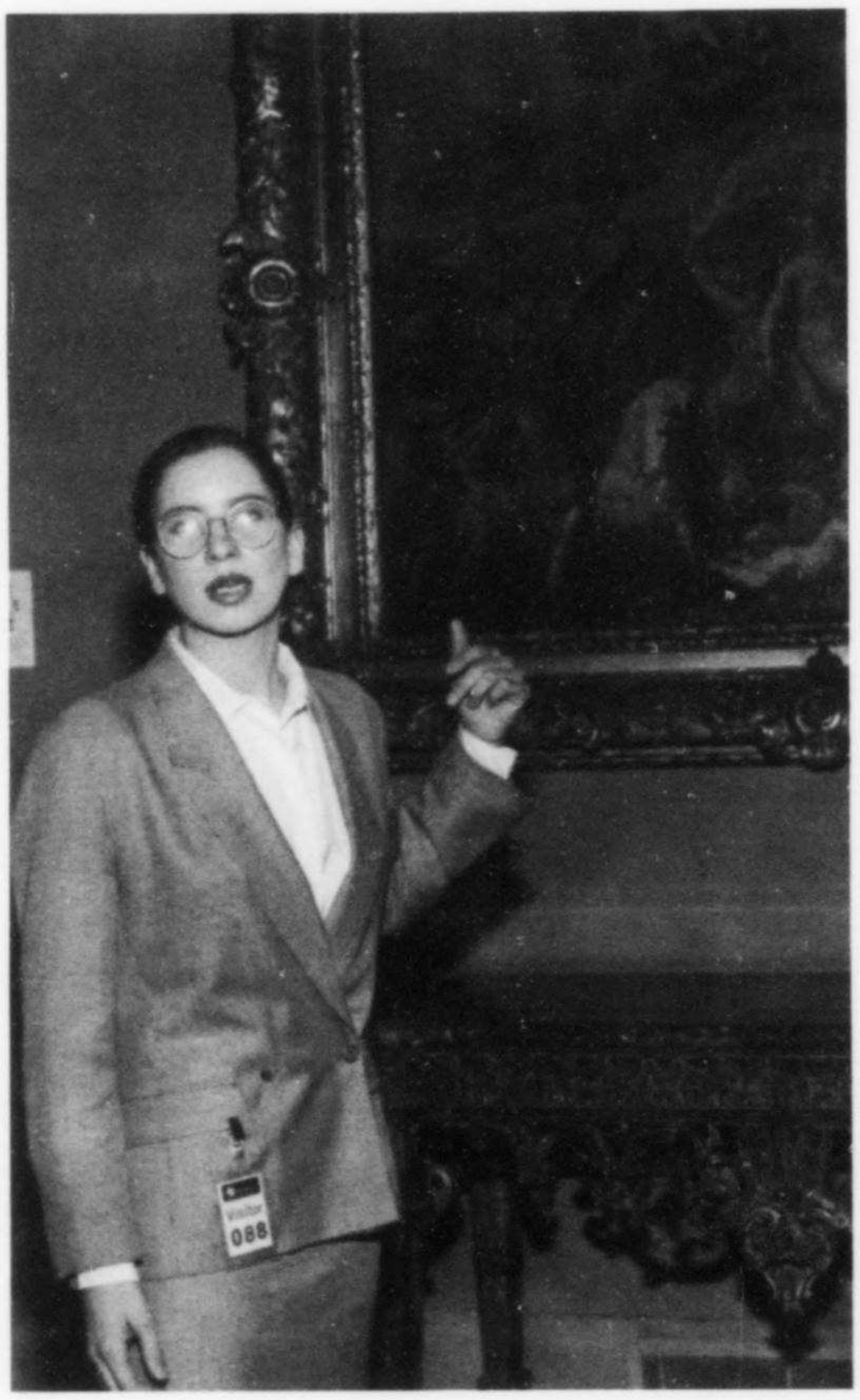
26. Department of Public Health and Charities of Philadelphia, *The Degenerate Children of Feeble-Minded Women* (1910), pp. 2–8:

"THE HISTORIES OF THESE FEEBLE-MINDED WOMEN AND THEIR FEEBLE-MINDED CHILDREN ARE PRACTICALLY THE SAME. THEIR UNFORTUNATE BIRTH, HELPLESSNESS, PAUPERISM AND RUIN IS PART OF A CONTINUOUS SERIES WHEREBY THE COMMUNITY IS CONSTANTLY SUPPLIED WITH THE ELEMENTS OF DEGENERACY" (p. 8).

27. *Introduction to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.*

28. Walter B. Miller, quoted in Chaim I. Waxman, *The Stigma of Poverty: A Critique of Poverty Theories and Policies* (New York: Pergamon Press, 1977), p. 26.

29. *Introduction to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.*



"Unable to 'make a go of it' because of character deficiencies or lack of skill . . . [If you'll just follow me]; 'the new poor'; 'multi-problem families'; 'the culture of poverty'; 'disreputable poor,' 'paupers,' 'cannot cope,' 'make noise,' cause trouble and generally 'create problems' . . . 'lower—lowers'"[30]

Addressing an exit sign above door at the far end of the gallery:

"Firm in painting, delicate in color and texture, this picture is a brilliant example of a brilliant form."[31]

Or over here . . .

Jane exits the gallery, leaving most of the group some distance behind her. She continues into the Medieval art galleries, walking back toward the Great Stair Hall. Speaking generally:

"Unstable and superficial interpersonal relationships . . . low levels of participation . . . little interest in, or knowledge of, larger society . . . sense of helplessness and low sense of personal efficiency . . . Low 'need achievement' and low levels of aspirations for the self.

Turning to address the group:

"The love of beauty is one of the finer things that makes life worth living."[32]

Again speaking generally:

"Jobs at the lowest level of skills . . . unskilled . . . and menial jobs . . .

Gesturing toward various parts of the gallery:

"In hotels, laundries, kitchens, furnace rooms, nonunionized factories, and hospitals . . ."[33]

"Scattered brick houses . . . dreary warehouses . . . blank walls and junkyards . . . drab, enclosing . . . sometimes blue . . ."[34]

Jane walks through the doors to the Great Stair Hall. She stops and turns to address group:

Really! I mean . . .

Here for example . . .

Jane moves in the direction of the stairs as she speaks, gesturing generally at benches, the stone railing, tapestries, etcetera:

30. Z. D. Blum and P. H. Rosi, "Social Class Research and Images of the Poor: A Biographical Review," in *On Understanding Poverty,* ed. Patrick Moynihan (New York: Basic Books, 1969), p. 350.

31. This sentence is the complete description of a painting in "The Display Collections: European and American Art," *Pennsylvania Museum of Art Handbook* (1931), p. 65.

32. Museum Fund, *A Living Museum,* p. 27.

33. Blum and Rosi, "Social Class Research," p. 351.

34. Description of approach to Philadelphia's Twentieth Street Station on a train. From Roberts, *Triumph on Fairmount,* p. 17.

"You take your ordinary, barnyard room, so to speak, the familiar room that you have lived in, that you never thought of as a work of art, and somehow, insensibly, you pull it about, you put a chair in a different place, you arrange the mantelpiece, get rid of half the impedimenta of the mantelpiece—you know how most people load up the mantelpieces—you simply strip it and you put one or two things there and you put them in the right place . . . an artist will do that . . . Well, that's what a museum does, I think, for all of us."[35]

I'd like to continue on now to the first floor . . .

Jane descends the Great Stair with the group. At the second landing she begins speaking, gesturing in various directions around the Great Stair Hall as she walks. When she reaches the bottom of the stair she walks around it to the left:

As I mentioned earlier, it "consists of a center building, with wings at each end extending back . . . It is four stories high, including the basement . . .

"The inmates are lodged in rooms of about 22 feet by 45 feet (of which there are 42) from 20 to 24 persons in each room, and are classed according to their general character and habits, separating the more deserving from the abandoned and worthless, and thus removing the most obnoxious feature consequent to such establishments. The Americans are generally by themselves; so are the Irish; and the Blacks also have their separate apartments.

"[It] also contains a penitentiary, a hospital for the sick and insane, several large buildings for work shops, school rooms, lodging rooms for children, and the various out-houses of a large and well-regulated establishment . . ."[36]

She stops in front of Diego Rivera's Liberation of the Peon, *which is hung outside the door to the coat room underneath the stair:*

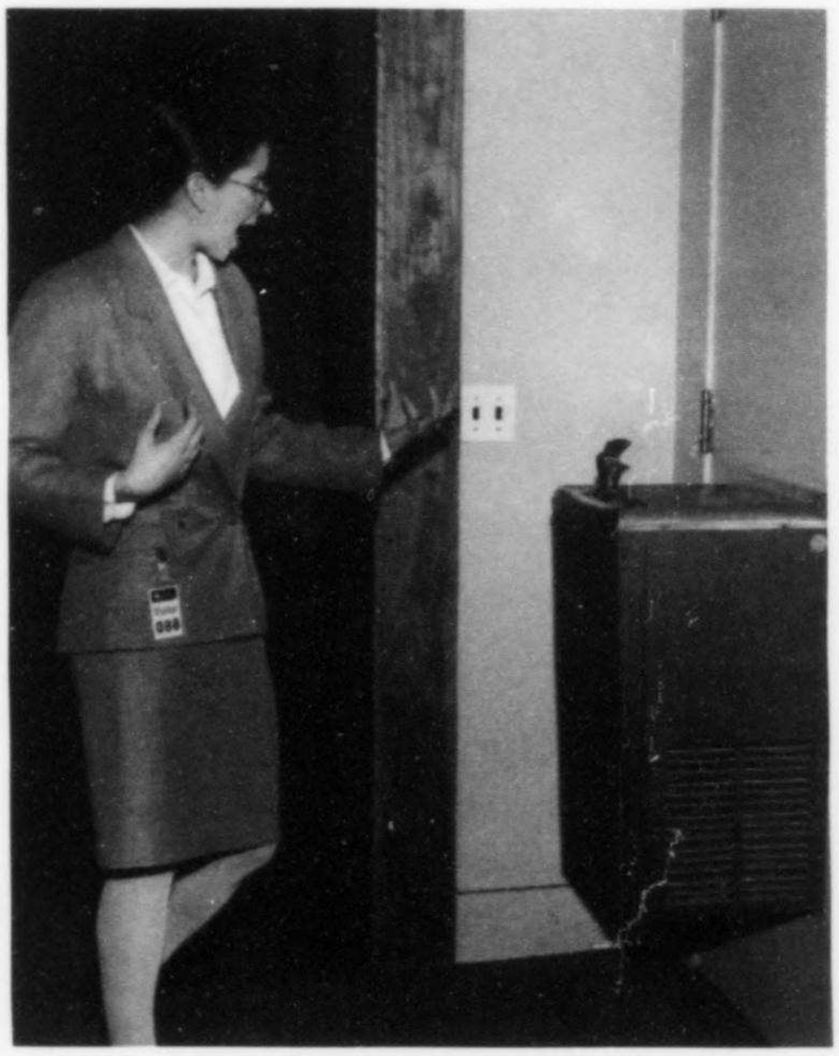
And isn't this a handsome drinking fountain!

Jane walks into the Coat Room, gesturing toward the drinking fountain at the far end. Addressing the drinking fountain:

Hmm, ". . . a work of astonishing economy and monumentality . . . it boldly contrasts with the severe

35. Royal Cortissoz, "Life and the Museum," Fairmount Park Art Association, *Fifty-Seventh Annual Report of the Board of Trustees* (1929), p. 55.

36. Philadelphia Board of Guardians, "Report of the Committee Appointed by the Board of Guardians of the Poor of the City and Districts of Philadelphia to Visit the Cities of Baltimore, New York, Providence, Boston and Salem (1827)," in *The Almshouse Experience: Collected Reports,* ed. David Rothman (New York: Arno Press, 1971), p. 8.



and highly stylized productions of this form . . . [Uh, notice, uh . . .] The massiveness . . . the vast [uh] . . . most ambitious and resolved . . .!"[37]

Graceful, mythological, life-size . . .

I want to be graceful.

Jane leaves the coat room, gesturing for the group to follow her:

Y'know—come along. You know "each individual, no matter how untutored, [can find] a thousand objects (or better still, just one . . .) so obviously perfect and so directly in the line of [her] own half-understood striving for perfection that . . ."[38]

Here, for example . . .

Jane walks to a David Smith sculpture. Standing next to it, she holds her arm outstretched:

Notice how the light catches the fabric, the tiny houndstooth checks of the suit, and silvers the fabric a little more brightly, as it falls about the arms, the legs, uh, just below the knee, and creases slightly at the waist, double-breasted . . .

But look at the face. The skin is broken. She turns her head away slightly . . .

Jane begins walking to the stairs leading to the West Entrance Hall, still speaking:

While her dress and bearing may suggest an upper-class, uh, lady, the discriminating, uh, the discriminating, viewer, will notice that her hands are scarred and poorly manicured, and her teeth have not been straightened.

I'd like to move on to the West Entrance now . . .

Half-way down the stairs to the West Entrance Hall, Jane turns to address the group:

"The museum's task could be described as the continuous, conscientious and resolute distinction of quality from mediocrity."[39]

"Hunger is the best sauce, and everything that is eatable is relished by people with a healthy appetite. [But] . . . a satisfaction of this sort shows no choice directed by taste. It is only when the want is appeased that we can distinguish which of many men has or has not taste."[40]

37. *Introduction to the Philadelphia Museum of Art.*
38. *The New Museum and Its Service to Philadelphia,* p. 20.
39. Alfred H. Barr, Jr., quoted from a plaque in the Museum of Modern Art.
40. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment,* trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hasner Press, 1951), p. 44.

The Philadelphia Inquirer

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DAILY MAGAZINE

SECTION D

PEOPLE • HOME • MOVIES • THE ARTS • TV • STYLE

"I just love to play," says Jon Bon Jovi's cousin, whose name has given her career a boost — even though she's playing small clubs, she's been on MTV news.

Bongiovi and her lead guitarist, Sian Steele, making music in a New York City rehearsal studio.

Jodi Bongiovi: Rockin' like a relative

By Scott Brodeur
Special to The Inquirer

She's been a guest on the Howard Stern radio show. She's chatted with Joe Franklin on his nationally televised talk show. She's been pulled on stage at the Stone Pony in Asbury Park to accompany Bruce Springsteen in "Santa Claus is Coming to Town." MTV has included her on its news segment.

Things have gotten so busy lately, her agent has even had to start denying some media requests for interviews. There are just too many.

Not bad for a rock singer who hasn't even recorded an album yet.

But that's what happens when your name is Jodi Bongiovi. As in Jon "Living on a Prayer" Bon Jovi. As in mega-producer Tony Bongiovi.

See, Jodi Bongiovi is the 26-year-old first cousin of Jon, whose face adorns the lockers of gushing schoolgirls everywhere. She's also the second cousin of Tony, who has produced albums for performers such as Talking Heads, Ozzy Osbourne and the Ramones, and whose Power Station recording studio in New York is one of the most famous in the world.

While this little episode of *All in the Family* is convenient for generating instant publicity, it has also been a hindrance, says Bongiovi, who opens for the Ramones at the Chestnut Cabaret tonight. It pushed her into the limelight before all the rough edges had been polished.

Take her first interview with a newspaper reporter last fall. Apologizing for arriving 20 minutes late, she blurted out that she just hadn't been able to find her hair spritz. When the story was published, she was dubbed rock's "hair apparent."

"I learned you don't start talking until the reporter asks you the questions," said Bongiovi, laughing at the recollection.

The Jersey native, who now lives in East Brunswick, is the first to admit she doesn't deserve all of the attention her name has accorded her — "not yet, anyway." But she's not traveling first-class, either.

Bongiovi — who, unlike her cousin, retains the original spelling of her family name — has been hopping around smaller clubs in the Northeast for the last six months. Among the more glamorous gigs she and her four-piece backup band have played have been openings for such retreads as the Guess Who and Foghat.

At some shows, they've played for a mere handful of fans. But, she said, she's willing to pay her dues.

