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OCTOBER

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David Joselit — *Marcel Duchamp's* Monte Carlo Bond *Machine*

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Cover Photo: The Art of Hitler.
An Exhibition by Steven Kasher, Rutgers University, January–February, 1991.

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Postscript on the Societies of Control*

GILLES DELEUZE

1. Historical

Foucault located the *disciplinary societies* in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; they reach their height at the outset of the twentieth. They initiate the organization of vast spaces of enclosure. The individual never ceases passing from one closed environment to another, each having its own laws: first, the family; then the school ("you are no longer in your family"); then the barracks ("you are no longer at school"); then the factory; from time to time the hospital; possibly the prison, the preeminent instance of the enclosed environment. It's the prison that serves as the analogical model: at the sight of some laborers, the heroine of Rossellini's *Europa '51* could exclaim, "I thought I was seeing convicts."

Foucault has brilliantly analyzed the ideal project of these environments of enclosure, particularly visible within the factory: to concentrate; to distribute in space; to order in time; to compose a productive force within the dimension of space-time whose effect will be greater than the sum of its component forces. But what Foucault recognized as well was the transience of this model: it succeeded that of the *societies of sovereignty*, the goal and functions of which were something quite different (to tax rather than to organize production, to rule on death rather than to administer life); the transition took place over time, and Napoleon seemed to effect the large-scale conversion from one society to the other. But in their turn the disciplines underwent a crisis to the benefit of new forces that were gradually instituted and which accelerated after World War II: a disciplinary society was what we already no longer were, what we had ceased to be.

We are in a generalized crisis in relation to all the environments of

* This essay, which first appeared in *L'Autre journal*, no. 1 (May 1990), is included in the forthcoming translation of *Pourparlers* (Paris: Editions Minuit, 1990), to be published by Columbia University Press.

enclosure—prison, hospital, factory, school, family. The family is an "interior," in crisis like all other interiors—scholarly, professional, etc. The administrations in charge never cease announcing supposedly necessary reforms: to reform schools, to reform industries, hospitals, the armed forces, prisons. But everyone knows that these institutions are finished, whatever the length of their expiration periods. It's only a matter of administering their last rites and of keeping people employed until the installation of the new forces knocking at the door. These are the *societies of control*, which are in the process of replacing the disciplinary societies. "Control" is the name Burroughs proposes as a term for the new monster, one that Foucault recognizes as our immediate future. Paul Virilio also is continually analyzing the ultrarapid forms of free-floating control that replaced the old disciplines operating in the time frame of a closed system. There is no need here to invoke the extraordinary pharmaceutical productions, the molecular engineering, the genetic manipulations, although these are slated to enter into the new process. There is no need to ask which is the toughest or most tolerable regime, for it's within each of them that liberating and enslaving forces confront one another. For example, in the crisis of the hospital as environment of enclosure, neighborhood clinics, hospices, and day care could at first express new freedom, but they could participate as well in mechanisms of control that are equal to the harshest of confinements. There is no need to fear or hope, but only to look for new weapons.

2. Logic

The different internments or spaces of enclosure through which the individual passes are independent variables: each time one is supposed to start from zero, and although a common language for all these places exists, it is *analogical*. On the other hand, the different control mechanisms are inseparable variations, forming a system of variable geometry the language of which is *numerical* (which doesn't necessarily mean binary). Enclosures are *molds*, distinct castings, but controls are a *modulation*, like a self-deforming cast that will continuously change from one moment to the other, or like a sieve whose mesh will transmute from point to point.

This is obvious in the matter of salaries: the factory was a body that contained its internal forces at a level of equilibrium, the highest possible in terms of production, the lowest possible in terms of wages; but in a society of control, the corporation has replaced the factory, and the corporation is a spirit, a gas. Of course the factory was already familiar with the system of bonuses, but the corporation works more deeply to impose a modulation of each salary, in states of perpetual metastability that operate through challenges, contests, and highly comic group sessions. If the most idiotic television game shows are so successful, it's because they express the corporate situation with great precision. The factory constituted individuals as a single body to the double advan-

tage of the boss who surveyed each element within the mass and the unions who mobilized a mass resistance; but the corporation constantly presents the brashest rivalry as a healthy form of emulation, an excellent motivational force that opposes individuals against one another and runs through each, dividing each within. The modulating principle of "salary according to merit" has not failed to tempt national education itself. Indeed, just as the corporation replaces the factory, *perpetual training* tends to replace the *school*, and continuous control to replace the examination. Which is the surest way of delivering the school over to the corporation.

In the disciplinary societies one was always starting again (from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory), while in the societies of control one is never finished with anything—the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation, like a universal system of deformation. In *The Trial*, Kafka, who had already placed himself at the pivotal point between two types of social formation, described the most fearsome of juridical forms. The *apparent acquittal* of the disciplinary societies (between two incarcerations); and the *limitless postponements* of the societies of control (in continuous variation) are two very different modes of juridical life, and if our law is hesitant, itself in crisis, it's because we are leaving one in order to enter into the other. The disciplinary societies have two poles: the signature that designates the *individual*, and the number or administrative numeration that indicates his or her position within a *mass*. This is because the disciplines never saw any incompatibility between these two, and because at the same time power individualizes and masses together, that is, constitutes those over whom it exercises power into a body and molds the individuality of each member of that body. (Foucault saw the origin of this double charge in the pastoral power of the priest—the flock and each of its animals—but civil power moves in turn and by other means to make itself lay "priest.") In the societies of control, on the other hand, what is important is no longer either a signature or a number, but a code: the code is a *password*, while on the other hand the disciplinary societies are regulated by *watchwords* (as much from the point of view of integration as from that of resistance). The numerical language of control is made of codes that mark access to information, or reject it. We no longer find ourselves dealing with the mass/individual pair. Individuals have become "*dividuals*," and masses, samples, data, markets, or "*banks*." Perhaps it is money that expresses the distinction between the two societies best, since discipline always referred back to minted money that locks gold in as numerical standard, while control relates to floating rates of exchange, modulated according to a rate established by a set of standard currencies. The old monetary mole is the animal of the spaces of enclosure, but the serpent is that of the societies of control. We have passed from one animal to the other, from the mole to the serpent, in the system under which we live, but also in our manner of living and in our relations with others. The disciplinary man

was a discontinuous producer of energy, but the man of control is undulatory, in orbit, in a continuous network. Everywhere *surfing* has already replaced the older *sports*.

Types of machines are easily matched with each type of society—not that machines are determining, but because they express those social forms capable of generating them and using them. The old societies of sovereignty made use of simple machines—levers, pulleys, clocks; but the recent disciplinary societies equipped themselves with machines involving energy, with the passive danger of entropy and the active danger of sabotage; the societies of control operate with machines of a third type, computers, whose passive danger is jamming and whose active one is piracy and the introduction of viruses. This technological evolution must be, even more profoundly, a mutation of capitalism, an already well-known or familiar mutation that can be summed up as follows: nineteenth-century capitalism is a capitalism of concentration, for production and for property. It therefore erects the factory as a space of enclosure, the capitalist being the owner of the means of production but also, progressively, the owner of other spaces conceived through analogy (the worker's familial house, the school). As for markets, they are conquered sometimes by specialization, sometimes by colonization, sometimes by lowering the costs of production. But, in the present situation, capitalism is no longer involved in production, which it often relegates to the Third World, even for the complex forms of textiles, metallurgy, or oil production. It's a capitalism of higher-order production. It no longer buys raw materials and no longer sells the finished products: it buys the finished products or assembles parts. What it wants to sell is services and what it wants to buy is stocks. This is no longer a capitalism for production but for the product, which is to say, for being sold or marketed. Thus it is essentially dispersive, and the factory has given way to the corporation. The family, the school, the army, the factory are no longer the distinct analogical spaces that converge towards an owner—state or private power—but coded figures—deformable and transformable—of a single corporation that now has only stockholders. Even art has left the spaces of enclosure in order to enter into the open circuits of the bank. The conquests of the market are made by grabbing control and no longer by disciplinary training, by fixing the exchange rate much more than by lowering costs, by transformation of the product more than by specialization of production. Corruption thereby gains a new power. Marketing has become the center or the "soul" of the corporation. We are taught that corporations have a soul, which is the most terrifying news in the world. The operation of markets is now the instrument of social control and forms the impudent breed of our masters. Control is short-term and of rapid rates of turnover, but also continuous and without limit, while discipline was of long duration, infinite and discontinuous. Man is no longer man enclosed, but man in debt. It is true that capitalism has retained as a constant the extreme poverty of three quarters of humanity, too poor for debt, too numerous for confinement:

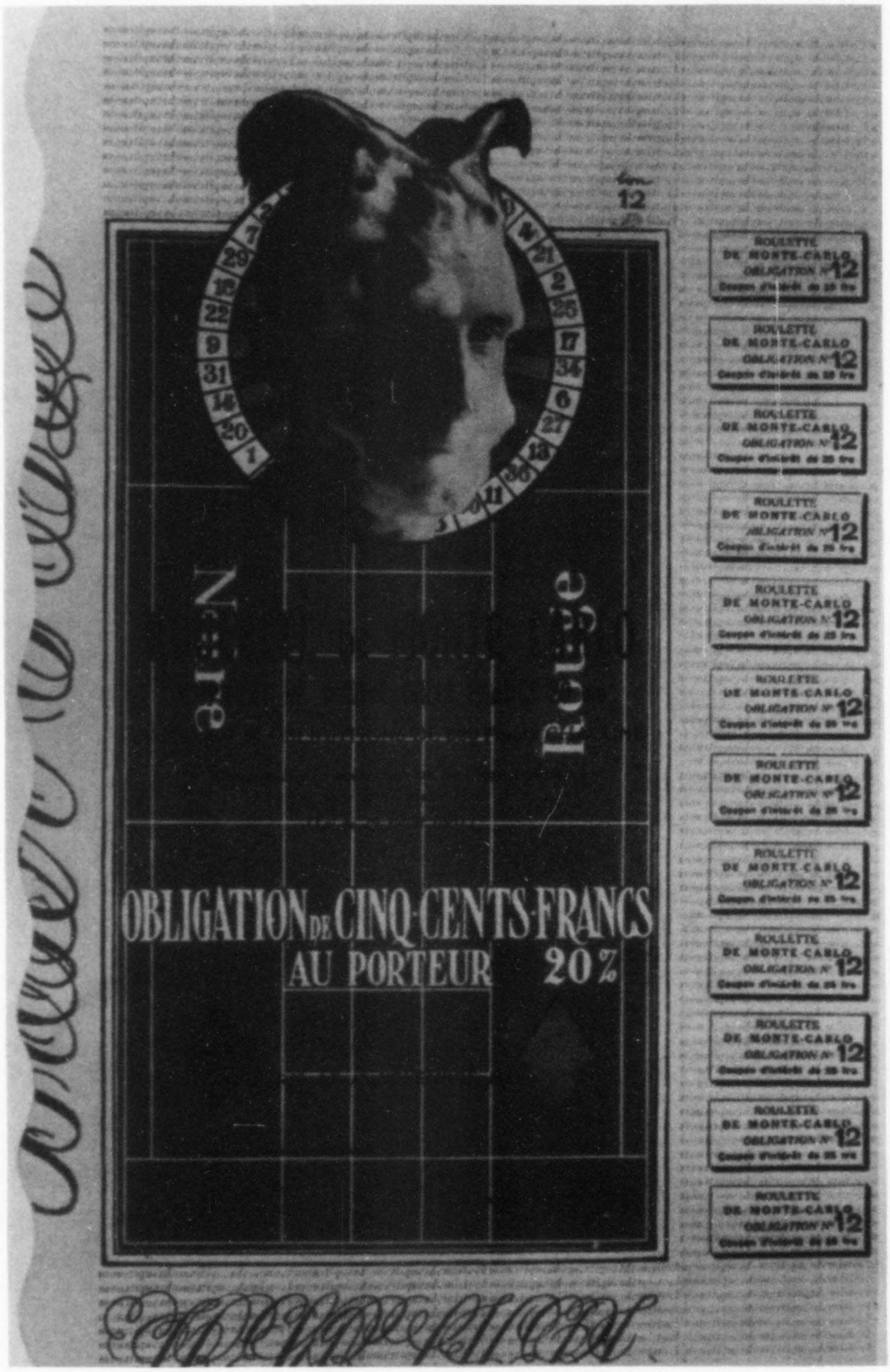
control will not only have to deal with erosions of frontiers but with the explosions within shanty towns or ghettos.

3. Program

The conception of a control mechanism, giving the position of any element within an open environment at any given instant (whether animal in a reserve or human in a corporation, as with an electronic collar), is not necessarily one of science fiction. Félix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighborhood, thanks to one's (dividual) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position—licit or illicit—and effects a universal modulation.