"I try to look at things as positively as I can," said Bongiovi, who grew up with Jon but hasn't seen him often since he hit it big. "As long as there's a stage up there, and I'm on it, I'm going to be smiling. There can be one person in the audience, and I'll key on that person and play to that person. I just love to play, and as long as I see that one person out there, I'll give it everything I have."

On a recent Wednesday night before a respectable crowd at CBGB's in New York, Bongiovi took the stage at 10 p.m. Dressed in a black leather jacket, tight black T-shirt and black pants, she danced, tossed her hair — about her only feature that resembles Jon's — and smiled as she played to the audience. Her movements consisted mainly of

(See BONGIOVI on 4-D)

Special to The Inquirer / CHONG-KRING CHEUNG

Bongiovi, 26, who performs at the Chestnut Cabaret tonight, also has a second-cousin in the business: Producer Tony Bongiovi.

'Philadelphia Cornucopia' out of view

Station renovation sends Grooms' sculpture into storage.

By Leonard W. Boasberg
Inquirer Staff Writer

George and Martha Washington, Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin are wrapped in plastic again. So are Julius Erving, Lucretia Mott and Thomas Eakins' male nude model. They and the other historic figures and artifacts in *Philadelphia Cornucopia*, Red Grooms' larger-than-life "sculpto-rama" of Philadelphia life and history, are back in the Civic Center, in storage for the third time.

For 15 months, until mid-January, *Cornucopia* had been on display in the northern waiting room of 30th Street Station, seen by — or ignored by — many of the millions of people who pass daily through Amtrak's second-busiest station.

Now, however, the 55-year-old railway station is to be restored and rehabilitated over 2½ years, at an estimated cost of $75 million. So *Cornucopia*, which is owned by the city, must be disassembled to make room for scaffolds.

Amtrak has no plans to put it back. *Cornucopia*, which some people love and others detest, occupies 2,800 square feet, with figures up to 12 feet high. "It took up half the seating of our north waiting room, and when the station is renovated, there won't be a place for it," said an Amtrak representative in Washington.

There is a possibility, however, that the work will be put together again, if the office and arts complex planned for the area north of the station is built. A major element of the complex, which would use Amtrak's air rights over 66 acres, would be a performing-arts center, said executive director Stephen Gele of the Philadelphia Center for the Performing Arts, a nonprofit group involved in the project. The complex is a joint venture of Gerald D. Hines, a Houston developer, and AtlantiCenter, a Philadelphia partnership headed by H. Leonard Prechter.

"We expect to find a permanent location for [*Cornucopia*] insofar as papier-mache can be said to be permanent," said Gele.

Cornucopia was commissioned in 1982, on the occasion of the city's tricentennial, by the Institute of Contemporary Art at the University of Pennsylvania. It first went on display there, for three months.

Later, a citizens' committee raised more than $110,000 to purchase it for the city, and the work was displayed for three years in the Visitor Center of Independence National Historical Park. Then it was disassembled again and sent to the Civic Center until September 1987, when it was put back together in 30th Street Station.

Its figures are made of Celastic, a material that dries harder and is more durable than papier-mache but is otherwise similar, and they are in pretty good shape, said Randy Dalton, the art installer who has been putting up the work and taking it down for more than five years.

Nevertheless, he said, if it goes up again, it will need some restoration of its own: "It's getting a little tacky."

Month-plus 'Poetry Week' has a well-versed program

By Leonard W. Boasberg
Inquirer Staff Writer

This year's celebration of Poetry Week in Pennsylvania kicks off tomorrow with the annual "Great Voices" readings by Julius "Dr. J" Erving and other well-known Philadelphians, and schoolchildren. It proceeds through March and then goes into overtime with several events scattered around the state in April.

That's well over a month. So why is it still called "Poetry Week"? Margot Barringer, American Poetry Center president and founding mother of the event, smiles and murmurs, "Poetic license."

As it happens, Mayor Goode's proclamation of the month of March as Poetry Week isn't scheduled until the middle of the month — March 15 at 5:30 p.m., to be precise, followed by a reception in the Mayor's Reception Room. Is this political license? No, explains a mayoral representative, mutual convenience: The Mayor's Commission on Literacy is sponsoring a poetry read-in on that day, one hour earlier in the same room. So this way, the participants — adults who are learning to read or getting their high-school diplomas, along with their volunteer tutors — can be invited to the ceremony and reception.

Pennsylvania's Poetry Week/Month started out six years ago as Philadelphia's Poetry Week. Today it's the largest such celebration of poetry (which Matthew Arnold described as "simply the most beautiful, impressive and widely effective mode of saying things") in the United States. Indeed, according to Barringer, there's no poetry celebration as extensive anywhere in the world.

This year more than 210 events are scheduled to take place in 41 cities and towns in Pennsylvania, with more poets than you can shake an iambic pentameter at — nearly 300, at last count.

A number of celebrated poets will participate. Two, Yunna Moritz and Aleksandr Tkachenko, are coming from the Soviet Union. There also will be the exiled Soviet Jewish poet Joseph Brodsky, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1987, as well as

(See POETRY on 3-D)

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The Philadelphia Inquirer / APRIL SAUL

Andrea Fraser as Jane Castelton, art museum guide.

Suppose you heard a museum guide describe a painting as "Shiftless! Unambitious!" Would you sense a sendup?

An indecent docent lectures for laughs

By Karen Heller
Inquirer Staff Writer

"Look at this painting," docent Jane Castelton says. "Graceful, mythological, life-size. So utilitarian and rectilinear. Plain grace. Harmony and perfection. She was from out of town."

Jane is talking about Poussin's *The Birth of Venus* at the Philadelphia Museum of Art. We only took two art history courses in college, but still, we are not sure that the guide in her prim suit and sensible shoes knows what she is talking about.

"And here," she says emphatically, gesturing broadly, "Shiftless! Unambitious! Chronic poor! Unable to make a go of it! Make noise! Cause pollution!"

Here she is describing Giordano's *Rape of the Sabines*, which is none of these things. Poor Jane, perhaps she had a rough night.

"In the heyday of colonial art, on the eve of the Revolution, this was one of the finest of American rooms, derived from the French rococo style," she says, moving on to perhaps her favorite place in the museum. "This room was frequented by George Washington when he was commander-in-chief and president of our country. They were stately people."

A good doctor might be able to help.

Jane is standing in the cafeteria.

But her speech is so passionate, and her enthusiasm so infectious, that the lunchroom's patrons rise to give her an ovation. Jane blushes. She so loves her job.

If Jane doesn't seem quite real — after all, this is a woman who says of a stool, "in scale and scope, the most majestic of undertakings" — that's because she isn't. There is no Jane. There is only Andrea Fraser, a New York performance artist, who created Jane three years ago. She was asked to contribute a piece to "Damaged Goods: Design and the Economy of the Object" at the New Museum of Contemporary Art in Manhattan. "Instead of making an object," says Fraser, who insists she has nothing in common with Jane except scale and color, "I decided to do a tour."

Fraser's work is concerned with exploring art in a larger context, "discussing non-art objects and linking them to art." The artist, 22, has created a museum catalogue as an artwork, has made a videotape of Jane's tour and is involved with the group The V Girls, which does a per-

(See ARTIST on 6-D)

In the West Entrance Hall:

"Still, it takes very little to produce a perfect plate of fruit and cheese." Here, for example . . .

Addressing one of the Dancing Nymphs *by Claude Michel (known as Clodion):*

"Hunks of sharp white vermont cheddar served in rough-hewn blocks, and a single perfect apple are elegant in their simplicity and preferable . . .

Turning to address second of Dancing Nymphs:

". . . to such daunting combinations as chicken medallions with avocado."[41]

Jane walks away from The Dancing Nymphs. *She walks past the coat room and into a corridor with rest rooms, telephones, the Art Sales and Rental Gallery, and some contemporary art. She speaks while walking, turning occasionally to address the group:*

"I heard at a Sunday brunch not long ago . . . Everybody, it seems, now has horror stories:

"A man with a magnificent house on Delancey Place says he can't keep flowers outside, because every morning he finds the pots overturned and his sidewalks covered with filth and litter.

"Another man tells of seeing a street bum [who seem to have taken every available nook, cranny and stairwell] sprawled in front of Nan Duskin on Walnut Street, in our prime retail location. Nobody could move this bum, not even the police.

"A woman who has always been a patron of the art museum can't believe what a shambles the landscaping there has become . . .

". . . there is no longer any place to escape [no civilized oasis]"[42]

Jane stops at the end of the corridor and turns to address the group:

Uh, this corridor houses some of the museum's public facilities: the coat room, rest rooms, telephones, uh . . . it doesn't really have a name, but uh . . .

Down the hall here . . .

Jane walks down an adjoining corridor toward the Drawing and Print Galleries opposite the Museum Shop:

41. Fran R. Schumer, "Salad and Seurat: Sampling the Fare at the Museums," *New York Times,* April 22, 1987, p. C1.
42. D. Herbert Lipson, "Off the Cuff," *Philadelphia Magazine,* December 1988, p. 2.

Down the hall here we have the Muriel and Philip Berman Drawing and Print Galleries. They were named as part of the museum's Donor Recognition Program. The museum, you know, provides prospective donors with a veritable cornucopia of Named Space Opportunities.

Here, for example . . .

Jane walks across the corridor to address the Museum Shop:

. . . for $750,000 you could name the Museum Shop.

You know, I'd like to name a space, why, if I had $750,000 I would name this shop, um . . . Andrea. Andrea is such a nice name.

Jane walks a few feet further down the corridor and stops again to address the group:

This is our Museum Shop, Andrea, named in 1989 by Mrs. John P. Castelton, a onetime museum guide and eternal art appreciator. Jane, as she was called, always liked to say that "patronage creates a personal sense of ownership in a beautiful home of the arts and unites the most enlightened spirits of the community in a high devotion to the public good."[43]

"Did you know her? To know her was to love her. She was special . . . with her long stride and tailored profile, a [blond] of medium height dressed in understated refinement, incredibly 'finished.' She often carried a briefcase . . . apologizing . . . Her voice surprised, deep and husky and resonant with emotion, drawing out and lingering over the vowels . . . a serious student, humble, hungry, analytic . . . She read . . . and would look and invite us to look . . . there was time to see more clearly."[44]

Jane is silent for a moment and then continues speaking as she walks past the Museum Shop and on through the series of harshly lit and empty corridors that lead to the museum's cafeteria:

"The museum wants and needs an informed, enthusiastic audience whose . . . knowledge of the collections and programming continue to grow."[45]

The museum says: here you will find "satisfaction,"

43. Museum Fund, *A Living Museum,* p. 19.
44. *The Weekday Museum Guides' Twenty-Fifth Anniversary 1960–1985,* p. 2.
45. "From the President and the Director," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Magazine* (Spring 1988).

you will find "contentment," you will find "pleasure," here you will find "the finer things that make life worth living," here you will be liberated "from the struggle imposed by material needs," here you will find your "ideal beauty," you will find "inspiration," here you will find "a place apart," you will find "standards," here you will find "civilization . . ."[46]

Jane stops just outside the cafeteria:

Oh, I've known happiness; intense happiness, exquisite happiness, here in the museum, beside these tiles, or across the room from those or, or over there, between these two.

It's nice to feel alive.

I'd like to live like an art object. Wouldn't it be nice to live like an art object . . .

"A sophisticated composition of austere dignity, vitality, and immediate quality; a strict formality softened by an exquisitely luminous atmosphere . . ."[47]

How could anyone ask for more?

Graceful, mythological, life-size . . .

Jane enters the cafeteria:

"This room represents the heyday of colonial art in Philadelphia on the eve of the Revolution, and must be regarded as one of the very finest of all American rooms."[48]

Jane moves through the room as she speaks, gesturing at tables, chairs, trash bins, cafeteria patrons, etcetera:

Notice "the architectural decoration . . . [It] combines the classical vocabulary of broken pediments and fluted pilasters familiar in English house design, with the flamboyant, asymmetrical plaster ornamentations derived from the French Rococo style. The beautiful upholstered sofa, Chippendale-style chairs, and marble-top table show the variety of form for which Philadelphia furniture makers were justly famous."[49]

And . . . "This room was much frequented by Washington while Commander-in-Chief and President."[50]

Jane leaves the cafeteria and walks back the way she came:

"Stately men and women—above all things

46. From "From the President and the Director," *Philadelphia Museum of Art Magazine;* Museum Fund, *A Living Museum;* and anonymous, *The New Museum and Its Service to Philadelphia.*
47. Descriptions of art in *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Guide* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1983).
48. "The Display Collections: European and American Art."
49. *Guide* (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1977).
50. *Pennsylvania Museum of Art Handbook* (1931).

stately—measured, ordered, with a certain quiet elegance about them . . . sober color, dignified composition, the arrangement . . . that is simple, fine, and sympathetic to us all [certain habits of good drawing . . . things which I like to call the 'good manners of painting'] . . . a little more measure, a little more calm, a little more serenity . . . dignity and a certain technical rectitude . . . taste, the sense of measure and decorum . . .

"Well, frequent this museum of yours and get in contact with tradition. You drink in the tradition that exists [here] and that is . . . piled up [here], all the epochs, all the great ages. You will feel with me that these touchstones, these standards, after all, are not pedantic things [but] standards for a cultivated, governed, discriminating instinct."[51]

Let's not just talk about art. Because finally, the museum's purpose is not just to develop an appreciation of art, but to develop an appreciation of values . . .

"By appreciation of values we have in mind the ability to distinguish between the worthy and the unworthy, the true and the false, the beautiful and the ugly, between refinement and crudity, sincerity and cant, between the elevating and the degrading, the decent and indecent in dress and conduct, between values that are enduring and those that are temporary,"[52] between . . .

Here . . . Over here, between . . .

Jane walks quickly back into the corridor with the telephones, coat room, rest rooms, Art Sales and Rental Gallery, etcetera. She moves around the corridor, gesturing to these things as she refers to them:

. . . here, the ability to distinguish between a coat room and a rest room, between a painting and a telephone, a guard and a guide; the ability to distinguish between yourself and a drinking fountain, between what is different and what is better and objects that are inside and those that are outside; the ability to distinguish between your rights and your wants, between what is good for you and what is good for society.

Well. That's the end of our tour for today.

Thank you for joining me, and have a nice day.

51. Cortissoz, "Life and the Museum," p. 53.

52. Edwin C. Broome, "Report of the Superintendent of Schools," *One Hundred and Tenth Report of the Board of Public Education, School District of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, for the Year Ending December 31, 1928*, pp. 275–76.

All performance photographs by Kelly and Massa Photography.

Tourism and the Semiotics of Nostalgia

JOHN FROW

In 1689 a Japanese poet travels to the deep north. Describing a tour of the island, he is nevertheless no tourist. His journey is in part a religious pilgrimage, in part the commemoration of localities celebrated by earlier poets, and in part an allegory of a passage into death.

The religious dimension of his journey is clear. Basho speaks of being constrained to silence about certain things he has seen because of the rules he must obey as a pilgrim. Before their departure, his companion Sora changes his name, takes the tonsure, and puts on the black robes of an itinerant priest. And the shrines that Basho visits are at once poetic and religious sites, and often sites of natural beauty as well. Their auratic value, and their deep linkage to the past, is made up of one or more of three elements: a name (which may encapsulate a story, or a reference to a divinity); a legend (which endows it with a history); and poetic thematization. Places are sanctified, in a way that is neither simply religious nor simply aesthetic, by the poems that have been written about them, some of which are of such antiquity that they have taken on the anonymity of custom. Indeed, poetic theme and local tradition may have become inseparable, as at the shrine of Muro-no-yashima, where "it was the custom. . . . for poets to sing of the rising smoke, and for ordinary people not to eat *konoshiro,* a speckled fish, which has a vile smell when burnt."[1] The poems that Basho writes in response are a form of homage: to the past poet, and to the place in its local particularity. They are texts to be read, but also material objects (strips of silk) left hanging in dedication at the site. Time and distance are abolished in the continuity between this gift described in the narrative and the poem that we read on the page.

Yet, in another sense, Basho's voyage is precisely a model of contemporary tourism—not in the sense of the banal anthropological analysis of tourism as

1. Basho, *The Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches,* trans. Nobuyuki Yuasa (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966), p. 99; further references are given in the text.

sacred quest, a timeless repetition of the archetype of the voyage,[2] but in the sense that Basho sets up a relationship between the tourist sight and the form of knowledge appropriate to it which continues to hold true beyond the religious and customary framework of Basho's world.[3] Consider this passage:

> My heart leaped with joy when I saw the celebrated pine tree of Takekuma, its twin trunks shaped exactly as described by the ancient poets. I was immediately reminded of the Priest Noin who had grieved to find upon his second visit this same tree cut and thrown into the River Natori as bridge-piles by the newly appointed governor of the province. This tree had been planted, cut, and replanted several times in the past, but just when I came to see it myself it was in its original shape after a lapse of perhaps a thousand years, the most beautiful shape one could possibly think of for a pine tree. The Poet Kyohaku wrote as follows at the time of my departure to express his good wishes for my journey.
>
> Don't forget to show my master
> The famous pine of Takekuma,
> Late cherry blossoms
> Of the far north.
>
> The following poem I wrote was, therefore, a reply.
>
> Three months after we saw
> Cherry blossoms together
> I came to see the glorious
> Twin trunks of the pine. (p. 111)

The writings of the ancient poets establish the formal essence of the tree, and all later seeing is governed by the possibility of conformity to this pattern. Just as the tourist guidebook stipulates an ideal core of interest in the sight, so the authority of a poetic tradition that constantly refashions the essence of the tree, its normative beauty (it is necessarily in "the most beautiful shape one could possibly think of for a pine tree" because it is nothing other than the embodied idea of the pine tree), constrains the visitor to a recognition of essence. In this case, the felicity of timing consists in the chance restoration of a conformity between the particular, more or less contingent shape of the tree and

2. Cf. Nelson H. Graburn, "Tourism: The Sacred Journey," in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism,* ed. Valene L. Smith (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1977), pp. 17–31; Catherine Joanne Schmidt, *Tourism: Sacred Sites, Secular Seers,* Ph.D. dissertation, SUNY Stony Brook (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms International, 1985).

3. It is therefore only partly ironic that "Basho's tricentenary has brought a Japanese tourist boom, men, women and children following in his steps by *shinkansen* (bullet train)." Ihab Hassan, "Alterity? Three Japanese Examples," *Meanjin* 49 (Spring 1990), p. 416.

its ideal form. The poem by Kyohaku provides a second modeling of the form for Basho, and his own poem confirms (like the tourist's photograph) not an empirical act of seeing but the congruence of the sight with the idea of the sight.

The poetic record thus promulgates a form of knowledge that can be recognized in and has a greater force than the appearances of the world. What the traveler sees is what is already given by the pattern. Basho knows, for example, that the hills of Asaka are famous for a certain species of iris, although no one he speaks to has ever heard of it. And he will travel to see "the miraculous beauty of Kisagata" (p. 128) or "the famous wisteria vines of Tako" (p. 132): tourist essences that precede his experience of them. At times we can see directly the process by which knowledge of place precedes and informs experience. Staying at an inn on the islands of Matsushima, and driven by excitement, "I finally took out my notebook from my bag and read the poems given me by my friends at the time of my departure—a Chinese poem by Sodo, a *waka* by Hara Anteki, *haiku* by Sampu and Dakushi, all about the islands of Matsushima" (p. 117). At other times the relation between pattern and sight is reversed so that the former seems to derive from rather than to generate the latter. Weeping in front of two tombstones in a cemetery, "I felt as if I were in the presence of the Weeping Tombstone of China" (p. 109). In a fishing village, "the voices of the fishermen dividing the catch of the day made me even more lonely, for I was immediately reminded of an old poem which pitied them for their precarious lives on the sea" (p. 114).

It is just such a semiotic structure that Jonathan Culler describes when he argues that, for the tourist gaze, things are read as signs of themselves. A place, a gesture, a use of language are understood not as given bits of the real but as suffused with ideality, giving on to the *type* of the beautiful, the extraordinary, or the culturally authentic. Their reality is figural rather than literal. Hence the structural role of disappointment in the tourist experience,[4] since access to the type can always be frustrated. For our time, at least, we must add that, despite the structural similarities, this ideality has a quite different force and function: lacking any transcendental anchorage, it is instead an effect of the density of representations covering our world and of the technological conditions of this density.

*

Early in *White Noise* Jack and Murray visit the most photographed barn in America. They pass five signs advertising it before reaching the site, and when they arrive they find forty cars and a tour bus in the carpark and a number of

4. Schmidt, *Tourism*, p. 59.

people taking pictures. Murray delivers a commentary: "No one sees the barn," he says;

> Once you've seen the signs about the barn, it becomes impossible to see the barn. . . . We're not here to capture an image, we're here to maintain one. Every photograph reinforces the aura. . . . We've agreed to be part of a collective perception. This literally colors our vision. A religious experience in a way, like all tourism. . . . They are taking pictures of taking pictures. . . . What was the barn like before it was photographed? . . . What did it look like, how was it different from other barns, how was it similar to other barns? We can't answer these questions because we've read the signs, seen the people snapping the pictures. We can't get outside the aura. We're part of the aura. We're here, we're now.[5]

*

The form of typicality characteristic of modernity has two features: it is constructed in representations that are then lived as real; and it is so detailed that it is not opposed to the particular. The name often given to it is the simulacrum.

For Plato, the simulacrum is the copy of a copy. Violating an ethics of imitation, its untruth is defined by its distance from the original and by its exposure of the scandal that an imitation can in its turn function as a reality to be copied (and so on endlessly).

The most influential contemporary account of the simulacrum and the chain of simulations is that of Jean Baudrillard. His is a melancholy vision of the emptying out of meaning (that is, of originals, of stable referents) from a world that is henceforth made up of closed and self-referring systems of semiotic exchange. In a state of what he calls hyperreality, the real becomes indefinitely reproducible, an effect, merely, of the codes that continue to generate it. From the very beginning Baudrillard has been hostile to the scandalous opacity of systems of mediation. His is a historical vision: there was a referent; it has been lost; and this loss is, as in Plato, the equivalent of a moral fall.[6]

By contrast, the account that Deleuze gives of the simulacrum in *Différence et Répétition,* while retaining the formal structure of the Platonic model, cuts it off from its ties to a lost original and cuts it off, too, from all its Baudrillardian melancholy. The world we inhabit is one in which identity is simulated in the play of difference and repetition, but this simulation carries no sense of loss. Instead, freeing ourselves of the Platonic ontology means denying the priority

5. Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1985), pp. 12–13.
6. Jean Baudrillard, *L'échange symbolique et la mort* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976); translated in part as *Simulations* by Paul Foss et al., Foreign Agents Series (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983).

of an original over the copy, of a model over the image. It means glorifying the reign of simulacra, and affirming that any original is itself already a copy, divided in its very origin. The simulacrum "is that system in which the different is related to the different through difference itself."[7]

*

Discourse on tourism, both academic and profane, can be described in terms of a series of three more or less standard moves. The first, and least interesting, consists in the criticism of tourism as inauthentic activity.[8] Here the tourist, understood as a *faux voyageur,*[9] is contrasted with the heroic figure of the traveler and accused of a lack of interest in the culturally authentic—a category constructed both by analogy and by direct reference to high aesthetic culture. The vocabulary is that of the critique of "mass" culture: in Daniel Boorstin's essay "From Traveler to Tourist: The Lost Art of Travel," the key adjectives—"plastic," "contrived," "prefabricated," "cheap," "jerry-built," "ersatz," "imitation," "sanitized," "synthetic," "artificial," "antiseptic," "homogeneous," "factitious," "pseudo"—enunciate a characteristic postwar fantasy about the masses and mass production, and express, in the process, a deep anxiety about those democratic (and "American") values which he claims to espouse.[10] But it is possible to read the opposition of tourist to traveler outside of this cultural imaginary. In the first place, the figure of the traveler, insofar as it has a reality, is not alien to the tourism industry but functional to it, both as precursor (the hippies who opened up much of the Third World to tourism, for example; there is a close analogy here with the phenomenon of gentrification)[11] and as exemplar. And in the second place, the constant recurrence of the opposition suggests that "these are not so much two historical categories as the terms of an opposition integral to tourism,"[12] in that they carry a desire and a self-contempt that drive the industry at the most fundamental level.

The second move in the narrative of tourism is a much more complicated and ambivalent one. Associated in particular with the work of Dean MacCannell, it seeks to value tourism positively by characterizing it as a quest for, rather than a turn from, that authentic experience of the world available to the pre-

7. Gilles Deleuze, *Différence et Répétition* (Paris: Presses Universitaires Françaises, 1968), p. 355.
8. Cf. Donald L. Redfoot, "Touristic Authenticity, Touristic Angst, and Modern Reality," *Qualitative Sociology* 7 (Winter 1984), p. 292.
9. Jean-Didier Urbain, "Sémiotiques comparées du touriste et du voyageur," *Semiotica,* vol. 58, no. 3/4 (1986), p. 269.
10. Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1961).
11. Cf. John Turner and Louise Ash, *The Golden Hordes: International Tourism and the Pleasure Periphery* (London: Constable, 1975), p. 255.
12. Jonathan Culler, "Semiotics of Tourism," *The American Journal of Semiotics,* vol. 1, no. 1/2 (1981), p. 130.

industrial traveler. In this reversal, however, the category of the authentic loses its immediacy, its unproblematic givenness; increasingly its place is taken by those semiotic mediations that, while seeming to give on to a reality other than themselves, come to defer, perhaps endlessly the vanishing horizon of authenticity. MacCannell, drawing on Goffman's distinction between the presentable "front" and the concealed (and *therefore* more genuine) "back" regions of a culture or a place, writes of this paradox:

> It is always possible that what is taken to be entry into a back region is really entry into a front region that has been totally set up in advance for touristic visitation. In tourist settings, especially in modern society, it may be necessary to discount the importance, and even the existence, of front and back regions except as ideal poles of touristic experience.[13]

The paradox is not just that the distinction between front and back disappears, as does the slightly different one between representation and reality, but that the construction of a more "real" reality is nevertheless entirely dependent upon it. The force of the practical distinction between front and back is to draw upon (and reinforce) those categories that associate truth with concealment, secrecy, and intimacy, and untruth with surfaces and visibility, in support of particular effects of truth and untruth. This has direct consequences both for the organization of everyday life and for the commercial viability of particular tourist sites. Analytically, however, the distinction is purely illusory. MacCannell thus elaborates something like Baudrillard's theory of a historical regime of simulation in which the difference between original and copy falls away, and indeed where the very existence of an "original" is a function of the copy.[14] At the same time, MacCannell retains a commitment to the categories of the authentic and the real, which, as in Baudrillard's work, are postulated historically (and nostalgically) as lost domains of experience or referentiality.

13. Dean MacCannell, "Staged Authenticity: Arrangements of Social Space in Tourist Settings," *American Journal of Sociology*, 79, no. 3 (1974), p. 597.

14. MacCannell argues against Walter Benjamin that "the work becomes 'authentic' only after the first copy of it is produced. The reproductions *are* the aura, and ritual, far from being a point of origin, *derives* from the relationship between the original object and its socially constructed importance" (Dean MacCannell, *The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class* [London: Macmillan, 1976], p. 48). In fact, Benjamin makes just this point in a footnote to "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction": "Precisely because authenticity is not reproducible, the intensive penetration of certain (mechanical) processes of reproduction was instrumental in differentiating and grading authenticity. To develop such differentiations was an important function of the trade in works of art. . . . At the time of its origin a medieval picture of the Madonna could not yet be said to be 'authentic.' It became 'authentic' only during the succeeding centuries and perhaps most strikingly so during the last one" ("The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn [New York: Schocken, 1965], p. 243, n. 2). There is, however, some ambiguity in this essay about the effects of reproducibility, and we can perhaps hold against Benjamin his having failed to foresee the extent to which technologies of reproduction were used in the twentieth century to construct effects of aura. Hollywood movies are the obvious example.

One of the ways in which this historicization works is through a reading of tourism as an allegory (or an "ethnography")[15] of modernity—where tourism and modernity are understood as facts of experience or consciousness rather than as socioeconomic institutions.[16] MacCannell's vocabulary is at once resolutely idealist and resolutely sociologistic. Modernity is equivalent to a process of structural differentiation, and what has been lost in this process is the structural solidarity characteristic of traditional societies. Tourism reflects this differentiation, but at the same time—and paralleling "concerns for the sacred in primitive society"[17]—it represents a quest for an authentic domain of being. It is thus a marker of the spiritual self-reflexivity of modernity and directly parallel to the self-consciousness of intellectuals about their own alienation.[18] In these terms,

> *postindustrial* or *modern society* is the coming to consciousness of industrial society, the result of industrial society's turning in on itself, searching for its own strengths and weaknesses and elaborating itself internally. The growth of tourism is the central index of modernization so defined.[19]

The historical dimension of this vision of the modern consists in its diachronic opposition to an organicist category of the premodern or traditional. It is closely bound up with the construction of a cultural Other—a mythology of "the primitive, the folk, the peasant, and the working class," who "speak without self-consciousness, without criticism, and without affectation,"[20] but also of the feudal and postfeudal aristocracy and its high culture. The Other of modernity—which corresponds to particular tourist objects and experiences—is defined by an absence of *design*—of calculation or of interested self-awareness. It must therefore exist outside the circuit of commodity relations and exchange values (although it is only accessible through this circuit, one form of the basic contradiction of the tourist experience). Erik Cohen cites the criteria used by curators and ethnographers to determine the authenticity of African art: an object counts as authentic only if it has not been made for acquisition by members of another culture, if it has been "hand made" according to traditional criteria and from "natural" materials, and if it has not been intended for sale. This is to say that "'authenticity' is an eminently modern value, whose emergence

15. MacCannell, *The Tourist,* p. 4.
16. "The deep structure of modernity is a totalizing idea, a modern mentality that sets modern society in opposition both to its own past and to those societies of the present that are premodern or un(der)developed." *The Tourist,* p. 8.
17. MacCannell, "Staged Authenticity," pp. 589–90.
18. Cf. Erik Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," *Annals of Tourism Research,* vol. 15, no. 3 (1988), p. 376.
19. MacCannell, *The Tourist,* p. 182.
20. Susan Stewart, *On Longing: Narratives of the Miniature, the Gigantic, the Souvenir, the Collection* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 16.

is closely related to the impact of modernity upon the unity of social existence"[21]: or, more precisely, to a definition of modernity as the converse and the historical loss of such a unity. The otherness of traditional or exotic cultures has to do with their having escaped the contamination of this fallen world: having escaped the condition of *information* (in Benjamin's sense), being unaware of their own relativity, avoiding absorption into the embrace of touristic self-consciousness. The charm of displays of preindustrial implements and artifacts in old houses and museums thus resides in their proclamation of the immediacy of use value: they are rough, differentiated, lacking the homogeneity of the commodity. This pair of black, roughly pitted scissors, this harvesting fork which still resembles the branches it was carved from, this leather harness, cut by hand from the hide—each is part of the long slow death of peasant culture of which our time is witnessing the end.