The socio-technological study of the mechanisms of control, grasped at their inception, would have to be categorical and to describe what is already in the process of substitution for the disciplinary sites of enclosure, whose crisis is everywhere proclaimed. It may be that older methods, borrowed from the former societies of sovereignty, will return to the fore, but with the necessary modifications. What counts is that we are at the beginning of something. In the *prison system*: the attempt to find penalties of "substitution," at least for petty crimes, and the use of electronic collars that force the convicted person to stay at home during certain hours. For the *school system*: continuous forms of control, and the effect on the school of perpetual training, the corresponding abandonment of all university research, the introduction of the "corporation" at all levels of schooling. For the *hospital system*: the new medicine "without doctor or patient" that singles out potential sick people and subjects at risk, which in no way attests to individuation—as they say—but substitutes for the individual or numerical body the code of a "dividual" material to be controlled. In the *corporate system*: new ways of handling money, profits, and humans that no longer pass through the old factory form. These are very small examples, but ones that will allow for better understanding of what is meant by the crisis of the institutions, which is to say, the progressive and dispersed installation of a new system of domination. One of the most important questions will concern the ineptitude of the unions: tied to the whole of their history of struggle against the disciplines or within the spaces of enclosure, will they be able to adapt themselves or will they give way to new forms of resistance against the societies of control? Can we already grasp the rough outlines of these coming forms, capable of threatening the joys of marketing? Many young people strangely boast of being "motivated"; they re-request apprenticeships and permanent training. It's up to them to discover what they're being made to serve, just as their elders discovered, not without difficulty, the telos of the disciplines. The coils of a serpent are even more complex than the burrows of a molehill.

Marcel Duchamp. Monte Carlo Bond. *1924.*



Marcel Duchamp's *Monte Carlo Bond* Machine*

DAVID JOSELIT

J'aimais les femmes atroces dans les quartiers énormes
Ou naissaient chaque jour quelques êtres nouveaux
Le fer était leur sang la flamme leur cerveau
J'aimais j'aimais le peuple habile des machines
Le luxe et la beauté ne sont que son écume
Cette femme était si belle
Qu'elle me faisait peur

—Guillaume Apollinaire, "1909," in *Alcools*

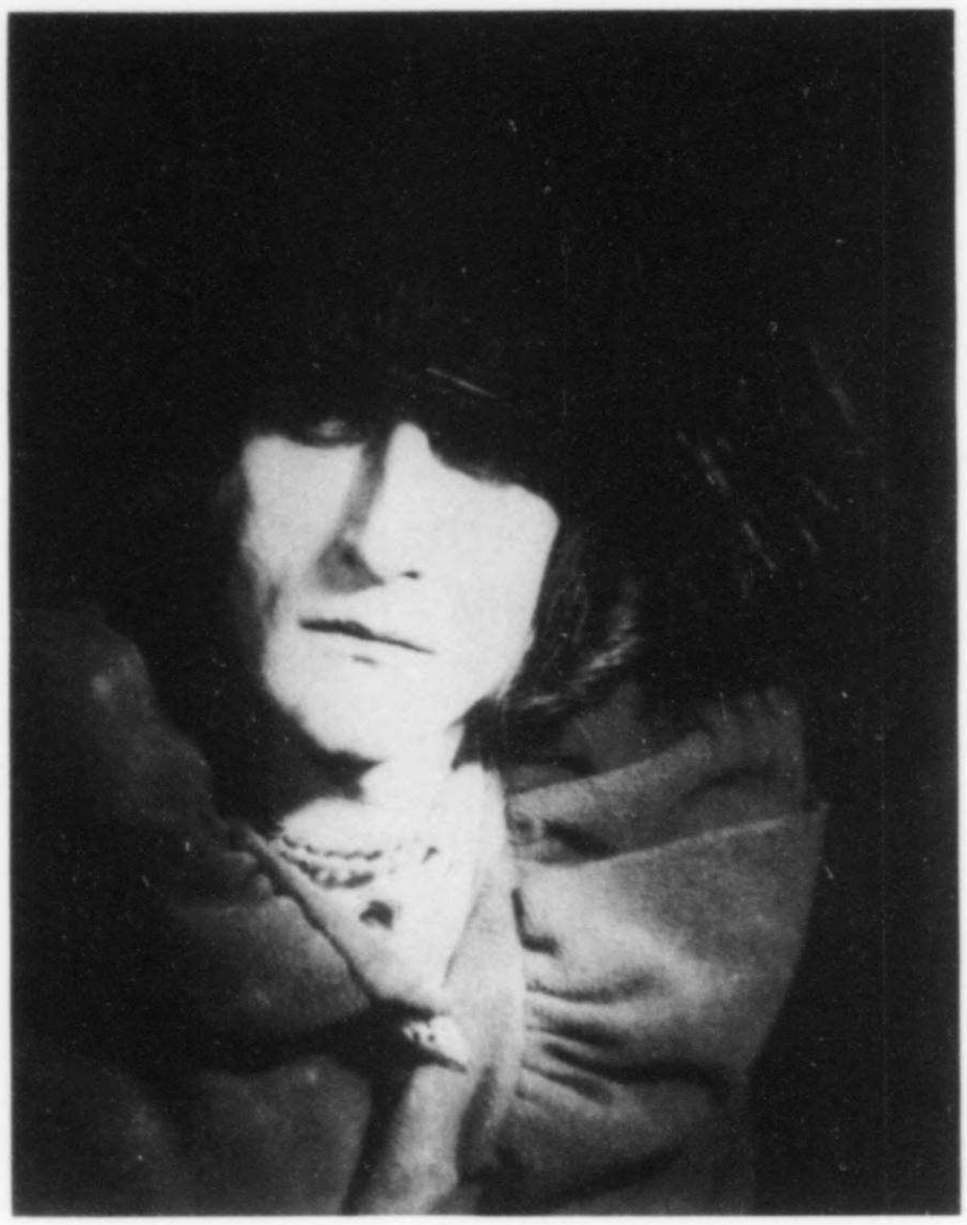
"Ovaire toute la nuit."

—Marcel Duchamp

In the searing concluding lines of his poem "1909," Guillaume Apollinaire evokes a hybrid feminine subject, equally seductive and repulsive to her masculine admirer. It is as though the poem's narrator had rushed into the arms of a woman and found himself in the mouth of a furnace. With fewer words, and a different kind of eloquence, Marcel Duchamp (and Rrose Sélavy) envision the body of woman as another kind of factory, "Ovaire toute la nuit," open (and producing) night and day. Femininity might wrap itself in "Le luxe et la beauté," as Apollinaire's machine-woman is "en robe d'ottoman violine/Et en tunique brodée d'or/Décolletée en rond," or like Rrose Sélavy dressed in a delirious "écume" of silly fur and outrageous hat. But the nature of these women, their inner core, is composed of iron and fire, spinning rotary discs: a pure site of production that is both "ouvert" and "Ovaire toute la nuit."

These suggestive literary fragments indicate a possible answer to the di-

* I would like to thank Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, for whose seminar "Duchamp and Dadaism" the first verion of this essay was written, and Annette Michelson for her editorial suggestions, particularly with regard to Nietzsche's concept of the Eternal Return.



Man Ray. Rrose Sélavy. *1921.*



Man Ray. Duchamp as Rrose Sélavy. *c. 1920–21.*

lemma posed by Robert Lebel when he asks the following question:

> Thus once again the year 1920 was a time for great decisions since from the position of anti-artist he [Duchamp] had to pass to that of engineer. This mutation was to be so important that it required a change of identity. After having thought first of adopting a Jewish name he took the pseudonym "Rrose Sélavy" with which thenceforth he signed his works. Should we see in this female entitity . . . the sign, evidently still ironic, of a passive acceptance of circumstances from now on?[1]

While Lebel's conjunction of Duchamp's new position as "engineer" (or perhaps anti-engineer) with his adoption of a female alias is invaluable, his easy elision of femininity with passivity is misleading. Far from serving as a "sign . . . of a passive acceptance of circumstances," I would argue that, like Apollinaire's woman who "était si belle/Qu'elle me faisait peur," Rrose Sélavy serves not to cancel but to extend the metaphors of industrial, visual, and sexual production that Duchamp's occulist machines were meant to introduce.[2] In this light, it is

1. Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 46.
2. I am therefore arguing, against Tania Modleski, that the metaphorical function of femininity may represent production as readily as consumption. My argument is more consistent with Rosalind



Fritz Lang. Metropolis. *1927.*

easier to resolve the mystery of Duchamp's early vacillation between a Jewish and a feminine pseudonym: both of these identities—the Jew and the woman—are mobilized culturally as paranoiac metaphors for a fearsome, runaway production. But while the irrational fear of "Jewish moneylenders" is restricted to the arena of capital, the identity of woman extends the metaphor of production into the realm of sexuality and the family—a place where Duchamp had already been and wanted to remain.

Andreas Huyssen's essay "The Vamp and the Machine: Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*" assists in clarifying the discursive field—to which I believe Rrose Sélavy belongs—by linking woman and industrial production in the 1920s. Huyssen's text centers on the character of Maria in *Metropolis*, a beautiful young woman who, at the beginning of the film, preaches an ethic of warmth, affection, and emotion to the workers while caring for and nurturing their children. Although her message is not explicitly revolutionary, the leaders of Metropolis seek to contain or subvert Maria's charismatic power by replacing her with a robotic

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Krauss's stipulation of an incarnated "feminine" vision as demonstrated in Duchamp's rotary reliefs. See Tania Modleski, "Femininity as Mas[s]querade: A Feminist Approach to Mass Culture," in Colin MacCabe, ed., *High Theory/Low Culture: Analysing Popular Television and Film* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); and Rosalind E. Krauss, "The Blink of an Eye," in David Carroll, ed., *The States of "Theory": History, Art, and Critical Discourse* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

double, what Huyssen calls the "machine-vamp." This double is sent back to the workers in the guise of an eroticized subversive: she performs a striptease for the men, leading to a frenzy of desire and violence that culminates in her being burned as a witch. Huyssen's description of the burning echoes the woman of Apollinaire's "1909":

> This technical process in which woman is divided and fragmented into inner and outer nature is later mirrored in subsequent stages of the vamp's destruction: the outer features of the vamp burn away on the stake until only the mechanical insides are left and we again see the metallic robot of the earlier scenes.[3]

Here again is the terrifying revelation that links woman and the machine. The "spume" or froth of her body, her dress, her beauty are revealed as nothing more than the masks of a robot: "Le fer était leur sang la flamme leur cerveau/ J'aimais j'aimais le peuple habile des machines." The spunk and flounce of Rrose Sélavy may be nothing more than the veneer—the bodily envelope—that simultaneously masks and reveals Marcel Duchamp the engineer.

Metropolis was conceived in 1924 and completed in 1927, and it is therefore directly contemporary to Duchamp's invention of Rrose Sélavy. At the heart of Huyssen's analysis of the film is his assertion that the "myth of the dualistic nature of woman as either asexual virgin-mother or prostitute-vamp is projected onto technology which appears as either neutral and obedient or as inherently threatening and out-of-control."[4] In other words, *Metropolis* plots two countervailing discursive connections: technology is feminized both in order to domesticate it (the virgin-mother) and to express its potential threat (the ravenous prostitute-vamp); but also, woman herself is envisioned as a dangerous machine, a factory "Ovaire toute la nuit." The machine-woman of *Metropolis* therefore occupies a contradictory identity. She is both the metaphor for technical production and the literal result of its processes. In *Anti-Oedipus* Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari provide a means of collapsing this distinction. As they declare: "A truly materialist psychiatry can be defined . . . by the twofold task it sets itself: introducing desire into the mechanism, and introducing production into desire."[5] In the transformation of Maria into a robot—or Marcel Duchamp, engineer, into Rrose Sélavy—precisely this dual process occurs: desire is introduced into industrial mechanisms and production enters into desire.

In *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari argue for a radically new vision of the psychic economy based on a critique of Freud's Oedipus complex as a

3. Andreas Huyssen, "The Vamp and the Machine: Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*," in Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture, Postmodernism* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1986), p. 75.
4. Ibid., p. 73.
5. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), p. 22.

substitution of "classical theater . . . for the unconscious as a factory."[6] The productive unit of the unconscious, according to them, is the desiring-machine:

> Desiring-machines are binary machines, obeying a binary law or set of rules governing associations: one machine is always coupled with another. . . . [There] is always a flow-producing machine, and another machine connected to it that interrupts or draws off part of this flow (the breast—the mouth).[7]

The desiring-machine is characterized by *connection*: the production of flows and their break or interruption. The unconscious is neither metaphorical nor the realm of fantasy, but rather a real site of production whose boundaries are not defined by the limits of the individual subject. In fact it is desiring-machines that are real and the subject that is an effect of their multiple chains of production: "This subject itself is not at the center, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, *defined* by the states through which it passes."[8] Drawing on Nietzsche's vision of subjectivity as an effect produced by a *physiological* interplay of forces,[9] Deleuze and Guattari sketch a precarious psychic "geology" in which the self is repeatedly shattered by the subterranean interactions of desiring-machines.[10] Pierre Klossowski has described this dynamic in terms of the "vicious circle" of Nietzsche's Eternal Return. According to Klossowski, the experience of the Eternal Return is the sensation of pure intensity (or as Deleuze and Guattari might put it, the free play of desiring-machines) that underlies the surface perception of a stable self. The only way of rising out of this pure intensity into signification—or identity—is to *return*: "How can meaning be constituted within the intensity? Precisely in returning upon itself—indeed in a new fluctuation in which, by repeating itself and imitating itself, it would become a sign."[11] On the level of the subject, the Eternal Return represents the individual's "multiple alterity"—his or her potential status as several past or future selves founded on a physiological intensity that can forever only be glimpsed. As Klossowski puts it:

> In adopting the necessity of the return as universal law at the outset, I de-actualize my present self to will myself in *all the other selves*, whose

6. Ibid., p. 24.
7. Ibid., p. 5.
8. Ibid., p. 21.
9. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1989).
10. At this juncture it is important to note that the "iron and fire" underlying Apollinaire's subject in "1909," as well as Maria's metallic and reflective robotic "skeleton" in *Metropolis*, establishes one sort of connection between what Deleuze and Guattari call desiring-machines and Klossowski calls "pure intensity" and *technology*. This is the type of link between industrial production and the production of the self that I believe the figure of Rrose Sélavy signals in Duchamp's work.
11. Pierre Klossowski, "Nietzsche's Experience of the Eternal Return," trans. Allan Weiss, in David B. Allison, *The New Nietzsche* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), p. 111.