The third move in the theorization of tourism follows from the internal condition of paradox progressively revealed in the playing out of the second. On one plane this is a hermeneutic problem: how can I come to terms with that which is Other without reducing it to the terms of my own understanding? In semiotic terms, this is a problem of the constitutive role of representation for the object: "The paradox, the dilemma of authenticity, is that to be experienced as authentic it must be marked as authentic, but when it is marked as authentic it is mediated, a sign of itself and hence not authentic in the sense of unspoiled."[22] This paradox then gives rise to a series of others. One has to do with the inseparability of the object from its semiotic status—that is, with the fact that any valued object is, minimally, a sign of itself, and hence—as with Basho's "famous" sites—*resembles itself*. MacCannell thus quotes a guidebook note that emphasizes the possibility of seeing objects "as if they are pictures, maps or panoramas of themselves,"[23] and John Turner and Louise Ash speak of the way every detail of a cultural monument "is so familiar from professional and amateur photography that it seems to be a genuine, life-size reproduction of the original."[24] From this follows the further paradox of the sheer impossibility of constructing otherness, since, as MacCannell argues, "every nicely motivated effort to preserve nature, primitives and the past, and to represent them authentically contributes to an opposite tendency—the present is made more unified against its past, more in control of nature, less a product of history."[25] A third moment in this series is the conclusion that in order to construct a good

21. Cohen, "Authenticity and Commoditization in Tourism," p. 373. On the notion of "authentic" African art, cf. also Bennetta Jules-Rosette, *The Messages of Tourist Art: An African Semiotic System in Comparative Perspective* (New York and London: Plenum Press, 1984).
22. Culler, "Semiotics of Tourism," p. 137.
23. MacCannell, *The Tourist,* p. 122.
24. Turner and Ash, *The Golden Hordes,* p. 137.
25. MacCannell, *The Tourist,* p. 83.

tourist object—one which makes "a convincing display of honest honesty"[26]—it becomes necessary to construct it as a plausible simulation of itself. Cohen's work on "alternative" tourism, such as hill tribe trekking in Thailand, which offers access to "primitive and remote, authentic and unspoilt sites beyond the boundaries of the established touristic circuits"[27]—with the consequence that the traditional tribal cultures of the area are transformed by the outside forces that tourism both opens up and represents—gives some sense of the spiral of simulations to which this necessity gives rise.

This sense of paradox, it must be stressed, is generated within a conceptual framework that holds on to the distinction between the authentic and the inauthentic. Its basis in MacCannell's work is the distinction between the tourist sight and the marker that provides information about the sight. This is roughly the relation between a real object and its representation, and it therefore holds open the possibility of a sight's being either represented truly or misrepresented. The concept of the "staging" of authenticity retains its ontological foundations. But MacCannell's work itself points to and verges on a different understanding of the relation between marker and sight that would resolve this particular set of aporias. This understanding would take to its logical conclusion the insight that the marker is constitutive of the sight (which cannot be "seen" without it), and hence, as van den Abbeele puts it, "removes or defers the sight from any undifferentiated immediacy."[28] The sight would itself be a further marker within a chain of supplementarity.[29]

*

This move resolves the forms of paradox associated with the conception of the authentic, but of course opens up a different set of difficulties. It is a move, as Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Edward M. Bruner argue, from the issue of authenticity to that of authentication, and it leaves open the question of the criteria according to which authentication and differentiation might occur.[30] This is a question about the practices by which limits and discriminations are set, and about the relativized systems of value which enable them. It is a question about postmodernism, and perhaps, as both Maxine Feiffer and John

26. Ibid., p. 128.
27. Erik Cohen, "'Primitive and Remote': Hill Tribe Trekking in Thailand," *Annals of Tourism Research,* vol. 16, no. 1 (1989), p. 31.
28. Georges van den Abbeele, "Sightseers: The Tourist as Theorist," *Diacritics,* vol. 10, no. 4 (1980), p. 7.
29. Van den Abbeele, p. 11.
30. Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Edward M. Bruner, "Tourism," *International Encyclopedia of Communications,* vol. 4 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 251.

Urry suggest, about the possibilities of a posttourism released from the touristic anxieties of modernity.[31]

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> I should have liked to live in the age of *real* travel, when the spectacle on offer had not yet been blemished, contaminated, and confounded; then I could have seen Lahore not as I saw it, but as it appeared to Bernier, Tavernier, Manucci. . . . There's no end, of course, to such conjectures. When was the right moment to see India? At what period would the study of the Brazilian savage have yielded the purest satisfaction and the savage himself been at his peak? Would it have been better to have arrived at Rio in the eighteenth century, with Bougainville, or in the sixteenth, with Léry and Thevet? With every decade that we traveled further back in time, I could have saved another costume, witnessed another festivity, and come to understand another system of belief. But I'm too familiar with the texts not to know that this backward movement would also deprive me of such information, many curious facts and objects, that would enrich my meditations. The paradox is irresoluble: the less one culture communicates with another, the less likely they are to be corrupted, one by the other; but, on the other hand, the less likely it is, in such conditions, that the respective emissaries of these cultures will be able to seize the richness and significance of their diversity. The alternative is inescapable: either I am a traveler in ancient times, and faced with a prodigious spectacle which would be almost entirely unintelligible to me and might, indeed, provoke me to mockery or disgust; or I am a traveler of our own day, hastening in search of a vanished reality. In either case I am the loser—and more heavily than one might suppose; for today, as I go groaning among the shadows, I miss, inevitably, the spectacle that is now taking shape. My eyes, or perhaps my degree of humanity, do not equip me to witness that

31. Maxine Feiffer, *Going Places: The Ways of the Tourist from Imperial Rome to the Present Day* (London: Macmillan, 1985); John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze: Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies* (London: Sage, 1990). Cf. Dean MacCannell, "Introduction," *Annals of Tourism Research,* vol. 16, no. 1 (1989), pp. 1–2: "The tourists and others no longer meet as representatives of 'modernity' and 'tradition,' even though they may continue to *act as if* this is the basis for their interaction." Rather,

> one finds "primitive" and "peasant" peoples exercising economic rationality alongside of "modern" peoples who live in a world seemingly shaped entirely by myth; Indian clowns, dancers and sales people gulling their white clients; and a "modern" thirst for authenticity met by a "primitive" capacity to produce dramatic representations of pseudo authenticity. In short, what one discerns here is a new set of living arrangements associated with the double displacement of the Third World which is simultaneously post-traditional and post-modern.

> spectacle; and in the centuries to come, when another traveler revisits this same place, he too may groan aloud at the disappearance of much that I should have set down, but cannot. I am the victim of a double infirmity: what I see is an affliction to me; and what I do not see, a reproach.[32]

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A process of paradox similar to that developed in theorizing tourism is played out with the concept and the practices of *tradition*—that is, with the form taken by the sacralization of the past. The concept has been extensively elaborated in Gadamer's hermeneutics, in historiography (for example, in Hobsbawm and Ranger's collection *The Invention of Tradition*), and in the disciplines that deal with customary societies, especially anthropology. The force of the argument presented by Eric Hobsbawm and others is that the ongoing reconstruction of the past is an act not only of recontextualization but of invention, and that even the most "authentic" traditions are thus effects of a stylized simulation. Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin summarize the current critique of the concept like this:

> One of the major paradoxes of the ideology of tradition is that attempts at cultural preservation inevitably alter, reconstruct, or invent the traditions that they are intended to fix. Traditions are neither genuine nor spurious, for if genuine tradition refers to the pristine and immutable heritage of the past, then all genuine traditions are spurious. But if, as we have argued, tradition is always defined in the present, then all spurious traditions are genuine.[33]

This theoretical critique has been accompanied, however, by a substantial "postmodern" growth in representations/appropriations of the past, which run parallel to the tourist industry's representation/appropriation of modernity's cultural Other (of which the past is of course one major form). Indeed, Patrick Wright points out that nostalgia for lost patterns of everyday life and for auratic objects that seem to be inherently meaningful "surely forms a powerful motivation even for fairly high-cultural tourism."[34] The heritage industry, which now includes monuments not only to ruling-class power but also to those idealized patterns of everyday life and work, has become an increasingly important

32. Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Tristes Tropiques: An Anthropological Study of Primitive Societies in Brazil*, trans. John Russell (New York: Atheneum, 1969), pp. 44–45.
33. Richard Handler and Jocelyn Linnekin, "Tradition, Genuine or Spurious," *Journal of American Folklore*, vol. 97, no. 385 (1984), p. 288.
34. Patrick Wright, *On Living in an Old Country: The National Past in Contemporary Britain* (London: Verso, 1985), p. 23.

piece of machinery for the construction of tradition. But moralistic denunciation is as inadequate here as it is in the case of tourism. Robert Hewison exemplifies the problem when he writes:

> Postmodernism and the heritage industry are linked, in that they both conspire to create a shallow screen that intervenes between our present lives and our history. We have no understanding of history in depth, but instead are offered a contemporary creation, more costume drama and reenactment than critical discourse. We are, as Jameson writes, "condemned to seek History by way of pop images and simulacra of that history, which itself remains for ever out of reach."[35]

Opposing the privilege of the written text to other forms of textuality, Hewison forgets not only that "costume drama and reenactment" have always been important vehicles of historical understanding, but that "history" is always a textual construct; the question cannot at all be about the gap between representations of history and history "itself," but only about the relative effectiveness, the relative political force, of different representations.

Patrick Wright's work offers a more politically differentiated account of the heritage industry, stressing its ability both to offer a celebration of past power relations and to project a vision of unalienated rationality. On the one hand, National History involves a ritualistic staging of heroic narratives in such a way as to deny their active historicity—their usability for the present. The past is constructed as a domain of authenticity through a public process of remembrance that affirms a continuity with the dead at the same time as it continuously repositions them at the heart of a narrative of the nation.[36] On the other hand, however, the valuing of the past as it connects to a present sense of loss need not merely be an exercise in idealizing nostalgia:

> If the past now includes the ordinary traces of old everyday life among its valued contents, there are different things to be said about the sense of *uniqueness* which hangs over the celebrated objects within its changing repertoire. This sense of uniqueness may indeed still characterize precious works of art, but in recent times it has drifted far from its old academic moorings and it can now be held in common by, say, a phrase of rhyming slang, an old piece of industrial machinery (preferably *in situ*), a hand-painted plate from the turn of the century and a cherished landscape or place. It is not merely official cultural policy which determines the meaning or the extent of the

35. Robert Hewison, *The Heritage Industry: Britain in a Climate of Decline* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 135.
36. Wright, *On Living in an Old Country*, pp. 69, 137.

> modern past. The uniqueness of heritage objects may indeed be pointed out in official guidebooks, but it is far more powerfully expressed in the vernacular measures of everyday life. For the perspectives of everyday life, the unique heritage object has *aura,* and in this respect the national heritage seems to have a persistent connection with earlier traditions of bourgeois culture—a connection which may even be *especially* strong as the modern past reaches out to include not masterpieces but the modest objects of bygone everyday life in its repertoire.[37]

This, I think, draws attention both to the cultural and political ambivalence of the retrieved everyday object, and to the struggles that take place over its articulation with the present. The past is reworked through different economies of value, and acquires a correspondingly differential force. The concept of the everyday may in its own way be as much an idealizing and a unifying category as that of the national, but it is perhaps more workable, more flexible, more open to multiple appropriations than the modes of official history. At the same time, however, it remains crucial to guard a deep suspicion of the auratic object, whatever the uses to which it may seem to lend itself. Nostalgia for a lost authenticity is a paralyzing structure of historical reflection.

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The "social disease of nostalgia"[38] has a particular history within the institution of Western medicine. Originally defined in the seventeenth century in terms of a set of physical symptoms associated with acute homesickness, it subsequently came to be closely connected with the "specific depression of intellectuals," melancholia.[39] By the nineteenth century it had been extended to describe a general condition of estrangement, a state of ontological homelessness that became one of the period's key metaphors for the condition of modernity (and which is also one of the central conditions of tourism, where the *Heimat* functions simultaneously as the place of safety to which we return and as that lost origin which is sought in the alien world).[40]

A persuasive argument has been made that the development of sociology in the decades around the turn of the century was bound up with a discourse on modernity structured by nostalgia. Bryan Turner identifies four elements of the nostalgic paradigm that feeds into sociology: a sense of historical decline,

37. Ibid., p. 253.
38. Stewart, *On Longing,* p. 23.
39. Bryan Turner, "A Note on Nostalgia," *Theory, Culture and Society,* vol. 4, no. 1 (1987), p. 147. Cf. Wolf Lepenies, *Melancholie und Gesellschaft* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1972).
40. For a critique of the gendering of the opposition between travel and *domus,* cf. Meaghan Morris, "At Henry Parkes Motel," *Cultural Studies,* vol. 2, no. 1 (1988), pp. 38, 43.

giving rise to various social theologies of lost grace; a sense of the absence or loss of personal wholeness and moral certainty (the fracturing of the canopy of religious and moral value by the growth of capitalist relations and of urbanization); a sense of the loss of individual freedom and autonomy (the disappearance of genuine social relationships, and the bureaucratization of everyday life); and a sense of the loss of simplicity, personal authenticity, and emotional spontaneity.[41] Linking together the work of Tönnies, Simmel, Weber, Lukács, and Adorno is "the notion that we constantly create life-worlds which through alienation and reification negate the spontaneity and authenticity of the will and its conscious subject, Man."[42] Lukács's concept of the "second nature of man-made structures"—"a complex of senses—meanings—which has become rigid and strange, and which no longer awakens interiority. . . . a charnel-house of long-dead interiorities"[43]—catches precisely that notion of a contradiction between a will to life and the forms of human association which from the start makes sociology so ambivalent a discipline.

Within this framework, nostalgia is "the repetition that mourns the inauthenticity of all repetition."[44] Against a degraded present structured by those "forms of human association," it sets a past, an otherwhere, characterized by immediacy and presence. A "sadness without an object," nostalgia

> is always ideological: the past it seeks has never existed except as narrative, and hence, always absent, that past continually threatens to reproduce itself as a felt lack. Hostile to history and its invisible origins, and yet longing for an impossibly pure context of lived experience at a place of origin, nostalgia wears a distinctly utopian face, a face that turns toward a future-past, a past which has only ideological reality. This point of desire which the nostalgic seeks is in fact the absence that is the very generating mechanism of desire . . . nostalgia is the desire for desire.[45]

Authentic and inauthentic experience; community and society; organic and mechanical solidarity; status and contract; use value and exchange value—the structural oppositions through which the relation between tradition and modernity is constructed (or rather, through which modernity defines itself against its mythical Other) are potentially endless but formally homologous.

41. Turner, pp. 150–51; cf. Roland Robertson, "After Nostalgia? Wilful Nostalgia and the Phases of Globalization," in *Theories of Modernity and Postmodernity*, ed. Bryan Turner (London: Sage, 1990), p. 49.
42. Georg Stauth and Bryan S. Turner, "Nostalgia, Postmodernism and the Critique of Mass Culture," *Theory, Culture and Society*, vol. 5, no. 2/3 (1988), p. 514.
43. Georg Lukács, *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*, trans. Anna Bostock (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1971), p. 64.
44. Stewart, *On Longing*, p. 23.
45. Ibid., p. 23.

The relation between traveler and tourist, between the exotic and the familiar, between immediacy and the forms of human association belong to this structure, and they continue to operate as powerful experiential categories.

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Consider the list of "things" that Heidegger cites in "The Origin of the Work of Art" as examples of thingness: stone, clod, jug, well, milk, water, cloud, thistle, leaf, hawk. Later the list is reduced to a few essential objects: "a stone, a clod of earth, a piece of wood. . . . Lifeless beings of nature and objects of use. Natural things and utensils are the things commonly so called."[46] All are drawn from a stable and preindustrial rural world, the mythical time before modernity. The ultimate authority for the experience of things in this world is the "authentic experience" of thingness by the Greeks—an experience of "the Being of beings in the sense of presence" (p. 22) that has been lost to Western philosophy in the process of translation of Greek thought into the Latin categorization of thingness as the union of substance with accidents, or as the unity of a manifold of sensations, or as formed matter.

The choice of these things—auratic or "poetic" objects—is never merely illustrative. The example of the shoes—"A piece of equipment, a pair of shoes for instance" (p. 29)—is loaded with the full force of shoeness: use value, fetish value, a "world" that opens out from the shoe's deep interiority. "Equipment" is *Zeug,* that which bears witness, which comes to appearance. Halfway between the brute, self-shaping thingness of a granite boulder and the craftedness of the art work, it is the embodiment of production for use. Its converse is the object produced for exchange, the commodity; but the category of exchange value is entirely and absolutely excluded from Heidegger's discourse (which is to say that it cannot be thought within it). The unstated and unspeakable opposition is that between the authentic object (since "as a rule it is the use-objects around us that are the nearest and authentic things" [p. 29]) and the inauthentic world of commodity production.