> entire series must be gone through so that, following the circular movement, I can again become *what I am at the moment in which I discover* the law of the Eternal Return.[12]

Duchamp's multiplicity of identities in the face of his readymades, Large Glass, rotary discs, and other "machines"—R. Mutt, Rrose Sélavy, wanted criminal, and shaving cream–laden faun—establishes such a Nietzschean "vicious circle" of subject effects. It is tempting to see this "rotation" through alternate personae as a strategy for representing what Klossowski defines as a pure intensity. But to this I will have to return.

At the center of Deleuze and Guattari's attempt to establish a truly materialist psychoanalysis is their assertion that the production of desire cannot be divorced from social production, that the two processes are in fact one:

> There is no such thing as the social production of reality on the one hand, and a desiring-production that is mere fantasy on the other. . . . The Marx-Freud parallelism between the two remains utterly sterile and insignificant as long as it is expressed in terms that make them introjections or projections of each other without ceasing to be utterly alien to each other, as in the famous equation money = shit. The truth of the matter is that *social production is purely and simply desiring-production itself under determinate conditions.*[13]

Following Deleuze and Guattari we can conclude that the adoption of Rrose Sélavy as an alter-ego, far from counteracting Duchamp's preoccupation with the machine, as Lebel implies, serves instead to broaden significantly the meaning of "engineering" within his work. For it is through the person of Rrose Sélavy—whose very name is a synonym for desire—that we may perceive the point of contact between desiring-production and social or economic production. Like the humming, spinning rotary discs, the body of Rrose is also a machine: a "Cuisse enregistreuse," perhaps.[14]

Cuisse enregistreuse: this and the multiplicity of linguistic fragments Duchamp/Sélavy produced during the 1920s introduces a third dimension of the machine in which Deleuze and Guattari's dual desiring-machines and social machines are embedded. It is the language-machine, and for his understanding of its mechanics Duchamp is indebted to the poet, novelist, and playwright Raymond Roussel. Apollinaire brought Duchamp to a performance of Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique*—a novel adapted for the stage—in May 1912, and from

12. Ibid., pp. 108–9.
13. Ibid., p. 29.
14. Rrose Sélavy (alias Marcel Duchamp), text published in the *White Box*, reprinted in Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson, eds., *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), p. 116.

Left: Marcel Duchamp. Wanted/$2,000 Reward. *1923.*

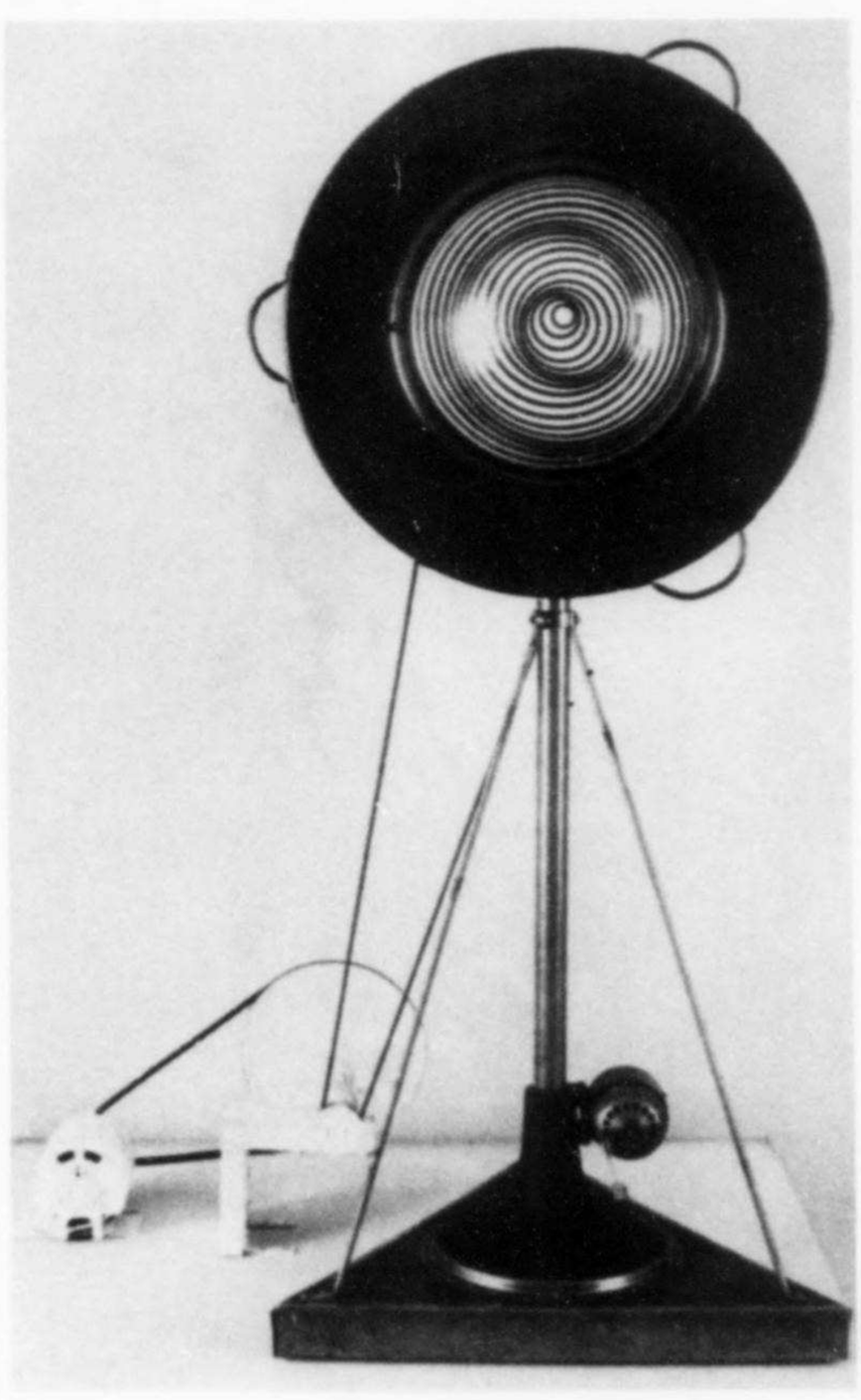
Right: Marcel Duchamp. Rotary Demisphere (Precision Optics). *1925.*

that time Duchamp considered the poet a major influence.[15] Roussel's narratives were generated from chains of associations and double entendres in which text was produced through a continuous process of recycling. As he explains in *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*:

> I chose two almost identical words (reminiscent of metagrams). For example, *billard* and *pillard*. To these I added similar words capable of two different meanings, thus defining two almost identical phrases.
>
> In the case of *billard* and *pillard* the two phrases I obtained were:
>
> 1. Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard . . .
> 2. Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard . . .

15. Duchamp had stated, "It was fundamentally Roussel who was responsible for my glass, *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even*. From his *Impressions d'Afrique* I got the general approach. This play of his which I saw with Apollinaire helped me greatly on one side of my expression. I saw at once I could use Roussel as an influence." See Marcel Duchamp, "The Great Trouble with Art in this Country," from an interview with James Johnson Sweeney, *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*, vol. 13, no. 4–5 (1946). Reprinted in Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 126.





In the first, "lettres" was taken in the sense of lettering, "blanc" in the sense of a cube of chalk and "bandes" as cushions.

In the second, "lettres" was taken in the sense of missives, "blanc" as in white man, and "bandes" as in hordes.

The two phrases found, it was a case of writing a story which could begin with the first and end with the second.

Now it was from the resolution of this problem that I derived my materials.[16]

Such a deployment of double meanings and near-metagrams was not Roussel's only technique for producing words out of words; he also devised a process of "pulverization" in which a readymade phrase was reduced to a similar-sounding string of fragments whose chance conjunctions became the basis for a narrative passage or tale.[17]

Both of Roussel's techniques are familiar to the readers of Duchamp. Whereas the poet creates an entire discursive circle—a story or novel written in flat, matter-of-fact prose—to double back onto nearly identical sentences like "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux billard" and "Les lettres du blanc sur les bandes du vieux pillard," Duchamp collapses the near-identity of two phrases onto a terse literary precipitate like "Ovaire toute la nuit," whose double, "Ouvert toute la nuit," stands behind it like a ghost. Like Roussel, Duchamp also exults in pulverizing and reformulating language: Rrose Sélavy is produced from "Eros, c'est la vie," or "Lits et ratures" from "Littérature." In the *Green Box* Duchamp includes a note, *Conditions of a language*, which we may presume dates from the time directly following his encounter with Roussel, and which seems almost a rephrasing of the writer's system:[18]

> The search for "*prime words*" ("divisible" only by themselves and by unity).

16. Raymond Roussel, *How I Wrote Certain of My Books*, trans. Trevor Winkfield (New York: Sun, 1977), p. 3.

17. Roussel described this method in the following terms:

> As the method developed I was led to take a random phrase from which I drew images by distorting it, a little as though it were a case of deriving them from the drawings of a rebus.
>
> I take as an example that of *The Poet and the Moorish Woman*. In this I made use of the song "J'ai du bon tabac." The first line: J'ai du bon tabac dans ma tabatière" gave me: "jade tube onde aubade en mat (object mat) a basse tierce."

See *How I Wrote*, pp. 8–9.

18. It is impossible to date notes from the *Green Box* specifically, but I will assume this one is part of the generative process of the *Large Glass* and was therefore written in the teens or early twenties. It is unclear whether Roussel's system was known before *How I Wrote Certain of My Books* was published posthumously in 1935. Judging from his texts of the 1920s, Duchamp certainly seemed either to know of or intuit it.

> Take a Larousse dict. and copy all the so-called "abstract" words, i.e., those which have no concrete reference.
>
> Compose a schematic sign designating each of these words. (this sign can be composed with the standard stops)
>
> These signs must be thought of as the letters of a new alphabet.[19]

Like Roussel, Duchamp envisioned language as a cycle of destruction and production where the distortion of words begets words, where readymade signifiers from Larousse are transformed into the "letters of a new alphabet."

Roussel imagined his language-machine as a new incarnation of rhyme based on the oscillation or pulverization of meaning: "This method is, in short, related to rhyme. In both cases there is unforeseen creation due to phonic combinations."[20] In his study of the poet's work, Michel Foucault described Roussel's art as an endless cycle of identity—of the death and regeneration of language, the eternal return of the same. It is worth quoting Foucault's lyrical description at length:

> Far from being a language that seeks to begin, it's the second form of words already spoken: it's everyday language ravaged by destruction and death. That's why it is essential that it refuse to be original. It does not attempt creation, but by going beyond destruction, it seeks the same language it has just massacred, finding it again identical and whole. By nature it is repetitive. Speaking for the first time of things never seen, machines never invented, monstrous plants, cripples Goya would never have dreamed of, crucified jellyfish, adolescents with sea-green blood, this language carefully hides that it says only what has already been spoken. However, he did reveal it at the last moment in his posthumous declaration [*How I Wrote Certain of My Books*]; thus his voluntary death [Roussel's suicide] opened an internal dimension of language which was, after all, his own sentencing of that language to death and also its resurrection from the splendid particles that constitute its body.[21]

Foucault's evocative passage describes a literary equivalent of the "vicious circle" of Nietzsche's Eternal Return. The language of both Roussel and Duchamp is one of death and rebirth. Each initiates a cycle in which sentences are broken apart into a "pure intensity" of meaningless syllables and word fragments, only to be re-willed within a different register as meaningful narratives. Theirs is a language of recurring, repetitive desire that eternally returns.

19. Marcel Duchamp, *The Green Box*, reprinted in Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 31.
20. Roussel, *How I Wrote*, p. 11.
21. Michel Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Ruas (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1987), p. 45.



Man Ray. Portrait of Marcel Duchamp with Shaving Cream.

The *Monte Carlo Bond*, a work by Marcel Duchamp and Rrose Sélavy dating from 1924, opens out onto each of the three dimensions of the machine that I have described: the desiring-machine, social production, and language, all of which, as Deleuze and Guattari might put it, share "identical natures and differing regimes."[22] As Robert Lebel recounts, the bond was conceived as a joint stock company designed to raise 15,000 francs "divided into thirty bonds of 500 francs each redeemable by 'artificial drawings' and bearing the somewhat exorbitant interest of twenty percent."[23] The purpose of this capital was to fund a system devised by Duchamp for winning at roulette. Such a conjunction of the activities of the "company" with the production of art is fundamental to the meaning of the *Monte Carlo Bond*: it is clear that Duchamp's martingale was as much intended to produce works of art as to generate cash profits. The very bond note itself—a lithograph including a portrait by Man Ray of Duchamp transformed through shaving cream into a chimerical figure, perhaps resembling a faun or devil—was a "masterpiece" of sorts. As *The Little Review* somewhat guilelessly reported in 1924–25, "If anyone is in the business of buying

22. Ibid., p. 262.
23. Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 50. Written on the bond note is the following statement: "Remboursables au pair en trois ans par tirages artificiels a partir du ler Mars 1925."

art curiosities as an investment, here is a chance to invest in a perfect masterpiece. Marcel's signature alone is worth much more than the 500 francs asked for the share."[24] Duchamp himself made the connection with painting explicit in a letter to Picabia in 1924:

> The Martingale is without importance. They are all either completely good or completely bad. But with the right number even a bad Martingale can work and I think I've found the right number.
>
> You see I haven't quit being a painter, now I'm sketching on chance.[25]

The *Monte Carlo Bond* was a specific kind of machine: a painting-machine whose elaborate, monotonous activity—the repetitive spinning of roulette discs, inevitably reminiscent of the optical pulse of the rotary reliefs—was meant to generate a new kind of painting, "sketched on chance."[26]

Duchamp's accounts of his "work" at the roulette table emphasize not the glamour of his occupation in an alluring Mediterranean capital, but rather a killing monotony and sameness. To Picabia he writes, "It's delicious monotony without the least emotion"; and to Jacques Doucet:

> I'm beginning to play and the slowness of progress is more or less a test of patience. I'm staying about even or else am marking time in a disturbing way for the aforementioned patience. But still, doing that or something else . . . I'm neither ruined nor a millionaire and will never be either one or the other.[27]

Again we are indebted to Lebel for amplifying this last line of Duchamp's letter

24. [*The Monte Carlo Bond*], *The Little Review* 10 (Fall/Winter, 1924–25), reprinted in Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 185.

25. Marcel Duchamp, Letter to Francis Picabia, 1924, reprinted in Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 187.

26. Duchamp's use of phrases and terms like "artificial drawings" and "sketched on chance" willfully wrests the definition of painting away from purely "retinal art" and toward a more conceptual understanding of the medium. In light of my discussion of Nietzsche's concept of the Eternal Return, it is interesting to note Gilles Deleuze's analysis of the role of chance within Nietzsche's concept of force:

> Will to Power is the differential element of forces—i.e., the element that produces the difference in quantity between two or several supposedly relating forces. Will to Power is the genetic element of force—i.e., the element that produces the quality of each force in this relation. As a principle, Will to Power does not suppress chance; on the contrary, it *implies* chance, because without chance it would neither be plastic nor metamorphic. Chance is the bringing together of forces into relation, while Will to Power is the determining principle of this relation.

See Gilles Deleuze, "Active and Reactive," trans. Richard Cohen, in David B. Allison, *The New Nietzsche* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), p. 90.

27. Marcel Duchamp, Letter to Jacques Doucet, 1924, reprinted in Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 187.

to Doucet with an apparently trivial but absolutely fundamental piece of evidence: "He considers his martingale infallible in this respect but he also admits that if one perseveres long enough one can hope to win an amount equal to the wages of a clerk who works in his office as many hours as the gambler does in the casino."[28]

What kind of machine, then, is the *Monte Carlo Bond*? On one dimension, it invents an entire discursive structure—bonds, thousands of spins of the roulette wheel—in order to double back to its starting point, to get nowhere. As Foucault argues with regard to Roussel's language-machines, which pulverize and resurrect the language of everyday life, Duchamp's bond issue is premised on a similar death and rebirth—a death and rebirth of painting. When one—let's say Jacques Doucet—buys a share of the *Monte Carlo Bond*, one buys a work of art, for as *The Little Review* gushed, "Marcel's signature alone is worth much more than the 500 francs asked for the share." If he sells, he receives an "artificial drawing." Like other works of art, the *Monte Carlo Bond* is meant to appreciate in value (at an interest of twenty percent); but the only thing produced by Duchamp's martingale is precisely another work of art, a "painting sketched on chance." There are no profits, only a return to the same: "I'm neither ruined nor a millionaire and will never be either one or the other."

In its creation of a complex discursive line the only purpose of which is to circle back to its point of departure, Duchamp's painting-machine is strikingly reminiscent of Louise Montalescot's painting-machine in Roussel's *Impressions d'Afrique*. Louise (perhaps like Rrose) is a clever young woman who has ingeniously invented a machine that can paint. Roussel details its mechanisms at length in several pages of description like the following:

> Deprived of its shutter, which the young woman still held between her fingers, the plate now stood exposed, revealing a smooth, brown, shiny surface. All eyes were fixed eagerly on this mysterious substance, endowed by Louise with strange, photo-mechanical properties. Suddenly, opposite the easel, a slight shudder ran through the automatic arm, which consisted of an ordinary, bright, horizontal blade, bent in the middle; the adjustable angle of the elbow tended to open as wide as possible, owing to a powerful spring, whose effect was counteracted by a flexible metal wire, which, emerging from the sphere, was fastened round the furthest tip of the arm and thus regulated the gap; at present the wire was being stretched to allow the angle to become progressively greater.[29]

The result of this miraculous machine was nothing more or less than an exact

28. Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 50.
29. Raymond Roussel, *Impressions of Africa*, trans. Lindy Foord and Rayner Heppenstall (New York: Riverrun Press, 1983), p. 144.

transcription of the landscape: "The finished work, seen as a whole, gave an impression of uncommonly intense colouring and remained strictly true to the original."[30] As Foucault argues of Roussel, such machines present an allegory of the identity of language: "In their wealth of poverty words always refer away from and lead back to themselves."[31] And so, Marcel, Louise, and Rrose seem to imply, do paintings. The *Monte Carlo Bond* establishes a flow of desire—of infinite spins of a disc and settlings of a ball—that departs from and returns to the same position: the process of representation itself. As Klossowski had put it in relation to Nietzsche: "How can meaning be constituted within the intensity? Precisely in returning upon itself . . . by repeating and imitating itself, it would become a sign."[32]

Duchamp's bond issue is a painting-machine, but its significance cannot be reduced to this status. For the *Monte Carlo Bond* projects a field in which desiring-production and social production come into play, in which—adopting the terminology of Deleuze and Guattari—the meaning of Oedipus within capitalism is both expressed and contested. As a natural consequence of their thesis that "*social production is purely and simply desiring-production itself under determinate conditions*,"[33] Deleuze and Guattari have undertaken to define the relationship between them and to periodize it historically. At the heart of *Anti-Oedipus* is the belief that social institutions—social repression—arise to counteract the primal fear of what the authors term "decoded" or deterritorialized flows of desire. Each of the three social models they describe—the "Primitive Territorial Machine," the "Barbarian Despotic Machine," and the "Civilized Capitalist Machine"—establishes techniques for coding or controlling desire, and within each one incest plays a different structural role. It is only in capitalism, characterized as it is by a general decoding of flows through the adoption of money and the unfettering of economic production from extraeconomic restrictions like myth, that the incest prohibition establishes itself within individual subjects and families in the form of Oedipus.

Within each of their three machines, Deleuze and Guattari structure the social field by establishing two orthogonal axes of relationship. The Primitive Territorial Machine arises from a vertical axis of filiation (the family, or *stock*) and a horizontal extension of alliance (marriage through a system of *debt*). In the primitive socius, incest with the mother is prohibited to insure the extension of the family through reproduction, to maintain the axis of filiation; and incest with the sister is prohibited to insure the establishment of a system of alliances through marriages outside of the clan based on blocks of inter-familial debt. Before the incest prohibition there were no subjects known as "mother" or

30. Ibid., p. 148.
31. Foucault, *Death and the Labyrinth*, p. 14.
32. Klossowski, "Nietzsche's Experience of the Eternal Return," p. 111.
33. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 29.

"sister," but only pure "intensities" of desire between one desiring-machine and another. Incest brings these unified, delineated subjects into being but sets them beyond reach as sexual objects. The Barbarian Despotic Machine establishes the social field along the same axes, but the meaning of these relationships is radically changed. Filiation becomes "direct" filiation to the despot or the deity that he represents, while alliance—what was accomplished through discrete blocks of debt in the Primitive Territorial Machine—becomes an infinite tribute, what Deleuze and Guattari call a "debt of existence." In this socius everything —including incest—is collapsed onto the body of the imperial leader, which is itself transformed into a despotic representation: the detached object as both phallus and signifier. The despot is Oedipus and Oedipus is the despot, and as a result the world is overcoded through his transformation into a signifier and the consequent invention of writing. The signifier arises as a deterritorialized sign through the body of the leader: "*Incest has ceased being the displaced represented of desire to become the repressing representation itself.*"[34]

It is the argument of *Anti-Oedipus* that Freud's Oedipus complex is not immanent in the unconscious of individual human subjects. Rather, an introjected Oedipus arises only at a particular historical moment and for a particular purpose: as a figure of repression within the deterritorialized flux of capitalism. Of the three social machines Deleuze and Guattari describe, capitalism comes closest to occupying what they theorize as the limit of the social: a complete decoding of desire in its transposition to an infinitely polymorphous cash economy. If capitalism is the relative limit of every socius, schizophrenia—the utter decoding of desire—is the *absolute* limit:

> Capitalism is indeed the limit of all societies, insofar as it brings about the decoding of the flows that other social formations coded and overcoded. But it is the *relative* limit of every society; it effects *relative* breaks, because it substitutes for the codes an extremely rigorous axiomatic that maintains the energy of the flows in a bound state on the body of capital as a socius that is deterritorialized, but also a socius that is even more pitiless than any other. Schizophrenia, on the contrary, is indeed the *absolute* limit that causes the flows to travel in a free state on a desocialized body without organs. Hence one can say that schizophrenia is the exterior limit of capitalism itself or the conclusion of its deepest tendency, but that capitalism only functions on condition that it inhibit this tendency, or that it push back or displace this limit by substituting for it its own *immanent* relative limits, which it continually reproduces on a widened scale.[35]

Schizophrenia is both capitalism's ultimate expression and its limit; its dream

34. Ibid., p. 201.
35. Ibid., pp. 245–46.

and its nightmare. Oedipus arises in the space between capitalism and schizophrenia; it enforces the boundary and "maintains the energy of the flows in a bound state." In terms of Nietzsche's "vicious circle" of the Eternal Return, Oedipus provides the mechanism for re-willing the self from its periodic dissolution into pure intensity (or schizophrenia).

According to Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism is constituted when the axes of filiation and alliance become entirely economic. Filiative or industrial capital arises when money begins to generate money; this vertical axis is transected by the commercial capital of alliance that binds the socius together through consumer purchasing—the investment by the wage earner of his meager resources into the system. Deleuze and Guattari argue that these two forms of capital, though scarcely ever distinguished, are completely incommensurable:

> Let us return to the dualism of money, to the two boards, the two inscriptions, the one going into the account of the wage earner, the other into the balance sheet of the enterprise. Measuring the two orders of magnitude in terms of the same analytical unit is a pure fiction, a cosmic swindle, as if one were to measure intergalactic or intra-atomic distances in meters and centimeters.[36]

It is the conjunction of these two dissimilar flows of money through the regulatory structures that Deleuze and Guattari call axiomatics that gives form to the capitalist field. In this social machine, characterized by the freeing of flows of money and their axiomatic conjunction, the structure of the family no longer gives form to relationships of production: "Capital has taken upon itself the relations of alliance and filiation. There ensues a privatization of the family according to which the family ceases to give its social form to economic reproduction."[37] Divested of its former role, the family comes to serve a new function: as the laboratory of Oedipalization. In capitalism, "Oedipal desires are the bait, the disfigured image by means of which repression catches desire in the trap,"[38] and Oedipus is distributed everywhere, inhabits everyone. Oedipalization makes the subject believe that all of his or her desires can be reduced to "Mommy and Daddy"; and this allows—or forces—him or her to repress the character of his or her real desire: the unconscious as a purely productive factory of desiring-machines and the capitalist socius as a humming machine of decoded flows. The social repression that once was imposed by myth or the law of the despot is now developed within the psychic economy of the individual.