In fact, the example of the shoes happens twice, or even perhaps three times, as Heidegger moves to "simply describe some equipment without any philosophical theory":

> We choose as example a common sort of equipment—a pair of peasant shoes. We do not even need to exhibit actual pieces of this sort of useful article in order to describe them. Everyone is acquainted with them. But since it is a matter here of direct description,

46. Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," *Poetry, Language, Thought,* trans. Albert Hofstadter (New York: Harper and Row, 1971), p. 21. Further references will be incorporated in the text.

> it may be well to facilitate the visual realization of them. For this purpose a pictorial representation suffices. We shall choose a well-known painting by Van Gogh, who painted such shoes several times. (pp. 32–33)

The choice is first of the "real" shoes, and then of a representation, selected purely for reasons of convenience (as a *Nachhilfe*), and as though it were transparent to the "real" object. The distinction between reality and representation is of course a distinction between two signifieds (not between a representation and a referent), and involves a characteristically novelistic production of a reality-effect. The question of the *genre* of this writing is of crucial importance here, as Heidegger's language performs a double movement resembling that of the late nineteenth-century naturalistic novel (Zola or Dreiser or Hamsun, perhaps). The first movement is a reduction of the shoes to pure thingness, pure semiotic neutrality: "The peasant woman wears her shoes in the field. Only here are they what they are. They are all the more genuinely so, the less the peasant woman thinks about the shoes while she is at work, or looks at them at all, or is even aware of them. She stands and walks in them. That is how shoes actually serve" (p. 33). Their authenticity is directly a function of this naked being, as it is of the absence of reflection and of self-reflection on the part of the peasant woman. Woman, peasant, shoe: these are the categories of a Being which is authentic because of, and *essentially* because of, its unself-consciousness.

The second movement is the converse of the first, a move towards semiotic fullness that is still, nevertheless, predicated on an absence of self-reflection. It begins with a tentative turn, "And yet—" (*Und dennoch*), which then modulates into the slow unfolding of a narrative plenitude: "From the dark opening of the worn insides of the shoes" (literally "of the trodden-out in-turning," *des ausgetretenen Inwendigen,* a sexualized swaying between inside and outside) "the toilsome tread of the worker stares forth"—a "toil" that belongs to no particular system of social relations because its context is that of a generalized human condition. The image of the shoes broadens into a landscape with peasant woman and then contracts to the shoes again: "On the leather lie the dampness and richness of the soil. Under the soles slides the loneliness of the field-path as evening falls." The fertility of the earth, the itinerary of the path: already the scene is becoming overdetermined by categories of gender. Then again a lyrical opening out from the dark inside of the shoes to the fullness of the world:

> In the shoes vibrates the silent call of the earth, its quiet gift of the ripening grain and its unexplained self-refusal in the fallow desolation of the wintry field. This equipment is pervaded by uncomplaining anxiety as to the certainty of bread, the wordless joy of having once more withstood want, the trembling before the impending childbed and shivering at the surrounding menace of death.

Finally, a movement of withdrawal again: this landscape, these emotions can be observed only "in the picture," since "the peasant woman, on the other hand, simply wears them"; "she knows all this without noticing or reflecting" (p. 34).

We realize now that the example is not an innocent one, that "the work did not, as it might seem at first, serve merely for a better visualizing of what a piece of equipment is. Rather, the equipmentality of equipment first genuinely arrives at its appearance through the work and only in the work," where it discloses "the unconcealedness of its being" (p. 36). But what have we been talking about? Neither the shoes in their nonrepresentational reality, nor simply a representation of the shoes, but something which is both and neither, something which partakes both of the peasant woman's intuitive knowledge of Being and of philosophical reflection (although this is description "without any philosophical theory"). The ambiguity of this space corresponds to the sexual ambiguity of the shoes, both inside and outside, opening and inturning; to the play between the sheltering and concealing motion of earth and the self-opening of world; and to the apparently gratuitous attribution of the shoes to a woman. In one sense, indeed, there is no ambiguity at all about this thing, this *Zeug,* this gaping hole that Heidegger and Schapiro and Derrida keep looking at, trying to go behind it to the thing-in-itself, this nameless or many-named thing, this euphemism, that opens and closes, that's laced or unlaced, that's worn by a pregnant peasant woman trudging across the furrows; this fetish. Yet the figure of the peasant woman is crucial to the problematization of the space between the inside and the outside of the painting, since, as Derrida notes in his commentary, these spaces are differently gendered:

> There is something like a rule to the peasant woman's appearance on the scene. Heidegger designates in this way the (female) wearer of the shoes outside the picture, if one can put it that way, when the lace of discourse passes outside the edging of the frame, into that *hors-d'oeuvre* which he claims to see presenting itself in the work itself. But each time he speaks of the exemplary product in the picture, he says, in neutral, generic fashion—that is, according to a grammar, masculine fashion: "*ein Paar Bauernschuhe,*" a pair of peasants' shoes.[47]

Derrida's "disappointment" with the passage invoking the peasant woman has to do both with this (gendered) ambiguity, such that "one never knows if it's busying itself around a picture, 'real' shoes, or shoes that are imaginary," and with its "consumerlike hurry toward the content of a representation," the "massive self-assurance of the identification: 'a pair of peasants' shoes,' just like that!"[48] This urge to attribution, the quest to find the proper feet for the shoes

47. Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting,* trans. Geoff Bennington and Ian McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), p. 307.
48. Derrida, pp. 292–93.

(assumed to be a pair, left and right) is what Heidegger has in common with Meyer Schapiro, who claims them not for a woman and not for a peasant but for the city-dweller, and their rightful owner, Van Gogh himself.[49] Nevertheless, while continuing to insist that the shoes are "more or less detached (in themselves, from each other and from the feet),"[50] Derrida moves, in a somewhat puzzling way, to resolve the ambiguity about the status of the shoes in the text. Everything that relates to the peasant woman and to that embarrassing intrusion of an outside into the painting, everything that relates to the ideology of peasant simplicity (in other words, the *genre of writing* that Heidegger falls into) is, it turns out, nothing more than "an accessory variable even if it does come massively under 'projection' and answers to Heidegger's pathetic-fantasmatic-ideological-political investments." In the presentation of philosophical truth this "peasant" characteristic "remains secondary," since "the 'same truth' could be 'presented' by any shoe painting, or even by any experience of shoes and even of any 'product' in general: the truth being that of being-product coming back from 'further away' than the matter-form couple, further away even than a 'distinction between the two.'"[51] The problem of the specificity of the forms of representation through which the question is posed is discarded like an old boot, and the example regains its innocence as a mere example, as *Nachhilfe,* regains its supplementarity ("accessory variable") in relation to the most important matters of philosophical origin.

But what is at stake here is more than the philosophical question. It has to do with precisely that "pathetic-fantasmatic-ideological-political investment." It has to do with the figure of woman and its relation to the fetish. It has to do with the impossibility of speaking exchange value. It has to do with the political implications of that construction (in 1935) of the category of "world" as "the self-disclosing openness of the broad paths of the simple and essential decisions in the destiny of an historical people (*im Geschick eines geschichtlichen Volkes*)." It has to do with the politics of "authenticity," the politics of nostalgia for a premodern world.

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These shoes turn up again, as it happens, in Fredric Jameson's best-known essay on postmodernism—here in contrast to Warhol's *Diamond Dust Shoes.* And here, paradoxically, it is the Warhol shoes that embody the fetish, in both the

49. Ibid., p. 283 and passim. Cf. Meyer Schapiro, "The Still Life as a Personal Object—A Note on Heidegger and Van Gogh," in *The Reach of Mind: Essays in Memory of Kurt Goldstein,* ed. Marianne L. Simmel (New York: Springer, 1968), pp. 203–9.
50. Derrida, p. 283.
51. Ibid. pp. 311–12.

Freudian and Marxist senses. It's not at all clear, however, what their sexual content (or indeed their lure as commodities) could be: they are "a random collection of dead objects," "as shorn of their earlier life-world as the pile of shoes left over from Auschwitz," and the problem Jameson encounters with them is the impossibility of making that Heideggerian move to a "larger lived context." Van Gogh's shoes, on the other hand, retain their Heideggerian force as an index of authenticity, although only on condition that they are restored both to their historical context of the world of peasant poverty, and to their context in the history of the sensory materiality of oil painting. Indeed, so authentic and so innocent are they that Jameson even cites Derrida as remarking—"somewhere"—that "the Van Gogh footwear are a heterosexual pair, which allows neither for perversion nor for fetishization."[52]

Whereas Heidegger had excluded any mention of exchange value, Warhol is all too fascinated by the commodity status of things. The problem posed by his work is that the images of Coca-Cola bottles or Campbell's Soup cans, "which explicitly foreground the commodity fetishism of a transition to late capital, *ought* to be powerful and critical political statements," but refuse the certainty of such critique. Moreover, lacking the hermeneutic resonance of Van Gogh's "heterosexual" and "unperverted" shoes, they signal the emergence of "a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense." In this they at once resemble and draw upon photography, which "confers its deathly quality on the Warhol image, whose glacéd x-ray elegance mortifies the reified eye of the viewer."[53]

The shift here from locating reification in the image to locating it in the viewing subject parallels that "more fundamental mutation both in the object world itself—now become a set of texts or simulacra—and in the disposition of the subject,"[54] which constitutes the determinant condition of Warhol's work. This (and Jameson acknowledges as much) is a *periodizing* shift in which the opposition of postmodernity to modernity precisely corresponds to the construction of modernity through its nostalgic opposition to traditional society. In another essay Jameson exemplifies the transition to the commodified world of late capitalism through a familiar metaphor. With commodification, he writes,

> the various forms of activity lose their immanent intrinsic satisfactions as activity and become means to an end. The objects of the commodity

52. Fredric Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," *New Left Review* 146 (July/August, 1984), p. 60. I have been unable to identify this particular "remark" in Derrida's essay on Van Gogh and Heidegger, "Restitutions of the truth in Pointing [*pointure*]" (*Truth in Painting,* pp. 255–382), but the essay does of course canvas every conceivable mode of sexualization of the shoe and the shoes, "normal" and "perverse," "homo-" and "heterosexual." Derrida fundamentally questions the assumption that the shoes constitute a pair, and links the compulsion to pair them to a certain repression of "perversity" (e.g., p. 333).
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.

> world of capitalism also shed their independent "being" and intrinsic qualities and come to be so many instruments of commodity satisfaction: the familiar example is that of tourism—the American tourist no longer lets the landscape "be in its being" as Heidegger would have said, but takes a snapshot of it, thereby graphically transforming space into its own material image.[55]

Here in a nutshell is the full nostalgic narrative of a decline from use value to commodity, from immanence to instrumentality, from the observing traveler to the possessive tourist, and from the world as being to the world as simulacrum. "One follows step by step the moves of a 'great thinker,' as he returns to the origin of the work of art and of truth, traversing the whole history of the West and then suddenly, at a bend in a corridor, here we are on a guided tour, as schoolchildren or tourists."[56]

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If the tourist, armed with camera, can be taken to exemplify the shifting historical relationship between the subject and the world of objects, then the specific form of this relationship—the activity of sightseeing—must also be understood historically. And, in the first place, it must be understood that this nexus between travel and vision has not always existed. Judith Adler's "Origins of Sightseeing" gives a meticulously detailed account, which I follow here, of the birth of this "historically new, overweaning emphasis upon the isolated exercise and systematic cultivation of the sense of sight." The practices of contemporary sightseeing, she writes,

> must ultimately be understood in relation to the historical development (and eventual popularization) of post-Baconian and Lockeian orientations toward the problem of attaining, and authoritatively representing, knowledge. They must be seen in relation to forms of subjectivity anchored in willfully independent vision, and in the cognitive subjugation of a world of "things." Above all, they need to be understood in relation to that European cultural transformation which Lucien Febvre first termed "the visualization of perception."[57]

In the Renaissance, Adler argues, the aristocratic traveler "went abroad for *discourse* rather than for picturesque views or scenes." The art of travel

55. Fredric Jameson, "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," *Social Text* 1 (1979), p. 131.
56. Derrida, *The Truth in Painting,* p. 293.
57. Judith Adler, "Origins of Sightseeing," *Annals of Tourism Research,* vol. 16, no. 1 (1989), p. 8. Further references will be incorporated in the text.

prescribed for him (more rarely her) "was in large measure one of discoursing with the living and the dead—learning foreign tongues, obtaining access to foreign courts, and conversing gracefully with eminent men, assimilating classical texts appropriate to particular sites, and, not least, speaking eloquently upon his return" (p. 8). The late sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries see a shift, however, away from a discursivity identified with scholasticism and traditional authority toward "an 'eye' believed to yield direct, unmediated, and personally verified experience" (p. 11). The change is clearly identifiable in Bacon's essay "Of Travel," with its prescription both of the cultivation of and conversation with good acquaintance, and of the detailed recording of sights witnessed in the course of travel—for didactic, it should be noted, not for aesthetic ends.

What emerges at this time is, then, an investigative art of travel, governed by an ideal of objectively accurate vision. It is closely linked with the development of experimental and observational methodologies in the natural sciences,[58] and indeed one of the major motives for traveling is, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the exchange of scientific information and the establishment of intellectual networks, which are then held in place by the system of scientific correspondents. At the same time the practice of keeping a travel diary grows to become a normal way of focusing observation, as does the writing up of travel notes in the form of fictive dated letters, reinforcing the valued sense of immediacy of witness. By the second half of the eighteenth century, the information-gathering focus of travel has come to include statistical inquiry and economic analysis, to such an extent, argues Adler, that "in this new concern with what later came to be called 'social indicators,' as well as in the further rationalization of impersonally conducted and more easily compiled observation, the history of amateur travel merges with the history of early social science" (p. 21).

By the nineteenth century, however, the amateur collection of information has largely been displaced by professional agents, and "a travel performance which had once been taken as a sign of seriousness and discipline was soon disdained as empty ritual, its epigone practitioners dismissed as hacks who simply ticked off a checklist of sights already exhaustively described by others" (p. 22). Its place was taken by a new discipline of connoisseurship for the eye, centering on the cultivation and display of "taste." In its aesthetic transformation, "sightseeing became simultaneously a more effusively passionate activity and a more private one" (although it had some famous and highly public models in the poets of the Romantic movements in England, France, and Germany). Originating in the discriminating perusal of privately owned works of art and

58. Cf. Barbara Stafford, *Voyage Into Substance: Art, Science, Nature, and the Illustrated Travel Account, 1760–1840* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984), especially chapter 1.

cabinets of curiosities, its conception of the aesthetic later broadens to take in landscape and cityscape: not just pictures but the picturesque, now integrated into a more general economy of looking.[59] It is this economy, the "belief in the restorative effects of happily constituted scenes, and an increasingly romantic orientation to aesthetic sightseeing" (p. 23), that forms the basis of modern tourism and of what John Urry describes as a generalized tourist gaze.[60]

Photography, the descendant both of the sketch pad and of the apparatus of scientific observation, unites in a dramatic way the disparate forms of knowledge—detached witnessing and aesthetic appreciation—that had made up this history. Its centrality to the industrialized tourism of the twentieth century (a "mass" activity that may include the most "private" and "individual" of pursuits) is a function in the first place of its ability to make readily available those aesthetic and observational competencies that had previously been the preserve of a cultural elite; but it is a function also of its power of capturing any piece of empirically witnessed reality and transforming it into a sign of itself—of "transforming space into its own material image" (Jameson). Photography as witness, as commemoration, as aesthetic framing partakes of just that mix of the sacred and the poetic that characterizes the testimonial poems of Basho, and like them it performs the crucial task of establishing the concordance of an empirical and personally experienced reality with an ideal pattern. The most Platonic of art forms, it describes what Urry calls "a kind of hermeneutic circle"[61] between a set of culturally authoritative representations (brochures, advertisements, guidebooks, coffee-table books, all the idealized typifications of the Other), then the experiential capture of those images for oneself, and finally the display of a further set of representations which confirm the original set and its relation to the real. It is a process of authentication, the establishment of a verified relay between origin and trace.