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of decoded flows of filiation and alliance, reterritorialized by Oedipus's distorted representation of desire, brings us back again to the *Monte Carlo Bond*. Duchamp's bond issue sketches out the field of

36. Ibid., p. 230.
37. Ibid., p. 263.
38. Ibid., p. 116.

capitalism as described in *Anti-Oedipus* only to collapse it back onto itself, to approach the absolute limit of schizophrenia. The *Monte Carlo Bond* establishes axes both of filiation and of alliance. What better image for filiative capital—for the generation of money from money—than gambling, the spinning disc of the roulette wheel? But Duchamp's bond also embodies a second manifestation of this generative principle: it, like other stocks and bonds, yields dividends—high ones, figured at twenty percent. The bond elides the two faces of filiative capital: its unpredictable relationship to chance and the mask of propriety—of legitimate investment—that serves to suppress any recognition of capital's always already speculative nature. But where does the capital of alliance lie in the *Monte Carlo Bond*, which at first appears as a pure demonstration of filiative production? The worker is nearly invisible in this "corporation" because he lies at its very center. Rrose Sélavy may be the chairman of the board, but Marcel is the one who labors; and his labor is "monotonous" and distinctly unproductive. As Lebel states:

> [Duchamp] considers his martingale infallible in this respect but he also admits that if one perseveres long enough one can hope to win an amount equal to the wages of a clerk who works in his office as many hours as the gambler does in the casino.[39]

Like the wage laborers described by Deleuze and Guattari, who bind the social machine together through the continual reinvestment of their meager capital, Duchamp-the-worker—the gambler as clerk—must put his winnings back into the "company": "I would like so much to pay my dividends."[40]

In the *Monte Carlo Bond* the axes of filiation and alliance that structure the capitalist field fall back onto themselves in a monotonous, repetitive rehearsal of desire which is always in motion but never leaves its point of departure: Duchamp breaks even. As Thierry de Duve argues in his article "Marcel Duchamp, or The *Phynancier* of Modern Life," the representative of filiative capital (the financier) and of alliance capital (the worker) are collapsed onto the person of the artist (or one of his aliases):

> At the beginning of the story Marcel Duchamp is R. Mutt, but this we won't know until the end. R. Mutt is like the little nobody who proclaims himself an artist in taking out his membership in the Society; he divides himself into a stockholder and an artisan, Richard and Mutt. Richard is like Arensberg, both of them "big" stockholders in the Society (both founding members) and both collectors (Richard is president of the hanging committee and future founder of the Société Anonyme). Mutt is like Mott, artisan-painter or small indus-

39. Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 50.
40. Marcel Duchamp, Letter of Jacques Doucet, January 16, 1925, reprinted in Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 188.

> trialist. As artisan Mutt suffers from his person's being divided into an exploited worker and a merchant who pockets a surplus value. As industrialist Mott doesn't suffer, he exploits his workers. Mutt envies Mott and fears for his trade.[41]

As de Duve demonstrates, Duchamp's experience as capitalist is radically divided and contradictory. He occupies several subject effects representing both financier and laborer, or as Deleuze and Guattari might put it, the "subject itself is not at the center, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, defined by the states through which it passes."[42]

There is a multiplicity of characters embedded in the *Monte Carlo Bond*—to be more precise, it is a *family* business. Rrose Sélavy is the mother, and chairman of the board. She is a mother who is a man. Marcel Duchamp is the father. In his portrait on the bond note by Man Ray, he, like Rrose, is masquerading—as a hypermasculine devil or faun. But his mask is made of shaving cream, echoing Sélavy's "Complete Line of Whiskers and Kicks."[43] He may be about to lose his whiskers, and he might be in for some kicks from Mother. Marcel's face is obscured by the frothy stuff, as though his identity were being erased. And Oedipus—the child—is there too; just as Deleuze and Guattari argue, Oedipus is everywhere. The entire background of the bond is covered with a text printed in green italics: "moustiques domestiques demi-stock." While the primary meaning of "moustique" is mosquito, it may also be an idiomatic term for a child or brat. "Stock" additionally contains the double meaning of family and goods. Distributed throughout the field of the bond is a domestic brat, a "half-share"—the product of a bond issue. In a fragment of 1922, Duchamp makes an analogous conjunction—an equivalent play on words—between "insects" and "incest": "Rrose Sélavy trouve qu'un incesticide doit coucher avec sa mère avant de la tuer; les punaises sont de rigueur."[44] Oedipus, the "incesticide" (and linguistic ghost of *insecticide*) is killing insects (children, as well as parents?) and yet also *producing* such progeny: "les punaises sont de rigeur."

Assuredly, the flowing desires of capital are displaced onto the representation of the Oedipal family in the *Monte Carlo Bond*, joined most explicitly in the single word *demistock*: the child who is a share. But this delirious, dissolving

41. Thierry de Duve, "Marcel Duchamp or The *Phynancier* of Modern Life," *October* 52 (Spring 1990), pp. 68–69.
42. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 21.
43. Rrose Sélavy's calling card included two "professional" affiliations or areas of expertise. Above her name, the card read, "Precision Oculism," and below, "Complete Line of Whiskers and Kicks." See Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 105.
44. Marcel Duchamp, text first published in *Littérature* (nouvelle serie, no. 5, Paris, October 1, 1922), reprinted in Sanouillet and Peterson, *Writings*, p. 105.

family (which anyway collapses back onto just one man) is not the kind of efficient laboratory of repression that Deleuze and Guattari identify. Duchamp reinvents the Capitalist Machine as though it were one of Roussel's language-machines: the *Monte Carlo Bond* leads onto a long journey filled with spins of the wheel, filiative and wage-earning capital, the production of children; and yet its destination is identical to its starting point. Or perhaps not quite. For in the *Monte Carlo Bond* Duchamp begins with capitalism, the relative limit of social machines, and ends with schizophrenia—what Annette Michelson called "autism considered as a language system"[45]—as the absolute limit of any socius. In his bond, Duchamp has sought to represent two kinds of pure intensity: that defined by Nietzsche as the "vicious circle," the cycle of alternate identities that must be passed through in order to will the self out of its lavalike formlessness, and secondly, the equally deterritorialized flows of money, which likewise eternally return to the same—to the point of breaking even. With his wry choice of the roulette wheel as the "vicious circle" par excellence, Duchamp inscribes one spinning disc within another: the cycle of identity meshes with the cycle of capital. It is through the figure of Oedipus, *the moustique domestique demistock*, that these two "wheels of chance" come to communicate.[46]

45. Annette Michelson, "'Anémic Cinéma': Reflections on an Emblematic Work," *Artforum* (October 1973), p. 60.

46. It should not be forgotten that these two "discs" constitute, moreover, a third figure: the "painting machine."

Oedipus Exploded: Pasolini and the Myth of Modernization*

CESARE CASARINO

The Pierre Menard Function

Pierre Menard's goal, as is well known, was not "to compose another *Don Quixote*," for that would have indeed been too easy; rather, he wanted to write, in 1930s France, "*the*" *Don Quixote*.[1] When Pier Paolo Pasolini, in 1967 Italy, set out to put on film the myth of Oedipus, he was compelled by the same paradoxical desire that drove Menard to his impossible task. Although their ultimate choices were entirely different, the problems they encountered were very similar. In a letter, Menard writes:

> My general memory of *Don Quixote*, simplified by forgetfulness and indifference, is much the same as the imprecise, anterior image of a book not yet written. Once this image (which no one can deny me in good faith) has been postulated, my problems are undeniably considerably more difficult than those which Cervantes faced.[2]

Menard's formula may function here as an anterior (and temporary) image of Pasolini's projects in *Edipo Re*: if one were to substitute "the myth of Oedipus" for *Don Quixote* and "Sophocles and Freud" for Cervantes, one would have already traced the more salient trajectories these projects take. For the arduous task that Pasolini undertakes in *Edipo Re* (and here the parallel with Borges's hero irremediably stops) is to bypass altogether, even while partially but signif-

* This essay has been conceived as part of a larger project on Pasolini and modernization. The section that will continue from where this present essay breaks off, and which is provisionally entitled "Pasolini's 'Modern' Cinema: or, the Free Indirect Vision of History," will deal with Deleuze's critique of Pasolini's theories of language and cinema.

I would also like here to thank Fredric Jameson, Ken Surin, Richard Dienst, Saree Makdisi, and Vitaly Chernetsky: their encouragement, criticism, and insights have made, in very different and all very significant ways, both this present essay and the idea of a larger project possible.

1. Jorge Luis Borges, "Pierre Menard, Author of Don Quixote," in *Ficciones*, trans. Emecé Editores (New York: Grove Press, 1962), p. 51.
2. Ibid., p. 48.

icantly reducing them, what still remain the two dominant and inseparable versions of the myth of Oedipus—the Sophoclean and the Freudian ones—in order to tap directly into archaic mythopoeic substrata, and so to explode both the substrata and the dominant versions from within. Hence Pasolini, being acutely aware of the false naiveté and nostalgic absurdity of attempting to write, in the second half of the twentieth century, a pre-Freudian and pre-Sophoclean Oedipus, inevitably articulates *Edipo Re* as the impossible solution to an insoluble problem. Pasolini in *Edipo Re* both formulates and answers a necessarily paradoxical question: how can one write the myth of Oedipus without rewriting either Freud's or Sophocles' versions of this myth at a time when it is no longer possible to conceive of Oedipus but through those versions, no longer possible to read Oedipus but through the lenses of psychoanalysis? Pasolini's experimental and provisional solution in *Edipo Re* is to incorporate Sophocles' and Freud's versions into his account in order to force them open and put them back into motion, to use their unspent energies for analytical processes they would or could not incept or even recognize, to seduce and be seduced by psychoanalysis yet immediately betray and abandon it.

Ultimately *Edipo Re* has nothing to do with either Freud or Sophocles. Yet Pasolini's is not some sort of third, alternative version of the myth of Oedipus as much as it is an attempt to escape from the fetters of those two previous paradigms by constructing a narrative that has far less to do with Oedipus than with his myth; or, in other words, Pasolini in *Edipo Re*, rather than rewriting the myth of Oedipus, writes a myth of the myth of Oedipus: the focus shifts from Oedipus to myth itself as a narrative practice. In this sense, Pasolini's Oedipus bears remarkable affinities to Deleuze and Guattari's accounts of Oedipus and his myths: *Edipo Re* journeys toward the construction of an anti-Oedipal version of the myth of Oedipus. Through the nomadic gaze of Pasolini's camera, Oedipus becomes a conduit for a mytho-historical reflection on modernization.

A Sociopolitical History of Fireflies
(or, an excursus on the question of periodization)

During one of several polemical exchanges on the nature and history of Italian fascism, Pasolini rejects Franco Fortini's belief that the distinction between an "adjective fascism" and a "substantive fascism"—a distinction that dated roughly from the end of World War II—could still be pertinent and operative in 1970s Italy. Such a distinction, Pasolini claims, might have been valid only while the postwar Christian-Democratic regime still effectively constituted "the pure and simple continuation of the fascist regime."[3]

3. I am referring here specifically to Pasolini's "L'articolo delle lucciole" ["The article of fireflies"] in *Scritti Corsari* (Italy: Garzanti, 1990), p. 128. This article was published in 1975, the year of Pasolini's death. All translations are my own unless otherwise noted.

Pasolini had sensed a dramatic change in the social and political fabric of the country:

> The real comparison between "fascisms" hence cannot lie "chronologically" between the Fascist fascism and the Christian-Democratic fascism, but rather between the Fascist fascism and the radically, totally, and unpredictably new fascism which was born from that certain "something" that happened roughly a decade ago [during the mid-1960s].[4]

What is at stake here is nothing less than a redefinition of the question and possibility of historical periodization. Pasolini's polemic is directed against the tendentious periodizations, organized around merely nominal changes of the guard, that are ultimately meant to produce and disseminate illusions of radical political change in order to conceal and foster what are, in effect, fundamental continuities in the agencies of power and their *modus operandi*. Thus when Pasolini, during his last decade, became increasingly preoccupied with locating and theorizing a radical break in Italian history, he understood such a break to have had nothing to do with the fall of the fascist regime, the end of World War II, or the beginning of the Republic; he perceived it, rather, as signaling a very different, all-pervasive, and all-encompassing (and hence far more elusive) set of socioeconomical transformations. Pasolini ultimately associated such transformations with the full emergence of a completely new and modernized society together with the total obliteration of a whole set of other older and archaic societies. Pasolini's historical periodization could no longer be structured around "historical events"; or, rather, the mechanics of the history of modernization had transformed the very nature and definition of "event" in such a way that a reassessment of the concept of periodization and a reassembling of its implicit epistemological structures had become necessary and unavoidable.

The "event" of modernization cannot be named. And yet, in order to talk about modernization, in order to write a history of it, one still needs to construct an almost-always synecdochical figure or event; one still needs to mark a series of "befores" and "afters."[5] So—returning now to the quotation and to the debates on fascism and Italian history—Pasolini creates an "event" (that certain "something" that happened roughly in the mid-1960s) in order to organize a periodization structured around it: thus, in a few pages, he rapidly sketches a mini-history of the Italian postwar period, which he divides into a "before," a "during," and an "after the disappearance of fireflies."[6]

4. Ibid.
5. It being understood that, given the mechanics of modernization, some "befores" might synchronically coincide with some "afters," and some other "befores" might even continue to exist or suddenly "happen" after all the "afters."
6. Pasolini, "L'articolo delle lucciole," pp. 129–31.