Two related systems of representation—the postcard and the souvenir—complement photography's function of authentication. Susan Stewart has written interestingly about each. The postcard she describes as an instrument for converting a "public" event into a "private" appropriation of the tourist object, in a process by which the tourist first "recovers the object, inscribing the handwriting of the personal beneath the more uniform caption of the social," and then, "in a gesture which recapitulates the social's articulation of the self—that is, the gesture of the *gift* by which the subject is positioned as place of production and reception of obligation,"[62] surrenders it to a third party who acts, quite involuntarily, as a witness to the simultaneous validation of the site and of the

59. Cf. Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape, Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760–1800* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
60. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze,* p. 82.
61. Ibid., p. 140.
62. Stewart, *On Longing,* p. 138. Further references will be incorporated in the text.

self. The souvenir similarly transfers distance into proximity; it "represents distance appropriated," and is thus

> symptomatic of the more general cultural imperialism that is tourism's stock in trade. To have a souvenir of the exotic is to possess both a specimen and a trophy; on the one hand, the object must be marked as exterior and foreign, on the other it must be marked as arising directly out of an immediate experience of its possessor. It is thus placed within an intimate distance; space is transformed into interiority, into "personal" space, just as time is transformed into interiority in the case of the antique object. (p. 147)

Arising not from need or use value but out of "the necessarily insatiable demands of nostalgia" (p. 135), the souvenir has as its vocation the continual reestablishment of a bridge between origin and trace. Like the medieval relic, which operates "by principles of sympathetic and contagious magic,"[63] it works by establishing a metonymic relation with the moment of origin (and its difference from photography and the postcard lies in its metonymic rather than representational figuration of the world of past experience). Like the fetish, the souvenir is a part object, and, since it is an allusion rather than a model, "it will not function without the supplementary narrative discourse that both attaches it to its origins and creates a myth with regard to those origins." This narrative of origins is "a narrative of interiority and authenticity" (p. 136), a story not of the object but of the subject who possesses it and who thus, through the souvenir, possesses the lost and recovered moment of the past.

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> "God, I hate tourists," said Gerald. "They've made a mess of everything. Nothing is real anymore. They obscure anything that was there. They stand around, droves of them, clicking with their blasted cameras. Most of them don't know what they're gawking at. . . . I usually go to places where there are no tourists—places that haven't been spoilt. But it's getting to the stage now where even the size of a city or a country is no longer a defence. You know how mobs pour in and stand around taking up room, and asking the most ludicrous basic questions. They've ruined a place like Venice. It's their prerogative, but the authenticity of a culture soon becomes hard to locate. The local people themselves become altered. And of course the prices go up."[64]

63. Victor and Ethel Turner, *Image and Pilgrimage in Christian Culture: Anthropological Perspectives* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978), p. 197.
64. Murray Bail, *Homesickness* (Melbourne and London: Macmillan, 1980), pp. 81–82.

*

The structure of the tourist experience involves a paradoxical relation at once to the cultural or ontological Other and to others of the same (tourist) culture.[65] It is tourism itself that destroys (in the very process by which it constructs) the authenticity of the tourist object; and every tourist thus at some level denies belonging to the class of tourists. Hence a certain fantasized dissociation from the others, from the rituals of tourism, is built into almost every discourse and almost every practice of tourism. This is the phenomenon of touristic shame, a "rhetoric of moral superiority,"[66] which accompanies both the most snobbish and the most politically radical critiques of tourism.[67] Hans Magnus Enzensberger was perhaps the first to define this dissociation as a structural moment of tourism, and to indicate its inherent bad faith:

> The critique of tourism. . . . belongs in truth to tourism itself. Its secret ideology, the value it sets on the "demonic," the "elementary," "adventure," the "undisturbed," all this is part of its self-advertisement. The disillusionment with which the critic reacts to it corresponds to the illusions that he shares with tourism.[68]

Urry has sought to define the basis for this dissociation through the concept of the "positional economy"—that is,

> all aspects of goods, services, work, positions, and other social relationships which are either scarce or subject to congestion or crowding. Competition is therefore zero-sum: as any one person consumes more of the good in question, so someone else is forced to consume less.[69]

The congestion and environmental destruction that accompany intensive tourist development, for example, can be explained in terms of the positional competition between consumers of a scarce tourist product (although this explanation,

65. There is of course no unitary "tourist experience," and a number of taxonomizations seek to differentiate between very diverse forms of experience. See, for example, Valene Smith, "Introduction," *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism*; Erik Cohen, "The Sociology of Tourism: Approaches, Issues, and Findings," *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984), pp. 373–92; Donald L. Redfoot, "Touristic Authenticity, Touristic Angst and Modern Reality," pp. 291–309. Nevertheless, for the purposes of this essay I assume a common semiotic structure to many tourist practices. My argument is restricted to the first four of Smith's categories (ethnic, cultural, historical, and environmental tourism), and doesn't necessarily concern her fifth category, recreational tourism.

66. MacCannell, *The Tourist,* p. 9.

67. The former is embodied in the widespread distinction between the tourist and the traveler, the latter in—for example—the Marxist moralism of Turner and Ash's *The Golden Hordes.*

68. Hans Magnus Enzensberger, "Eine Theorie des Tourismus," *Einzelheiten I: Bewußtseins-Industrie* (Frankfurt am Main, Suhrkamp, 1962), p. 185.

69. Urry, *The Tourist Gaze,* p. 43; further references will be incorporated in the text.

like all such rationalist economic explanations, fails to take into account the capitalist organization of this "competition"). The notion of "scarcity" is itself not an absolute, however, since different modes of consumption of limited tourist resources have different consequences. Urry distinguishes between two primary modes of tourist consumption (two modes of the tourist "gaze"): one is the "romantic" gaze, which is "concerned with the elitist—and solitary—appreciation of magnificent scenery, an appreciation which requires considerable cultural capital" (p. 86), and which is therefore predominantly a middle-class mode of appropriation; the other is the "collective" gaze, which, based on popular modes of pleasure, is anti-auratic, anti-elitist, and participatory. From this distinction Urry concludes that the "arguments about scarcity and positional competition mainly apply to those types of tourism characterized by the romantic gaze. Where the collective gaze is to be found, there is less of a problem of crowding and congestion" (p. 46). But for whom is there less of a problem? Urry's argument assumes that the two modes are alternative to and separate from each other. This is not the case: collective or convivial tourism impinges on, and may crowd out, romantic tourism, whereas the converse does not hold true. This is not to say that the romantic gaze does not itself often end up imposing a forced competition, or that it does not at times deliberately seek to control access to its preferred objects; it is to say that the category of the popular here establishes a false universality.

Tourism, says John Carroll in an essay that is entirely complicit with the snobbery it denounces, "has brought to the many an experience that they imagined to be the privilege of the few."[70] Touristic shame is thus based not merely on the actuality of positional competition but an a *Verwerfung,* a denial and repression of the mass availability of privilege. It involves a fantasy of achieved upward mobility, and it has its favored models of the aristocratic good life. Two letters of Wordsworth from 1844, written on the occasion of a projected extension of the railway line to Kendal and Windermere, give a sense of the contradictions to which positional competition gives rise, and of their basis in a fantasy of class understood through the model of cultural capital.

The attraction of the Lake District, Wordsworth writes, lies in "its beauty and its character of seclusion and retirement," whereas the projectors of the railway have announced that their intention is "to place the beauties of the Lake District within easier reach of those who cannot afford to pay for ordinary conveyances."[71] But Wordsworth's argument is not directly that seclusion and accessibility are incompatible, but rather that there is no point in opening up

70. John Carroll, "The Tourist," *Sceptical Sociology* (London: Routledge, 1980), p. 140.
71. William Wordsworth, "Kendal and Windermere Railway" (letters to the *Morning Post,* December 11 and 20, 1844), in *Selected Prose,* ed. John Hayden (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988), p. 78; further references will be incorporated in the text.

the area to those who will not adequately appreciate it. This argument about taste is partly historical: "the relish for choice and picturesque natural *scenery* . . . is quite of recent origin" (p. 79), and especially when the landscape is relatively wild. Wordsworth cites numerous examples of English travelers who felt only horror at the Swiss Alps, and points out that in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century travel writings, "where precipitous rocks and mountains are mentioned at all, they are spoken of as objects of dislike and fear, and not of admiration." The point is "that a vivid perception of romantic scenery is neither inherent in mankind, nor a necessary consequence of even a comprehensive education" (p. 80). (The word "romantic" here is opposed to the "ordinary varieties of rural nature.")

The question, then, is one about the appropriate means for furthering the growth in appreciation of "romantic scenery." But

> surely that good is not to be obtained by transferring at once uneducated persons in large bodies to particular spots, where the combinations of natural objects are such as would afford the greatest pleasure to those who have been in the habit of observing and studying the peculiar character of such scenes, and how they differ one from another. Instead of tempting artisans and laborers, and the humbler classes of shopkeepers, to ramble to a distance, let us rather look with lively sympathy upon persons in that condition, when, upon a holiday, or on the Sunday, after having attended divine worship, they make little excursions with their wives and children among neighboring fields, whither the whole of each family might stroll, or be conveyed at much less cost than would be required to take a single individual of the number to the shores of Windermere by the cheapest conveyance. It is in some such way as this only, that persons who must labor daily with their hands for bread in large towns, or are subject to confinement through the week, can be trained to a profitable intercourse with nature where she is the most distinguished by the majesty and sublimity of her forms. (pp. 81–82)

The concept of cultural capital ("taste"), which is meant to place the discussion on the level of aesthetic competencies rather than on the level of social class, transparently fails to do so, since the aesthetic is immediately a code word for class. Nature "herself" is divided into two classes, with the lower level of "ordinary" rural beauty—the "neighboring fields"—assigned to the working class. The discussion of aesthetic education is insufficient as an argument, since there is no sense of how a progression from one class of beauty to the other could take place, and in any case the economic barriers are to be retained. It seems to be a question rather of keeping these artisans and laborers and shopkeepers in their natural station—which the mobility of tourism threatens—and of pro-

tecting them (and their "wives and children") even from their own desires: keeping them from "temptation."

There can be little doubt that Wordsworth's concern is indeed not for these aesthetically deprived workers but for those who enjoy a privileged and protected access to a scarce resource. Subsequent passages contrast the quiet enjoyment of natural beauty to the noisy vulgarity of those popular recreations that would inevitably accompany mass tourism (pp. 83–84). Popular pleasures and the romantic gaze are in conflict, and it is at once a class conflict and one necessarily internal to modern tourism itself. The "unavoidable consequence" of opening up the railways "must be a great disturbance of the retirement, and in many places a destruction of the beauty of the country, which the parties are come in search of" (p. 84).

The irony is, however, that it is Wordsworth himself who has issued the invitation, who has already educated the vulgar crowd to the beauties of the Lake District, and whose poems have acted as a sort of tourist brochure. This becomes a little clearer in the second letter, where he writes of various manufacturers in Lancashire and Yorkshire who plan to send their workers for holidays to the banks of Windermere. The conception of nature as spiritually restorative that underlies such an initiative is in no small measure derived from Wordsworth's own writings. Touristic shame and the opposition of an authentic to an inauthentic gaze work to repress an understanding of the investments (both financial and moral) that the circulation of cultural capital makes possible.

*

> The infrastructure of the tourist industry is made up of
>
> travel agents, tour operators and guides, hotels and resorts, transportation networks and information and communication systems, mass media marketing, tourist regions and attractions, travel gear and souvenirs, travel literature and films, educational institutions that train industry personnel and foster scholarly research on tourism, regulatory and policy-making bodies, government agencies, professional associations, and international travel organizations and clubs.[72]

The function of the industry is to sell a commodity to a group of consumers. Accounts of its size and turnover vary considerably, but Cohen cites a rise in the number of international tourists from 25.3 million in 1950 to 291 million in 1980,[73] and Dominique Callimanopulos uses a similar figure of 285 million

72. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and Bruner, "Tourism," p. 249.
73. Erik Cohen, "The Sociology of Tourism," p. 377.

tourists in 1980, 85 percent of them originating in North America and Europe, to project total export earnings of about 79 billion U.S. dollars annually.[74]

In some of its aspects the commodity sold by the industry is a relatively material set of services (travel and accommodation, for example). But the more determinant aspects of this commodity (the "hooks" that keep consumers buying) are immaterial. The product sold by the tourism industry, in its most general form, is a commodified relation to the Other. This is not precisely a relation between host and guest, because, as Cohen points out, tourism involves pressures which

> transform the guest-host relationship that is based on customary, but neither precise nor obligatory, reciprocity into a commercial one that is based on remuneration. This transformation involves incorporating hospitality—an area that many societies view as founded on values that are the very opposite of economic ones—into the economic domain.[75]

One part of the relation to the Other involves, then, the commodification of hospitality. In its other major dimension, the relation involves the Other not just as a provider of services but as an object of attention. Its salable otherness is either that of the natural or built world, or that of an alien culture.

The commodification of reciprocal bonds, of the environment, and of culture are moments of that logic of contemporary capital which extends private appropriation and ownership from material to immaterial resources, and whose paradigm case is the commodification of information. What makes the process so difficult for those affected to control is the fact that these resources have previously been more or less freely available, or at least have been restricted in noneconomic ways. The effect, as Davydd Greenwood argues with respect to the commodification of culture, is that this appropriation can take place without any requirement of formal consent. Anything at all can be transformed into a commodity. This is clear when cultural services are paid for, but

> it is not as clear when activities of the host culture are treated as part of the "come-on" without their consent and are invaded by tourists who do not reimburse them for their "service." In this case, their activities are taken advantage of for profit, but they do not profit, culturally. The onlookers often alter the meaning of the activities being carried on by local people. Under these circumstances, local

74. Dominique Callimanopulos, "Introduction," *Cultural Survival Quarterly* 6 (Summer 1982), p. 3. For a useful set of statistics on tourist visits to the Third World, cf. *New Internationalist* 142 (December 1984), pp. 10–11.
75. Cohen, "The Sociology of Tourism," p. 380.

culture is in effect being expropriated, and local people are being exploited.[76]

The logic of tourism is that of a relentless extension of commodity relations and the consequent inequalities of power between center and periphery, First and Third Worlds, developed and underdeveloped regions, metropolis and countryside. Promising an explosion of modernity, it brings about structural underdevelopment, both because of its control by international capital and "because it is precisely the *lack* of development which makes an area attractive as a tourist goal."[77] This is the paradox of the impossible appropriation of the Other repeated with an economic vengeance; and it is a paradox that rebounds, since any place at all can become the cultural Other of tourism.

76. Davydd J. Greenwood, "Culture by the Pound: An Anthropological Perspective on Tourism as Cultural Commoditization," in *Hosts and Guests: The Anthropology of Tourism,* pp. 130–31.
77. Susan Buck-Morss, "Semiotic Boundaries and the Politics of Meaning: Modernity on Tour —A Village in Transition," *New Ways of Knowing: The Sciences, Society, and Reconstructive Knowledge,* ed. Marcus G. Raskin and Herbert J. Bernstein (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1987), p. 230.

Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub
Reply to Benjamin Buchloh on Conceptual Art

We are here reprinting, at the request of Joseph Kosuth, the following replies to Benjamin Buchloh's "Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," which appeared in October *55 (Winter 1990). These replies were written in response to the version of the essay that appeared in* L'art conceptuel: une perspective *(Paris: Musèe d'art moderne de la Ville de Paris, 1989). Kosuth's initial response was inserted into the first edition of the catalog, and the revised version printed below (which Kosuth has now further revised with the addition of a comment on Buchloh's footnote 28 [footnote 29 in the* October *version]) appeared, together with a response by Seth Siegelaub, in the second edition of the catalog. The quotations within the replies come from the version of Buchloh's essay that appeared in the catalog.*

It is the first time in my experience that I have seen a participant in an historical survey show attacked—much less with such vehemence. When it is an art historian who takes as his task the defamation of a living artist in character, work, and name, the situation is even more difficult to countenance. I do not propose that Mr. Buchloh give up his grim subjectivity. Yet, it should not escape notice that his attack is primarily a personal one and grounded in my *writings*, rather than an analysis of my work. Whether Mr. Buchloh's newfound writing style—apparently developed for this occasion—is intended to pass as theory or art history undoubtedly will provide some amusing speculation, but in any case it does a disservice to both while satisfying the requirements of neither.

Unfortunately, the moralism at the root of Mr. Buchloh's journalism does not translate into a professional ethic. In his systematic condemnation and ridicule of my work, he breaches not only the trust I placed in his personal assurances of a fair and objective reading of this period—he engages in a wholesale falsification of a history—and not only my own. I would only hope that the blatant cronyism hiding below his "history" of conceptual art and his biased and judgmental diatribe leveled against my work does not escape the attention of the reader of this catalog.

This letter will not address the score of injustices in Buchloh's article nor will it attempt to show the limitations of his history of the readymade. He had five months to write his article and I have had two days to digest it. I will merely cite two of the most blatant falsehoods, saving an itemized account for a later date.

Footnote 6. Apparently, Mr. Buchloh did not read *Art after Philosophy* closely. On Kawara is included. I admire and respect both On Kawara and Sol LeWitt and resent anything else being implied. Excuse me if I was influenced by Judd and Morris and not by Buchloh's choices. Their agenda as artists was something quite separate from mine. This is common knowledge to those familiar with the period. The bad faith attribution of my motives is uncalled for. Although Buchloh never asked me, I will say that I never saw *Red Square, White Letters* by Sol LeWitt until the seventies and was surprised and interested in it. In any case, it is certainly an anomaly in his work.

As for SVA, I was notorious there when I was a student for questioning the teachers. So much so, in fact, that the director of the school, Silas Rhodes, put me on the faculty at the age of twenty-two.

Footnote 18. The exhibition space referred to was called the Lannis Gallery (after my cousin Lannis Spencer, who was paying the rent) for the first month, and the Museum of Normal Art thereafter. I never called it the "Lannis Museum" and corrected anyone who did. Those familiar with this period know this, as well as the fact (as usual unmentioned) that it was the space where Hanne Darboven, Robert Ryman, On Kawara, and others were publicly exhibited very early—if not for the first time. This fact and activities such as my show "Fifteen People Present Their Favourite Book" in 1967 (among others) is curiously omitted. By 1967, I was working on the *First Investigation* and never exhibited the *Proto-Investigations* at the Lannis Gallery. All this is known and documented.

This brings us to his most reprehensible attack—even beyond the bounds of Buchloh's infamous polemics. It concerns the date of my *Proto-Investigations*. Ever-diligent in supporting the causes of his friends (Mr. Buchloh has heretofore not published on my work, although he borrows the voice of an "expert" on Conceptual Art here), my early work presents a special problem for this group, as it does for their champion. As I stated very clearly at the time (Buchloh could have asked Seth Siegelaub et al. about this, rather than interviewing individuals who neither knew my 1965 work nor had anything to gain by supporting me, to put it mildly), these works existed only in notes or drawings and were fabricated after I had the financial resources due to interest in the somewhat later work. Of course I was asked "what did you do before?" notably by Gian Enzo Sperone, among other critics and gallerists. Again, this is all known, if not by Mr. Buchloh. I simply had no funds at that age to fabricate works, and frankly, with no hope to exhibit them at the time—and with the nature of the work being what it was—there really was no point. This work is titled *Proto-Investigations*, clearly from the vantage point of the Investigations. Is the physically exhibited presence of a work the only criterion for its existence? It isn't, if you know anything about Conceptual Art. In contrast to his claims, Mr. Buchloh did not ask me to provide any documentation about this early period. I find it bitterly ironic that he singles out my work to have legitimate dates questioned while the dates of two of his friends' works are patent fabri-

cations that are left unchallenged. Or are these diversionary tactics the purpose of his essay?

In order to isolate and dismiss me as a modernist, Mr. Buchloh simply stops discussing my activities at the moment they can be favorably compared with the work of his friends on the issue of "institutional critique." The period from *The Second Investigation* through to the period of *The Fox*—the years covered by this exhibition—is completely missing. At the same time, Mr. Buchloh takes insights, terminology, even a philosophical agenda from this early text of mine and naturalizes it in the process of validating the work he wants to support. And he would have you believe, dear reader, that the "institutional critique" which he ascribes only to the work of his chums burst forth out of thin air, and could have done so without benefit of this early writing and the work which went with it.

Mr. Buchloh seems desperate to either deny the work I did or to attribute it to someone else. In good faith I accepted the assurance of Buchloh and others that a hatchet job of this sort would neither be done nor permitted. Buchloh and I had one two-hour conversation (our first) after which it was agreed that we should correspond and exchange summer addresses. I never heard from him again. Apparently he opted for the easier job of a partisan attack rather than doing the necessary homework for a text more appropriate to such a catalog. A press release for a gang of pals should not be confused with historical scholarship. With this text, Mr. Buchloh disqualifies himself once and for all from being taken seriously on this subject.

Footnote 28. Mr. Buchloh is himself a very adept modernist who uses an endless citation of "facts"—dates, quotes, references, cited works, and so forth for the purpose of constructing a scholarly, "authoritative" genealogy. Yet glaring errors abound. In this footnote, to cite one with remarkable implications, he cites my *First Investigations,* in passing, as *paintings.* Those works, texts of definitions from my dictionary, are mounted photographs. Anyone with even a passing knowledge of my work knows that this work, as well as the *Proto-Investigations,* used photography. The literature of and on this period, not to mention my own writing on this work, is replete with references to it because of its philosophical/ideological importance for an art engaged with signification rather than auratic manipulation of form. Either Benjamin Buchloh is breathtakingly ignorant of the movement he is claiming expertise in (as other errors would suggest), or he has intentionally misrepresented facts of this history in order to support a subjectively inspired polemic (as the rest of his manipulation of the facts would indicate).

—Joseph Kosuth, November 19, 1989, and April 20, 1991.

Despite claims and occasional footnote references to the contrary, Buchloh's text is a formalistic and idealistic one, a sort of tautological "art history as art history as art history," which has little, if any, relationship to the social, economic, or cultural, i.e., historical, period which it pretends to describe. Although the text claims to deal with the production of art between 1962 and 1969, it is hard to imagine how one can deal with that period without mentioning, even in a passing footnote, for example, May '68 or the U.S. War in Vietnam, which marked the period, even the art world. This is especially the case for a "progressive" art historian trying to understand so-called "Conceptual Art," an art whose spirit, ideas, and practices were linked with the broad social issues of the time. Instead of an open-ended, imaginative history questioning the possible dialectic between the art and life—why, for example, this type of art arose when it did and not, say, in 1926 or 1947 or 1984, or how this art was related to the changing mode of the production, distribution, and consumption of culture, etc.—he has chosen to write a standard, conservative, hermeneutically-sealed, textbook-type history of his idea of "who-influenced-who," "who-did-what-first," etc.

His "Conceptual Art" history is reductive for still another reason: for him, "Conceptual Art" is basically a history of what he thinks happens in Manhattan between Twenty-third Street and Canal Street, just like artists living in Paris or Berlin in the early part of the century. A false idea, as its international character, especially the relation between artists in Europe and the U.S., was one of its most original traits, differing greatly from other art "movements." Europe, in fact, was—and still is, twenty-five years later!—the site of most of the exhibitions—including this one—and of the interest which supported this work. Apparently, although living in Europe at the time, Mr. Buchloh does not find this of interest; perhaps he is unaware of this history?

His history is written with the hindsight and sense of distance of an art historian writing about the (long) dead past, with very little, if any, connection to the present, or, especially, future. His article even begins with ". . . roughly from 1965 to its temporary [?] disappearance in 1975," and concludes with Marcel Broodthaers's anticipation of its ". . . abolition of object status and commodity form, at best, would only be short lived," so we should not forget that we are dealing with a closed—and unsuccessful?—chapter in past art history. (Perhaps this need to reduce history to a compact package is precisely one of the unspoken purposes of museum exhibitions and art history?)

One of the reasons why this type of writing claiming to be history can be written about "Conceptual Art" is that during its development there was no art critic who lived the period and "promoted" and explained it (with the obvious exception of Lucy Lippard in New York, and to a lesser degree Charles Harrison and Michel Claura in Europe) and is still interested in writing about it twenty years later. Perhaps this was because the artists identified with this current were so vocal and literate about their work and thus partly excluded the need for a

critical backup, but in any case the result is that much of the documentation and history of the period has been—and will be—left to people who have not lived it and are trying to reconstruct it long after the fact. This poses some very original problems in charting the period, in addition to understanding the significance of the art produced.

But the specific problem with Benjamin Buchloh's text is not that it is composed of much subjective opinion, but that it pretends to be a factual history of the period, a pretention reinforced by its attachment to—and legitimation by—the catalog of the first museum attempt to produce an historical exhibition of the work of the period. Obviously, we all can have insightful opinions about a period we didn't personally live through—even art critics and historians—but what is disturbing here is that Buchloh's opinions are parading around as facts.

Of the other numerous underlying misconceptions ordering his concept of "Conceptual Art," we will only mention here the most important: the Duchamp fixation.

Like Hegel, for whom human history was conceived as the realization of the Idea, Buchloh's "Conceptual Art" is the realization of the Duchampian Idea.

Duchamp is depicted as the only possible "progressive" antidote to what Buchloh considers a "reactionary," tautological, positivistic formalism—which has been enlarged by Buchloh to include all square art objects. With Buchloh's history, the Duchamp influence is inescapable: "Confronting for the first time the full range of Duchamp's legacy, Conceptual practices . . ."; "This erosion by the introduction of a legalistic language and the administrative style of the material presentation of the artistic object—has, of course, once again been prefigured in Duchamp's practice as well"; "In January 1963, (the year of the first American retrospective of the work of Marcel Duchamp at the Pasadena Art Museum) a relatively little-known Los Angeles artist [Edward Ruscha] decided to publish a book entitled *Twenty-Six Gasoline Stations*"; "It is therefore all the more surprising to see around 1968 (what one could call the thrid phase of Duchamp reception) . . ."; "A few months later, Kosuth based his argument for the development of conceptual art on an equally restricted reading of Duchamp"; etc.; etc.

But the real problem of the Duchamp fixation is not that it makes Duchamp appear omnipotent; it has an even more insidious and important effect. By fabricating his history of "Conceptual Art" around the armature of the Duchamp idea—or the idea of Duchamp—Buchloh's history has been reduced almost exclusively to artists and ideas which can be situated—whether *pro* or *con*—within the Duchamp perspective, thus very carefully avoiding any other ideas, such as those of Andre, Weiner, Buren, and Barry, among others, which have little, if anything, to do with Duchamp, and often open directly onto social, moral, and political issues, both art-related and more general. The obvious

exclusion of Carl Andre from the beginnings of this history is especially revealing; it is nothing less than the exclusion of the "political."

In light of his Duchamp fixation, much of Buchloh's critique of Kosuth also appears as a disguised dispute over the "correct" interpretation, use, and misuse of Duchamp. Furthermore, whereas Buchloh devotes much critical energy on the ideas of Kosuth without mentioning his work, it is quite the contrary for most of the other artisits, whose work is mentioned—albeit usually descriptively—but rarely their ideas (except for Robert Morris, who is treated approvingly because of his Duchamp ideas, and to a lesser extent, Sol LeWitt and Daniel Buren, who, however, are treated rather ambiguously).

As one can see, I have not even begun to question Buchloh's subjective choice of specific facts and their ordering in time and space; this will have to wait for a more thorough and serious study of "Conceptual Art" and its relation to its historical moment. For our moment, I will limit myself to a random list of some actors "missing in action"—dematerialized?—who contributed, in one way or another, to the formation of the art historical moment called, for lack of a better term, "Conceptual Art": Carl Andre, John Baldessari, Robert Hout, Jack and Nell Wendler, Hollis Frampton, John Chamberlain, Ron Wolin, Harald Szeemann, VH101, Jean-Luc Godard, Edward Keinholz, Lucy Lippard, Jan Dibbets, Prague 1968, Eugene Goosen, Art & Project, Dennis Oppenheim, "Art and Industry," Gian Enzo Sperone, Christo, Wim Beeren, Richard Serra, Art Workers Coalition, Robert Smithson, Walter König, *Avalanche*, Vito Acconci, Germano Celant, Robert Irwin, Jennifer Licht, Lotta Continua, Stanley and Elyse Grinstein, Joseph Beuys, Ray Dirks, Yvonne Rainer, Prospect, Niele Toroni, Donald Burgy, "Process Art," Woodstock, Giuseppe Panza, Peter Townsend, "Art of the Real," Willougby Sharp, Keith Arnatt, Michel Claura, Konrad Fischer, May '68, Frederick Barthelme, Jack Burnham, Peter Downsborough, Barry Flanagan, Christine Kozlov, Pulsa, Hamish Fulton, Guerilla Art Action Group, Stanley Brouwn, John Chandler, Enno Develing, N.E. Thing Co., the Black Panthers, David Askevold, Hanne Darboven, Richard Long, Terry Fox, "Land art," Billy Kluver, Johannes Cladders, Michael Asher, Gilbert & George, Piero Gilardi, Peter Hutchinson, Michael Harvey, Al Hansen, "Antiform," Luis Camnitzer, Michael Heizer, David Lamelas, Allen Kaprow, Ger Van Elk, Stephen Kaltenbach, Artist's Rights Movement, the Rosario Group, Bruce McLean, Mario Merz, Ursula Meyer, Walter de Maria, Barry Le Va, Roelof Louw, Adrian Piper, Gerry Schum, Les Levine, Franz Erhard Walther, The Bay of Pigs, Ian Wilson, Klaus Rinke, Keith Sonnier, William Wiley, Michael Snow, "Video Art," William Wegman, John Gibson, Tony Schafrazi, James Lee Byars, Abbie Hoffman, Sigmar Polke, Herman Daled, the U.S. Servicemen's Fund, Tomasso Trini, Eugenia Butler, Gene Beery, Lee Lozano, John Perrault, Marjorie Strider, Alan Ruppersberg, John Latham, Gene Swenson, Kent State, the Beatles, and, lest we forget, the Vietnam War.

—Seth Siegelaub, January 1990.

Benjamin Buchloh Replies to Joseph Kosuth and Seth Siegelaub

I am a bit disappointed that Joseph Kosuth refused to take me up on the critical and scholarly exchange that seemed possible after our original interview/discussion conducted during the research in preparation of my essay. It was in a spirit of critical debate that I had written this essay concerning historical and theoretical questions within the complex field of activities that is now inevitably and irreversibly compounded under the stylistic epithet "Conceptual Art."

I had deliberately refrained from provocative polemics in both tone and information in order to continue that critical exchange. The careful reader can easily recognize that my essay does not in fact contain any accusations or polemics directed specifically at Joseph Kosuth or his work (unless one would consider it an insult to voice a very hesitant doubt that is buried in a footnote and introduced with the explicit proviso that ". . . for the time being and until further evidence may be produced . . .").

Instead of responding to the proposal to look at the history of conceptual art from a position of critical distance, Kosuth has reacted with a massive assault consisting of blackmail (of the curators who originally published my essay in the exhibition catalog, whom he threatened with withdrawing his work from the exhibition unless they would cede the most important space in the exhibition to his work and glue his printed reply, supplied on the day of the opening, into the already printed catalog) and *ad hominem* insults to which I have no reason to respond.

What I would like to respond to, however, is the evidence of a common art-world attitude in Kosuth's reaction that is symptomatic in its fusion of paranoia and the compulsion to control. Artistic practice from this perspective is not a dialogic enterprise where critical questions can be asked, challenges and provocative hypotheses can be posed, and answers and counterchallenges can be returned. By contrast, it is an enterprise of the culture industry and its products, whose international dissemination has to be protected (like corporate products in general) from any challenge by critics—the leftover nuisance from the old days when artistic practice still aspired to operate in the public sphere.

It seems that in the mind of artists like Kosuth, artistic practice is a matter of image control and product protection, of territorial strategies, networked or, if necessary, extorted in the various institutional and commercial venues that facilitate the work's continued circulation and guarantee its mythical status.

Historical insight and critical communication have to be silenced and blocked in order to buttress a support system dependent on the blind faith of curators, collectors, dealers, and disciples.