The "disappearance of fireflies," which was a "phenomenon as swift and shocking as a strike of lightning," had been due to the sudden air and water pollution in the countryside during the final stages of the accelerated process of industrialization that was completed in the first half of the 1960s.[7] For Pasolini, the "disappearance of fireflies" becomes the "event" of modernization, and it marks an unbridgeable historical rift that divides the postwar Christian-Democratic regime into "two absolutely distinct phases, which not only cannot be compared to each other, as thus one would be implying some sort of continuity between them, but which have even become historically incommensurable."[8] But what *kind* of event is "the disappearance of fireflies?" Or, what kind of event can the *disappearance* of anything be? And how does one *represent* an act of disappearance? By defining and periodizing modernization through a disappearance, Pasolini inevitably points to the paradoxes and resistances that the process of modernization poses in the face of any representational or narrativizing project. Furthermore, modernization is here also defined by what it destroys rather than by what it introduces. Thus "the disappearance of fireflies" comes to be constituted as a synecdoche for the complete obliteration of archaic, preindustrial worlds: for this latter and vaster disappearance is the otherwise unrepresentable "event" of modernization.[9]

The question of why Pasolini uses in this context a heading such as "the disappearance of fireflies" remains, nonetheless, fraught with possibilities which have to do with the peculiar kind of language and narratives this phrase evokes. Pasolini explains that "the disappearance of fireflies" is a "poetical-literary definition" of the phenomenon of modernization.[10] But this "explanation" begs questions rather than answering them: why, in fact, would Pasolini need a "poetical-literary definition" in order to periodize modernization?[11] And from which poetical-literary genre does such a definition arise? Or, in other words, where have we heard anything like this before? It is not a coincidence that, to some, "the disappearance of fireflies" might sound like the title of a fable or of the proverbial grandparent's story, as this phrase, in fact, harks back to the language of storytelling and folklore and, furthermore, to the world of myth. Pasolini calls into being the "event" of modernization by naming it as if it were

7. Pasolini continues by saying that fireflies "are now a rather tormenting memory of the past: and an elderly man who might have such a memory can no longer identify himself in the new youth, and hence can no longer have the good old regrets of time ago." Ibid., p. 129.
8. Ibid.
9. And, in a certain sense, as soon as Pasolini chooses "the disappearance of fireflies" as an event and a name for the completion of the process of modernization, he has already revealed on which side of this historical divide his political, intellectual, and emotive investments lie.
10. Pasolini, "L'articolo delle lucciole," p. 128.
11. Pasolini's ironically apologetic justification that he uses a "poetical-literary definition" because he is a "writer" is nothing but mystifying, as he was perfectly fluent in a whole series of cultural languages and conventions—from the political-philosophical to the sociohistorical, from the poetical-literary to the polemical-journalistic—all of which he used very often, at times even simultaneously.

a myth: for him it is precisely as an anachronistic narrative straight out of the archaic substrata of folklore and myth that the history of modernization becomes conceptualizable and representable.

For if all of history is fundamentally nonnarrative, although it is only in narrative form that it becomes at all perceptible, the history of modernization is eminently resistant to narrativizing impulses.[12] The history of the gradual incorporation, exploitation, homogenization, and effacement of archaic socio-economic and cultural structures at the hand of industrial modernization is, in fact, a history of conflictual synchronism of radically different and nonsynchronous plateaus.[13] Such a history, because of its unparalleled degree of heterogeneous sedimentarity and simultaneous contiguity, does not merely constitute the insurmountable acid test for any centered and unilinear narrativizing apparatus. It also, and most significantly, calls for a whole new reconceptualization of the epistemological presuppositions underlying any narrative operation; indeed it requires a radical critique of the very concept and possibility of narrative. The history of modernization demands the coming-into-being of radically schizoid narrative structures.

Pasolini reaches the ancient shore of storytelling, folklore, and myth haunted by such narrative questions. It is in the context of such narrative impossibilities and experimentations that all of the intellectual production of Pasolini's last decade needs to be viewed. Specifically, in the wake of precisely that historical moment which he had identified as the final onslaught of modernization (mid-1960s), and hence also at the beginning of the most explosive decade in Italian postwar history (mid-1960s to late 1970s), Pasolini embarked on a series of film projects that took him through the mythology of ancient Greece and the narrative cycles of the Middle Ages: *Edipo Re* (1967), *Medea* (1970), *Note per un Oreste Africano* [*Notes for an African Orestes*] (1970), *Il Decamerone* [*The Decameron*] (1971), *I Racconti di Canterbury* [*The Canterbury Tales*] (1972), *Il fiore delle Mille e una Notte* [*The Flower of the Thousand and One Nights*] (1974). These films' common conditions of possibility rest on a firm will to denounce and resist the complete obliteration of residual pastoral, agricultural, and artisanal social formations (along with all their very diverse ethnolinguistic and socioeconomic histories) by the onset of modernization—a modernization which Pasolini identified in the multi-headed Hydra of a suddenly industrialized economy, of an increasingly bureaucratized and repressive Italian state, of an increasingly (linguistically and culturally) homogenized Italian society. Medieval folklore and storytelling on the one hand, and ancient Greek mythology on the other, provided for Pasolini the ideal cultural material for a series of investi-

12. See Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), particularly pp. 81–82.

13. See Ernst Bloch's "Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to its Dialectics," in *New German Critique* 11 (1977). More shall be said about Bloch in the next section of this essay.

gations into the narrative questions posed by modernization. The making of *Edipo Re*, which signaled a turn to an increasingly preoccupied and denunciatory tone in Pasolini's work, marks the beginning of these film cycles and of these investigations.[14] For this is precisely the unsolved historical problem that propels the projects of *Edipo Re*: constructing a new and schizoid narrative structure through which the history of modernization could be written.

Myth and Jetztzeit
(or, on the historical architectonics of Edipo Re*)*

Edipo Re is a history of Italy from 1922 to the then-present moment of 1967. The film consists of three distinct but not separate sections, none of which is announced by a break or a title, so that the overall impression conveyed is that of a continuum (cinematic and otherwise).[15] Yet the film insists on a tripartite structure: the second section, which takes up almost the whole length of the film, is a version of the myth of Oedipus; the first and third sections take place, respectively, in an early-1920s rural community and in a mid-to-late-1960s urban setting. Viewed within such a frame, the properly mythological central section is locked in between a still rural, agricultural world and a completely urbanized and industrialized one, and it thus comes to fill the remaining gap of that half century which saw the full-scale modernization of Italian society.[16] While we closely follow Oedipus's vicissitudes in the second section of the

14. Though, arguably, *Uccellacci e Uccellini* [*Hawks and Sparrows*], which preceded *Edipo Re* by one year, had already explicitly related the matter of modernization to medieval traditions of storytelling, *Uccellacci e Uccellini* does for the world of the Middle Ages exactly what *Edipo Re* does for the world of ancient Greek mythology.

15. In *Edipo Re* there are indeed discontinuities and disruptions (which shall be discussed later), but they are not diachronic ones.

16. Here Pasolini is being faithful to his periodization of Italian history, within which he had detected a fundamental continuity between the "Fascist fascism" and the postwar "Christian-Democratic fascism," along with a radical break from these forms of "old-fashioned" and traditional fascism in the mid-1960s. *Edipo Re* encapsulates in one historical continuum precisely the rise and fall of that fascism which, while still firmly anchored to the ideologies of an unmistakably clerical-patriarchal tradition, accelerated and brought to full completion the processes of socioeconomic modernization (and, paradoxically, such processes in turn effaced the material conditions of possibility of that tradition and of its archaic social formations).

In this sense I fully share Pasolini's conviction that the Italian postwar republican-democratic regime was, structurally and otherwise, continuous and coextensive with the monarchic-fascist regime, especially when it came to the "modernizing compulsion": although World War II leveled Italy physically and otherwise, the two previous decades of fascism paved the way for the full completion of both economic and political modernization in the postwar era, since the fascist state demolished the monarchy as a viable political institution and increasingly pursued industrialization in all fields (including, and perhaps especially, in agriculture, and hence with even more fulminous consequences on rural-agricultural social formations). Mussolini's mandate, after all, is directly linked to a crisis of industrial production, as he was ushered into power precisely in 1922 in the wake of an increasingly threatening post–World War I wave of factory strikes.

film, Italian society simultaneously undergoes its most profound metamorphosis.

The third and last section of *Edipo Re*, which opens in the midst of an urban center (Bologna) and proceeds through the squalid industrial wastelands of its outskirts, finally ends by returning to the village of the first section. But while in the first section this rural community was pulsating with life, people, and activity, in the third section it is suddenly shown to be empty, run-down, and abandoned. The point is that we are never allowed to see under whom or how such a transformation was perpetrated. Between the early 1920s and the late 1960s the mission of modernization has been fully accomplished, its projects fully realized; this metamorphosis, though, can be experienced only as a "before" and an "after," only through its effects, since the actual process of social transformation cannot itself be represented. In *Edipo Re* the metamorphosis of modernization is accessible only through and as the myth of Oedipus. But if this is the case, and hence if, in *Edipo Re*, the myth of Oedipus "happens" between 1922 and 1967, through what kinds of spatio-temporal and socio-cultural realms does this myth unfold?

The moments of suture between the film's sections are in this respect particularly enlightening. During the last sequence of the first section, in which the father goes from his own bedroom to his son's adjacent bedroom and grabs the feet of the awake and scared child in the cradle, a new, extremely simple, and haunting musical theme is introduced in the sound track (a strident flute measured by a sonorous drumbeat). When the narrative then suddenly switches to the second section and to the space of myth, and we see in the distance, in the midst of a vast mountainous and desert landscape, Oedipus the child being carried away by the shepherd, the same musical theme continues uninterrupted from the previous section, and it proceeds to pervade and resonate throughout the arid and empty planes of most of the mythological section of the film. Thus during the last sequence of the first section this specific musical theme does not function merely as a herald of the second section's strident world of myth (although it is with the latter that this theme is nonetheless decidedly associated); since the musical theme still fully belongs to the situation of the first section, it indicates that both the first and the second sections of the film unfold on the same spatiotemporal plane, and it hence binds them in a paradoxical unit. For one needs to consider the ambiguous ontological status of this musical theme during the last sequence of the first section: it is only *later*, in the second section, that one perceives how this theme is completely entangled with the matter of myth; hence it is only retrospectively that one realizes how, at the end of the first section, this theme had been streaming forth from an archaic, mythological substratum that one had not yet been given to see, but which *had been there all along*.

At the end of the second section, a self-ostracized and self-blinded Oedipus staggers through the crowd and out of Thebes, led by the messenger boy. It is

at this point, the second moment of suture, that the film crosses an invisible threshold into the third section, in which a blind young man and a boy (played by the same actors as Oedipus and the messenger boy) are walking under a Renaissance arcade in present-day Bologna. The question one might ask at the sight of Oedipus and his boy in Bologna is not "Where do they come from?" (one knows they have come from Thebes, after all) but, rather, "How did they get there?" Much like those enigmatic doors and corridors which, in Kafka's *The Trial*, take K. from one very specific architectural-institutional space to another completely different one (the courthouse, the church, the office, the home, etc., which are thus suddenly revealed to be paradoxically contiguous and coextensive as well as separate and distant from each other), the arcade at the beginning of the third section of the film is a corridor that connects the crowded town square of ancient Thebes directly with the busy central piazza of present-day Bologna, thus transforming these two seemingly incompatible worlds into adjacent and communicating spatiotemporal and sociocultural vessels.[17]

Such an elaborate architectonic structure, constituted by contiguous, overlapping, and intersecting planes, had already been announced in the very first frame of the film: an ancient milestone stands by the side of the road with the name "Tebe" [Thebes] and a hand pointing in the direction of that city carved on it. The film proceeds with a shot of a town seen in the distance across green fields (presumably Bologna), and then the early-1920s narrative proper emerges. Later, in the second section, that same milestone will return over and over again to guide Oedipus toward his fate. Thus in the first frame of the film the world of myth is juxtaposed with an early twentieth-century narrative in which Bologna is reached via the same road that leads to ancient Thebes.

And one could go on: characters, gestures, sounds, and all sorts of other fragments of reality that travel freely from one section to the next are in fact recurrent throughout the film and constitute its narrative structure as at once composite and continuous. The point is, though, that such a multilevel architectonic structure never indicates that the world of myth and the world of the present are the same, but rather, it continuously insists that these are radically different worlds that nonetheless exist in the same time and space, that share

17. As Fredric Jameson points out, the different architectural-institutional spaces in *The Trial* belong also to different historical periods: K.'s highly routinized, standardized, well-apportioned, professional, and efficient workplace is the product of a modernization that the exceedingly slow and Byzantine juridical convolutions, the labyrinthine architectural structures, and the "shabby baroque splendor" of the "old-fashioned" courthouse cannot possibly share. See Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991), pp. 307–9. The profound affinity between the peculiar subdivisions, redistributions, and organizations of space in *The Trial* and the as-peculiar and disorienting ones in *Edipo Re* lies in the fact that what gives rise to them in both works is precisely the same problem of narrativizing the history of modernization (and this also indicates that in both works space is organized according to a temporal-historical logic).

in the same *Jetztzeit*. In *Edipo Re* each frame, each cut, each narrative corner or node has the potential to become a door that opens onto the world of myth or back out of it. In *Edipo Re*, Pasolini elaborates a theory of history much like that of Ernst Bloch, which perceives the present of modernization (a present, that is, in which the projects of modernization have not yet been fully realized) as a heterogeneous historical conglomerate that is constituted by diverse and refractory materials, fossilized strata and substrata, archaic fragments and sedimentations, shapes and directions of things to come, unspent mythic energies, and prehistoric forces awaiting to resurface and erupt again and again.