The violence of Kosuth's response cannot possibly have been triggered by the one inference and two factual mistakes that he has found in my fifty-five-page manuscript. The first factual mistake is my suggestion that Kosuth called his exhibition space on occasion the Lannis Museum, which is in fact an error; he called it the Lannis Gallery, as I do call it; and he called it also the Museum of Normal Art.

The second mistake—noticed by Kosuth after more than a year had passed and pointed out in his addendum to the original rebuttal, here published upon his request—is a patent misconstruction. The interested reader will easily notice that in my footnote 28 (footnote 29 in the *October* version of the essay), I do not at all refer to Kosuth's *Proto-Investigations* as "paintings," but as "definitions of words on large black canvas *squares*." Obviously I do know that the *Proto-Investigations* were not painted, but that they were photostats. But I have to admit that I was under the erroneous assumption that these paper photostats were mounted like valuable posters on canvas to protect them from damage during installation when the truth is that they are mounted on cardboard.

The main accusation leveled by Kosuth against the curators at the time was that he had only two days before the opening to read my essay and respond to it. Now, more than a year later, it is astonishing that all Kosuth can come up with is a second partial error in one of my footnotes. I had been looking forward particularly to hearing some retrospective thoughts from Kosuth about his infatuation with tautological thought in the mid-to-late sixties—which seems a crucial subject for the study of that moment—or to further clarifications of the interaction between the minimalists and the emerging conceptualists. But queries about relationships between artists and their shared information can only be misconstrued by Kosuth as an attempt to sabotage the idea of the protean originality of the artist prodigy. Kosuth therefore seems to have decided that he must shore up his territory and status against even the slightest gesture of critical doubt with a totally disproportionate rebuttal, a strike of deterrence, so to speak, that would settle questions once and for all and would make future critics think twice about even wanting to ask a question or two. But moreover—and paradoxically—it seems that his outrage and insults were motivated perhaps even more by the fact that he could not resist the temptation to display once again his status as a *master* by deploying the institutional power of the museum to stage a public retaliation similar to the famous Guggenheim affair when he co-initiated the censoring of Daniel Buren's work from the Guggenheim International Exhibition in 1971.

*

Seth Siegelaub's polemical response to my essay seemed less surprising to me than that of Joseph Kosuth: after all, ambitious art dealers in the twentieth century have often claimed that they make art history more than that they make money. Their exclusive identification with one particular moment of artistic production is both the condition of their success and the cause of their failure to recognize any other activity within that moment, let alone the development of the work of a subsequent generation (one could think of Kahnweiler's vituperative attacks on the emergence of nonrepresentational art, for example, and his simultaneous devotion to minor post-cubist artists like Manolo).

It seems that my article has awoken Mr. Siegelaub from his historical sleep, as he seems startled by the prospect that somebody might dare to question both the immaculate conception of the movement whose New York debut he managed and the subsequent canonization of its players as the true conceptual artists of 1968. Now Siegelaub wakes up in the role of the Marxist poseur, counseling me on how to write a truly dialectical history, rather than the conventional formalist one he ascribes to me.

I have to admit I have much more respect for Siegelaub the art dealer, exhibition organizer, and the publisher of International General than for Siegelaub the Marxist counsel. First of all, I have always considered it an honor to be accused of being a formalist by vulgar Marxists and to be accused of being a vulgar Marxist by conservative voices in the art and art history world. But after a twenty-year debate on the relative autonomy of the aesthetic from the ideological and the political sphere and the concomitant difficulties for writing a social art history, even the most radical and orthodox Marxist art historians would not advocate the methodological simplicity of Siegelaub's argument. Accusing me of having failed to recognize that conceptual art was born first and foremost from the political oppositions of these artists to the war in Vietnam and their sympathy with the student rebellions of 1968 seems only one of the inevitable results of the mechanistic determinism Siegelaub considers to be dialectical.

This argument appears all the more dubious in the light of my discussion of Kosuth's work, with its continuous emphasis on the analytic nature of art and its inability to make synthetic propositions. More absurd yet, it is Kosuth that Siegelaub feels particularly compelled to defend (of all participants in the Siegelaub group certainly the least convincing candidate for the political causes of Conceptual Art, *then and now*). I can only suspect that this engagement results more from the loyalty to the numerous objects by this artist in Siegelaub's collection than loyalty to the Marxist cause.

His second accusation is that I failed entirely to understand the movement's essentially international character. I thought I had sketched out, both in my essay and in the consultation for the concept of the exhibition, to what extent I consider Conceptual Art to be both European and American in its origins and its consequences. (Does the final part of the essay not deal explicitly

with the European critical responses to the myths of Conceptual Art in the work of Marcel Broodthaers, Daniel Buren, and Hans Haacke, for example?)

At the same time that Siegelaub accuses me of having written a narrow local history of the activities between Twenty-third Street and Canal Street in Manhattan, he tries to disqualify me from writing about the subject—as does Kosuth—by arguing that I was after all—unlike himself and Lucy Lippard—not an eyewitness at that place at the time. For it seems that, according to Siegelaub's astonishing materialist ideas about history, only eyewitness accounts are reliable, and the rest is personal fiction. This conception of history culminates in Siegelaub's long list of proper names that, according to him, make up the real history of Conceptual Art.

Finally, Siegelaub argues that in opposition to his all-embracing collective vision of conceptual art, mine is closed and esoteric, suffering most of all from a "Duchamp fixation." I guess I would have to admit that I suffer from a Duchamp fixation (as a physicist might suffer from an Einstein fixation) to the extent that I do in fact consider Duchamp's contribution to the theory and practice of aesthetic experience tremendous—a legacy whose full range is only beginning now to become apparent. But my attempt to unravel that complicated legacy does not posit Duchamp as the personal beginning and end. Quite the opposite, it is an attempt to develop a detailed reading of the works of the artists and their operations inside the parameters of the Duchampian legacy and to understand the real changes that they have contributed within that discursive and institutional territory called contemporary art. That this first sketch would contain ambiguities seems inevitable, since ambivalence is a fundamental condition of the aesthetic object, but in no way can they be misconstrued as my personal ambivalence toward the individual artists. It seems that dealers and collectors inevitably will be the last ones to maintain the notion of art history as one of continuous achievements and unsurpassable heroic deeds.

—Benjamin Buchloh, May 1991

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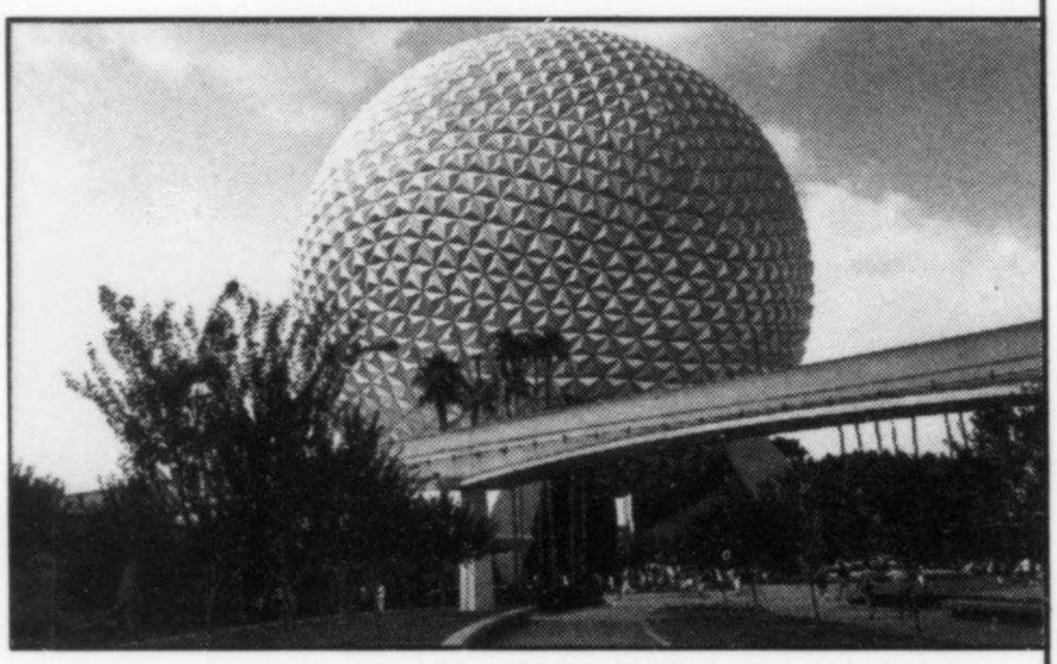

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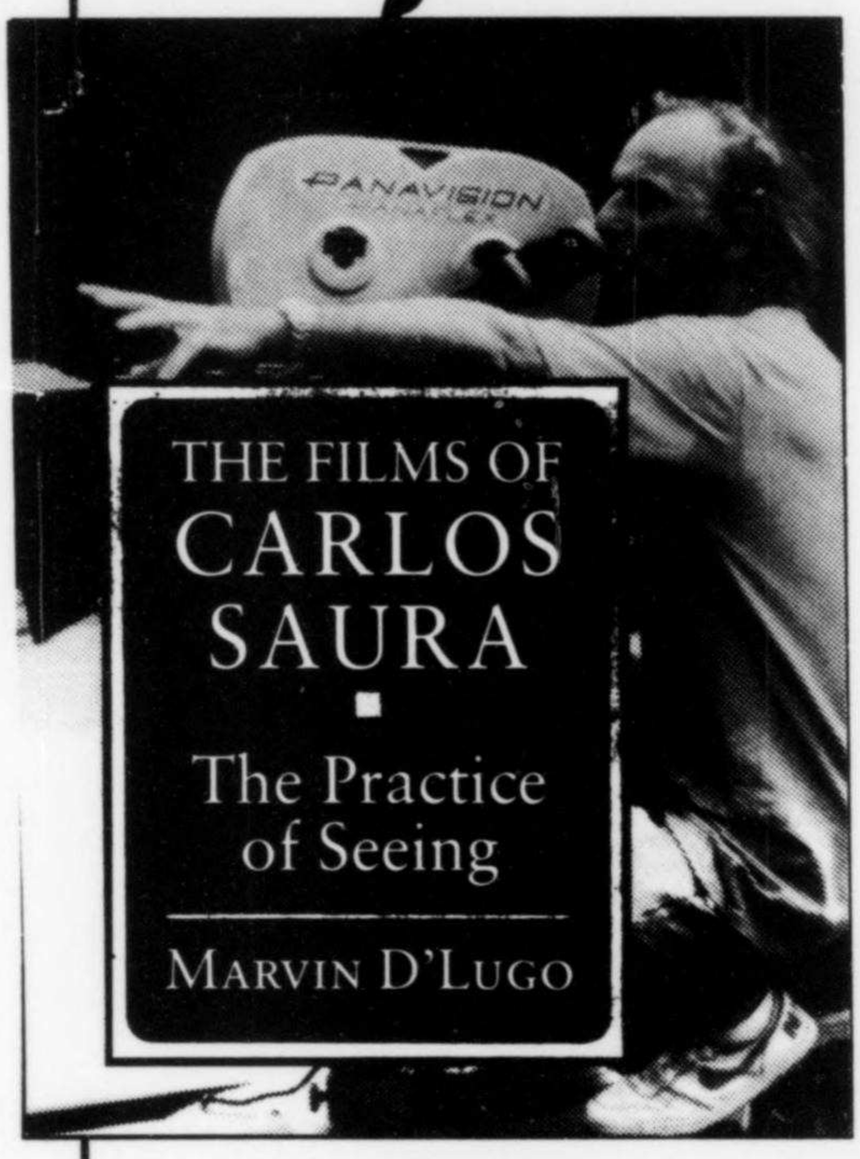

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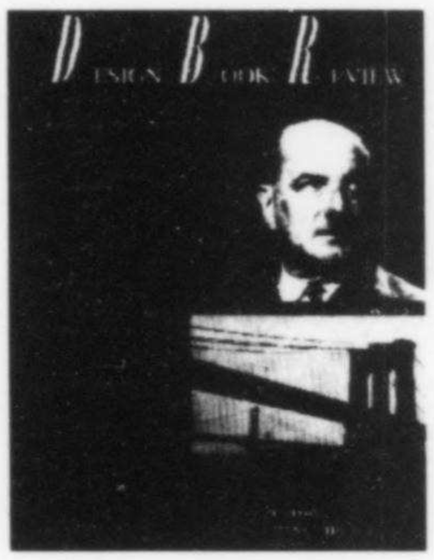

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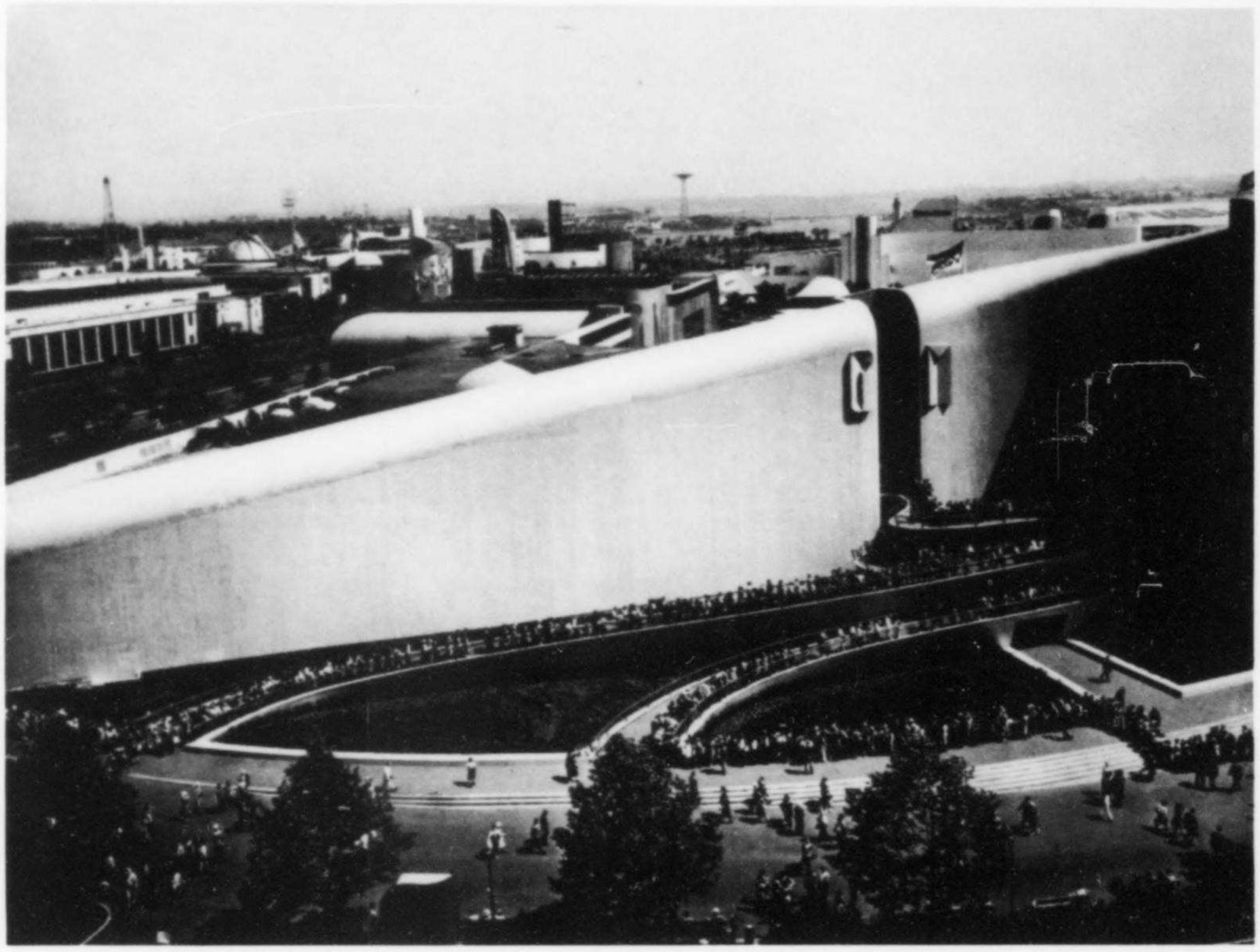

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