But while Bloch was writing from the midst of a still-unfinished process of modernization, at a time when national socialism was exploiting the persistence of archaic, threatened, pent-up forces,[18] Pasolini operates from the other end of this process at a point when the mission of modernization has been accomplished and the new and far more dangerous "fascism of consumer society" seems to have entirely homogenized and obliterated the remnants of earlier times.[19] In Pasolini's own periodization, the making of *Edipo Re* dates from precisely the last moment in Italian history in which this synchronism of the nonsynchronous was still possible, in which premodern and prehistoric substrata, here all represented synecdochically by the world of myth, still survived alongside and within a modernizing present. All of Pasolini's later films are entirely set and developed within a single historical period, whether this be the present, the 1940s, the Middle Ages, or the world of myth, and hence they are really for the first time historical reconstruction entirely a posteriori, as presumably now (after the mid-to-late 1960s) nothing of those previous periods has been allowed to survive.

The fact that *Edipo Re* marks the end of the process of modernization, whereas Bloch was writing at a moment in which this process was still in full development, is also consistent with one of the most distinctive characteristics of Pasolini's historical schemata. While Bloch's conception of history is, in fact, still fiercely dialectical—although the theorization of the synchronism of the nonsynchronous already confronts him with the "Problem of a Multilevel Dialectics"[20]—it is no longer clear whether Pasolini's historical architectonic structure in *Edipo Re* is still dialectical and whether all of its different and

18. Bloch's "Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to its Dialectics" was originally written in 1932.
19. This term ("fascism of consumer society"), which was very dear to Pasolini, is crucial to an understanding of his increasingly critical and isolated political position, in the midst of the protests and upheavals of the 1960s and '70s, vis-à-vis both the traditional, "official" left (the P.C.I.) and the emergent extraparliamentary left. While he had already rejected the former, long before the 1960s, because of its taints of dogma and prejudice, he could still less identify, generationally and ideologically, with the latter, which to him was a product, indeed a manifestation, of the new "fascism of consumer society."
20. Ernst Bloch, "Nonsynchronism and the Obligation to its Dialectics," *New German Critique* 11 (1977), pp. 35–38.

superimposed historical levels relate dialectically to one another. The three sections of the film constitute, after all, three discrete narrative moments that, though they do form a continuum, are not related to one another by virtue of any causality: they slide into or intersect one another without any sense of cause and effect. *Edipo Re*, posited as it is at the end of modernization, can perhaps be regarded as an experiment in the nondialectical writing of history.

In a 1971 interview, Pasolini says:

> Practically and ideologically, I no longer have any hope. I am without justifications and alibis. What is the origin of hope, I mean both Marxist and bourgeois hope? They both stem from a common matrix: Hegel. But I am against Hegel. Thesis? Antithesis? Synthesis? It seems too convenient. My dialectic is no longer ternary; instead, it is binary. There are only irreconcilable oppositions. Therefore, no "*sole dell'avvenire*," no better future.[21]

Pasolini's binary dialectic is at least an antidialectical dialectic, if not perhaps a dialectic on the verge of self-dissolution, that is, a nondialectic. Commenting on the above quotation in his essay "The Left According to the Ashes of Gramsci," Maurizio Viano writes that Pasolini "adopts Gramsci's binary scheme without its redeeming dialectic," and that he refuses "Gramsci's ideal whereby the 'low' should supersede the 'high' all the while losing in the process its contradictory qualities and its spontaneity."[22] Hence, in *Edipo Re*, the archaic powers of myth (the "low" of present history and culture) are not given historical legitimacy by the frame formed by the early 1920s and late 1960s since they function within the present, by their own internal mechanics, as the non-co-optable layers of historical radical heterogeneity. Pasolini's lack of "hope" also has to do with the painful awareness of the fact that when the fully modernized present is no longer able to "use" the archaic histories that it cannot co-opt, it wipes them out completely.

Oedipus and the Primal Scene of the State

Edipo Re is a history of Pasolini from 1922 to the then-present moment of 1967. That is, *Edipo Re* is an autobiographical account of Pasolini's Oedipus complex. That Pasolini, who was born in Bologna in 1922 to an elementary school teacher and an army officer, dragged through all of his life an obsessive and unresolved Oedipus complex is only a tangentially interesting fact.[23] *How*

21. In Maurizio Viano, "The Left According to the Ashes of Gramsci," in *Social Text* 18 (Winter 1987/88), p. 55.
22. Ibid., pp. 55–56.
23. We all have our complexes and problems, after all, and I personally find investigating even my own neuroses a rather tedious enterprise after a while, let alone then trying to figure out other

Pasolini narrated this complex, or, in other words, *how* this complex functions through his sociopolitical investigations, philosophical-historical reflections, and literary and cinematic experimentations, is the question that I pose in the following pages.[24] For, as I announced in the first section of this essay, Pasolini's version of the myth of Oedipus in *Edipo Re* offers an escape from Freudian psychoanalysis—an escape that has to do both with conceiving the Oedipal triangulations as being constituted as political investments and, hence, with constructing Oedipal triangles only in order to multiply their sides and corners and to shatter them from the inside. And if by now my account of Pasolini's Oedipal narratives has started to resonate with Deleuze and Guattari's critical elaborations on the Oedipus complex and on psychoanalysis, that is because they indeed bear an interesting family resemblance.[25]

Deleuze and Guattari write in *Anti-Oedipus*:

> There is no Oedipal triangle: Oedipus is always open in an open social field. Oedipus opens to the four winds, to the four corners of the social field (not even 3+1, but 4+*n*). A poorly closed triangle, a porous or seeping triangle, an exploded triangle from which the flows of desire escape in the direction of other territories. It is strange that we had to wait for the dreams of colonized peoples in order to see that, on the vertices of the pseudo triangle, mommy was dancing

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people's complexes. . . . My polemic here is directed against that kind of psychoanalytic criticism which does not think itself much different from psychoanalysis and which, hence, "treats" the text (and sometimes even the author!) as a patient.

24. Clearly here I am *not* talking about sublimation. The concept that somehow the Oedipus complex can be sublimated and its pent-up forces redirected and "utilized" implies fundamentally that the Oedipus complex exists somewhere else *before* existing within sociopolitical narratives, and that it exists as something else *before* being itself a sociopolitical narrative. The standpoint from which I argue, and from which I start in these pages, does not recognize such "befores."

Besides, in order not to take Pasolini, who was thoroughly well-read in psychoanalysis, at face value and in order not to discuss him on his own terms, which we would do if we were to analyze his texts in relation to and in terms of his Oedipus complex, we need to distance ourselves further and to ask why he felt the necessity to write about and through his Oedipus complex and psychoanalysis. In other words, since he himself already uses the Oedipus complex and psychoanalysis as paradigms through which he can conceptualize, represent, and narrate, we would simply be reiterating his own thoughts about such matters if we were to try and "discover" these paradigms in his work or to "explain" the latter through them.

25. I should make clear that I intend neither to assimilate Pasolini's work to Deleuze and Guattari's (or vice versa) nor to "use" Deleuze and Guattari's works to analyze Pasolini's own (or vice versa). I am interested, in fact, in how all these accounts perform strikingly similar, but also significantly different, critical operations, which should then emerge enriched and modified by one another, if not clearer. In some respects, Deleuze and Guattari, mostly because of the specific medium they work with, make more explicit certain accounts of psychoanalysis which are already there in Pasolini. Both Pasolini's and Deleuze and Guattari's critiques of psychoanalysis and reconstructions of the Oedipus complex come at the end of modernization (*Anti-Oedipus* dates from 1972), from which they derive their seminal and explosive energies. Hence, they are both at the same time denunciations and symptoms of a profound social metamorphosis. *Edipo Re* and *Anti-Oedipus* are both philosophical meditations on "old" and "new" fascisms.



with the missionary, daddy was being fucked by the tax collector, while the self was being beaten by a white man. It is precisely this pairing of the parental figures with agents of another nature, their locking embrace similar to that of wrestlers, that keeps the triangle from closing up again, from being valid in itself, and from claiming to express or represent this different nature of the agents that are in question in the unconscious itself.[26]

Indeed, Pasolini's construction of the Oedipus complex in *Edipo Re* never locks itself off and implodes into what Deleuze and Guattari have identified as Freud's blind and claustrophobic familialism; rather, it is continously marked by apertures and conduits onto the social and political fields.[27] At one particularly haunting moment of the first section of the film, the father, who is wearing a full uniform and appears to be an army officer, is left alone in the middle of a street with the son, who leans out of a perambulator; father and son stare at each other, the one menacingly from above, the other expectantly but fearfully from below; the camera switches back and forth from a close-up of the man's face to a close-up of the child's face, while the sequence is periodically interrupted by the insertion of Oedipal texts: "You are here to take my place in the world, to push me back into nothingness and to steal away from me everything I have." And, a few frames later: "And the first thing that you shall steal from

26. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), p. 96.
27. See also Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of Freud in the second plateau of *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), especially pp. 27–29.

Pier Paolo Pasolini. Edipo Re (Oedipus Rex). *1967.*

me shall be her, the woman I love. . . . In fact you already steal away from me her love!" It is not at all clear whether it is the father or the son who thinks such words; indeed it could be either or even both at the same time. Here one experiences the first deformation of the triangulation: for how is one to construct the always infallible exegetical apparatus of the Oedipal triangle if one cannot even assign utterances with some degree of precision to their proper and expected actors? The project of drawing a stable geometrical figure is doomed from the very start. When, in the final frame of this sequence, the camera watches father and son from a distance, one suddenly sees a building standing behind them that had been barred from view during the close-ups: from the central balcony of the building's facade an Italian flag, with the Savoy coat-of-arms, is prominently displayed. At the moment when the father-son confrontation might have been under a serious threat of becoming crystallized into an exquisitely familial struggle, the most official of images of the state bursts onto the scene and reveals the father in uniform for what else he is even as he is also a father: a military emissary of the state, an agent of Gramsci's *Stato-carabiniere*.[28] For one realizes in this last frame that the child was also watching the unrolled flag, looming above and behind his father's shoulders; and it is also at this point that one might remember that this whole sequence had actually been opened by a close-up of the flag onto the facade, a detail that could not yet have been related to anything else. The father here is an agent of both familial and state surveillance. But why is the *father* watching over the son? Why is the *mother* absent, and where is she?

Indeed, it was the mother who was carrying the child in the perambulator; before the father-son sequence, she had left the husband guarding over the child while she went inside the building through the central door surmounted by the flag. (And is this building a school? Is it a town-hall?) In the middle of the father-son sequence she had come out of the building through the same door, under the same flag, followed by a group of girls; she had stared with the slightest hesitation at the father and son, but had then rushed off and away with the girls. It is not clear whether these girls are students, servants, or something else altogether. One thing, though, is certain: they call her *padroncina* [my lady], a word with no exact correspondent in English, which is only spoken by a subaltern in addressing a superior, and which implies both a financial dependence of the former to the latter (if not ownership) and a close and mutual, almost familial, familiarity derived from continued personal and perhaps also physical contact. In other words, this vocative is a residual fragment of a feudal social contract. At a moment when once again the Oedipal triangle was threatening, like a venus flytrap, to shut its jaws onto mother, father, and

28. See Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey N. Smith (New York: International Publishers, 1983), especially pp. 261–62.

son, the mother forces it back open. The mother, who abandons the child to his father's surveillance in order to run away with the servant girls, is revealed as the agent of yet some other kind of power (a still-feudal power as opposed to the more recent and modernized one of the military-bureaucratic state apparatus that the father both serves and is policed by) and is also crucially associated with servants (even if admittedly in a position of power over them).[29] Furthermore, what is the child to make of this flagged building that first swallows his mother and then ejects her so that she can run away from him? Does not the state already come between the child and his mother, stealing her away from him even before the father is irremediably associated with the state, even before the state itself is seen mounting the father from behind and above, locking itself forever onto the father's shoulders like an all-powerful octopus?

In *Edipo Re*, the state is *not* a substitute for the father as much as the father is *not* a metaphor for the state. Similarly, the mother does not stand for the powers that govern her and with which she is complicitous, or vice versa.[30] In *Edipo Re* the Oedipal triangle is never allowed to find its validity and legitimacy for itself and in itself, but always instead in the open outside of immediately political forces and spaces. In fact, there is no such "outside," because there is no "inside" either: the Oedipal triangle is never allowed even to form. Thus there are only Oedipal utterances, phrases, gazes, directions, tendencies, contractions: fragments of an Oedipal discourse that is given no syntax, sometimes not even a grammar.

But what is one to do with such fragments, especially when one is painfully aware, as Pasolini constantly is, of their dangerous wish to be reconduced back to a purely familial structure? And how is one to speak of the father? Of course there is always Kafka's solution—admittedly not an easily repeatable one, but one that Pasolini always courted and at times rewrote, at least in part. For what would happen, in fact, if one were to absolve the father, and to recognize him for the innocent and oppressed servant of the state that he is, like Deleuze and Guattari believe Kafka to be doing in his "Letter to the Father"?[31] In that case, Deleuze and Guattari write that,

29. In the preceding sequences this situation had already been announced when the mother left the child alone lying in the grass in order to go and play with the same group of girls. This sequence mirrors many other scenes in the second section of the film in which Jocasta often leaves Oedipus to go and play with her handmaidens in the fields.

30. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari, in *Anti-Oedipus*, insist that "the father and the mother exist only as fragments, and are never organized into a figure or a structure able both to represent the unconscious, and to represent in it the various agents of the collectivity; rather, they always shatter into fragments that come into contact with these agents, meet them face to face, square off with them, or settle the differences with them as in hand-to-hand combat" (*Anti-Oedipus*, p. 97). Deleuze and Guattari reiterate some of these same concepts in *Kafka*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), pp. 11–12.

31. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, especially pp. 9–10.

> as Kafka himself says, the problem isn't that of liberty but of escape. The question of the father isn't how to become free in relation to him (an Oedipal question) but how to find a path there where he didn't find any. The hypothesis of a common innocence, of a distress shared by father and son, is thus the worst of all hypotheses.[32]

And thus Pasolini writes of his own military father:

> [He was] passional, sensual, violent . . . and he ended up in Libya without a penny; thus he began his military career, by which he was going to be deformed and repressed into the most definitive conformism. He had gambled everything on me, on my literary career, since I was little, as I wrote my first poems when I was seven years old: poor guy, he had had an intuition, but he had not foreseen the humiliations which would accompany the gratifications.[33]

Pasolini had correctly identified the powers that had enslaved his father into political numbness as the expansionist and "imperial" militarism of the fascist state. Pasolini hence sought an escape from such powers exactly where his father had not found one—that is, by becoming an antifascist militant involved in the Partisan Resistance while his father was fighting on the other side and by exchanging his father's military career for a literary one.[34] That Pasolini's homosexuality was part and parcel of such escapes is also the case (and this is what he might be referring to when he speaks of those unforeseen humiliations his father had to face).[35]

The first section of the film is also a narrative that runs from birth to the primal scene. But not even the primal scene is able to draw a stable and hermetically sealed Oedipal triangle. At a crucial moment toward the end of the first section, the child has been left asleep in his cradle at night by his parents, who have left the house; suddenly the child awakens and, alone and frightened, calls his mother, then crawls out of the cradle and toddles through

32. Ibid., p. 10.
33. From the biographical note in Pasolini, *La Religione del mio tempo* [*The Religion of my time*] (Italy: Garzanti, 1961), p. vii.
34. Ironically, Pasolini published his first book in 1942, when his father had been taken prisoner of war in Kenya. This first publication bears the title *Poesie a Casarsa* [*Poems to Casarsa*]. Casarsa was his mother's birthplace, in the mountainous northeastern region of Friuli, and these poems were written in *Friulano*, his mother's "dialect." The question of "dialect," which became one of the central conditions of possibility and organizing principles of Pasolini's entire work, constituted yet another opening of the Oedipal complex onto what, in postwar Italy, became once again an explosive cultural-political controversy, a controversy that indeed, since Dante's *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, has been at the heart of the insoluble problem of defining and constituting an Italian national identity, and which punctually returns, at times of radical change, to the forefront of Italian political debates.
35. In 1948, after his father's return from the war, Pasolini, who was then a teacher, was at the center of a scandal when a boy admitted to having had sexual relations with him.



the open window and outside onto the balcony, where he sees, across the courtyard and in another room, the shadows of his parents dancing and kissing, projected onto a curtain. At this point the child bursts out crying and calls "Mamma," while at the same time a series of fireworks is going off high in the sky, covering up his cries with the sound of explosions. For this is a holiday, and the whole community is celebrating; his parents had, in fact, left him to go to a party. Once again, the loss and betrayal that the child experiences unfold directly onto the social field. It does not much matter whether this is a religious or a state holiday: in either case the child's parents are fragments of a larger community that is celebrating itself and that calls its members to perform their social functions. The fireworks, which scare the child and sweep over his cries of anguish, are the agents of an omnipresent social order that separates him from his mother while even inscribing itself on the sky; their explosions shatter the Oedipal triangle from "outside"—from the social field—precisely at the crucial moment when, as the child watches the parents kissing, a set of fragmentary Oedipal impulses might have crystallized into a fixed geometrical figure.

Later, when the parents return home exhausted but still inebriated by the festivities, the son, now back in the cradle, hears them having sex in their adjacent bedroom. Afterward, the father walks into the other bedroom, leans into the cradle, and grabs the feet of the son, who, scared, screams for his mother; and, when an Oedipal solution seems again inevitable, the film slides into the second section and into the high planes of myth. The second section opens with a long, panoramic shot of mountainous, desert plateaus, within





Pier Paolo Pasolini. Edipo Re (Oedipus Rex). *1967.*

which one finally sees, far away, the shepherd carrying Oedipus. While discussing Kafka's "exaggeration" of his Oedipus complex, Deleuze and Guattari write:

> The goal is to obtain a blowup of the "photo," an exaggeration of it to the point of absurdity. The photo of the father, expanded beyond all bounds, will be projected onto the geographic, historical, political *map* of the world in order to reach vast regions of it: "I feel as if I could consider living in only those regions that either are not covered by you or are not within your reach." An Oedipalization of the universe.[36]

Similarly, by switching from the dark and claustrophobic enclosure of the small bedroom in which father and son are locked in struggle to the immense openness of the desert plateaus flooded with light, where Oedipus is a barely visible shape in the far distance, Pasolini expands the Oedipus complex as if it were an elastic film enveloping a vast and archaic landscape. And here Pasolini goes further than Kafka (and than Deleuze and Guattari): the Oedipus complex, instead of simply being *projected* onto the "map of the world," is enlarged to cover the immense desert regions of myth, and it acquires *their* shapes and *becomes* their map—a paradoxical, superimposed, life-size map. The Oedipus complex is the map that Oedipus follows in his meanderings through the desert plateaus, from Thebes to the mountains of the Cythaeron, from the Cythaeron to Corinth, from Corinth to Delphi, from Delphi to Thebes (and from Thebes to Bologna). This is indeed an "Oedipalization of the universe" and not a universalization of the Oedipus complex.

Pasolini uses the primal scene as a narrative springboard from which to launch the Oedipus complex into history. For the desert plateaus of myth, onto which Pasolini scatters the fragments of the primal scene, are not merely geographical but also historical and political regions. In his *Cinema 2*, during the discussion of the "break of the sensory-motor link" and of its effects on the visual image of modern cinema, Deleuze writes:

> The visual image becomes *archaeological*, *stratigraphic*, *tectonic*. Not that we are taken back to prehistory (there is an archaeology of the present), but to the deserted layers of our time which bury our own phantoms; to the lacunary layers which we juxtaposed according to variable orientations and connections. . . . These are the deserts of Pasolini, which make prehistory the abstract poetic element, the "essence" co-present with our history, the archaean base which reveals an interminable history beneath our own.[37]

36. Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p. 10.
37. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), pp. 243–44.

We return here to the synchronism of the nonsynchronous or, rather, to a crucially modified version of it.[38] The mythological section of *Edipo Re* opens onto a desert and continues until its end to unfold through deserts. The deserts of *Edipo Re* are images of a historical coexistence of radically different and heterogeneous layers that becomes possible, or rather, visible and problematic, in the history of modernization. Deleuze detects such tectonic images, after all, in postwar, "modern" cinema. These images are an archaeology of the present —not of *any* present, but of the present of modernization. Via the deserts of *Edipo Re*, Pasolini deterritorializes Oedipus onto a life-size stratigraphy of modernization: *an Oedipalization of history*.

Oedipus at Bologna

When, in the second section of the film, Oedipus, coming from the oracle at Delphi, encounters the father at the fated crossroads, Pasolini blows up the myth of the murder of the father into a dangerous and protracted ordeal (as if to dispel any illusions that to kill your own father might be easy). Oedipus is confronted and chased by Laius's five armed escorts, whom he kills one by one, and with great difficulty, using cunning and physical strength. At last he is face-to-face with the father (whose servant, the only survivor of the carnage, has already run away), and the final murder can take place.

What this very long sequence emphasizes is that at virtually every stage Oedipus had the real choice to run away, that he chose to fight even when the odds were against him, and that there was absolutely no need to kill Laius after having slaughtered his escorts since he, an old man, posed no physical threat to him—that, in other words, Oedipus's each and every action and gesture was willed, thought-out, almost planned in advance. The murder of the father was not an inevitable event, but a willed act. When Oedipus, toward the end of the second section, finally learns, by his own will and force, everything he can possibly learn about his birth, he utters to himself and for himself: "Now everything is clear, willed, not imposed by destiny." As Oedipus in *Edipo Re* becomes the maker of his own history, in the most literal and materialistic sense of the concept, Pasolini parts ways completely with Sophocles: in *Edipo Re* history has been substituted for fate.[39]

38. As I suggested earlier already for Pasolini, in fact, Deleuze's geological understanding of history, unlike Bloch's, is no longer a dialectical one: the friction between these overlapping, sliding, "co-present" historical layers is not a mediation in any dialectical sense of the concept.

39. To those who might sensibly and correctly object that, far from parting ways with Sophocles, Pasolini uses the dialogue of Sophocles' tragedy profusely and verbatim throughout his film to the point of incorporating nearly the whole Sophoclean text, I can only answer with the remarks that the narrator of Pierre Menard relates when comparing a passage on the nature of history in Cervantes' *Don Quixote* with the identical passage in Pierre Menard's *Don Quixote*:

> History, *mother* of truth; the idea is astounding. Menard, a contemporary of William



Ultimately, though, Pasolini, in parting ways with Sophocles, also parts ways with Deleuze and Guattari (by falling back to a problem very similar to the one encountered by Kafka at the end of *The Metamorphosis*).[40] The third section of *Edipo Re* harks back to Sophocles' account of the myth of Oedipus's exile and death in *Oedipus at Colonus* and is at the same time a radically different version of it. In the film, a present-day Oedipus, helped by a present-day messenger boy, crosses Bologna, goes beyond its industrial outskirts, and returns to the now abandoned and empty rural house of his birth and childhood, which we saw in the first section of the film. When reaching the fields where his mother used to leave him lying on the grass to go and play with the girls, Oedipus pronounces his death: "Life ends there, where it begins," thus bringing the whole film to an end, shutting it into a hermetic circularity. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, an old and exiled Oedipus reaches the holy site of Colonus, at the outskirts of Athens, and calmly walks to meet his death in the sacred forest, called by the voice of God. Although such an end could be taken as a reterritorialization of the exiled Oedipus back onto the social field of the religious and

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James, does not define history as an investigation of reality, but as its origin. Historical truth, for him, is not what took place; it is what we think took place. The final clauses—*example and lesson to the present, and warning to the future*—are shamelessly pragmatic.

Equally vivid is the contrast in styles. The archaic style of Menard—in the last analysis, a foreigner—suffers from a certain affectation. Not so that of his precursor, who handles easily the ordinary Spanish of his time.

In the last analysis, Pasolini remains, inevitably and willingly, "a foreigner" of the Sophoclean text and its Oedipus. See Borges, *Ficciones*, p. 53.

40. This is the problem of a final "re-Oedipalization." See Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, pp. 14–15.

Pier Paolo Pasolini. Edipo Re (Oedipus Rex). *1967.*

the divine, it is also the case that Oedipus here sees death as a relief and an escape from the paralyzing guilt and the haunting crimes and nightmares of his life. God here does not represent the father but is rather the final and complete escape from the father. Oedipus had already been deterritorialized from the enclosed social field of Thebes onto the uncharted space of exile; at Colonus he finally deterritorializes himself from his complex, from himself altogether. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, Oedipus willingly walks into the forest and gently evaporates into the air above and the earth below, traces a final line of flight, becomes molecular.[41] Instead of such an uncompromising deterritorialization, Pasolini, after having forced the Oedipus complex through political detours, apertures, and fragmentations, in the end reterritorializes Oedipus back where he had begun, in the familial space of the primal scene.

No movement of territoriality, though, can ever be finished, complete, final. As territories and their boundaries are constantly in flux, so also a reterritorialization can be final in a particular text (and in its attendant textual apparatus) and yet be reopened and deterritorialized again onto another uncharted space by another textual apparatus; so also a line of flight can always be obstructed and shut down when repositioned by this other apparatus, hijacked back to its last territory. Furthermore, lest one remain anchored to a diachronism that is alien to these movements, it has to be emphasized that a reterritorialization can simultaneously be a deterritorialization, that it can at the same time constitute the path for yet another line of escape. In other words, these territorial fluxes always need to be historicized.[42]

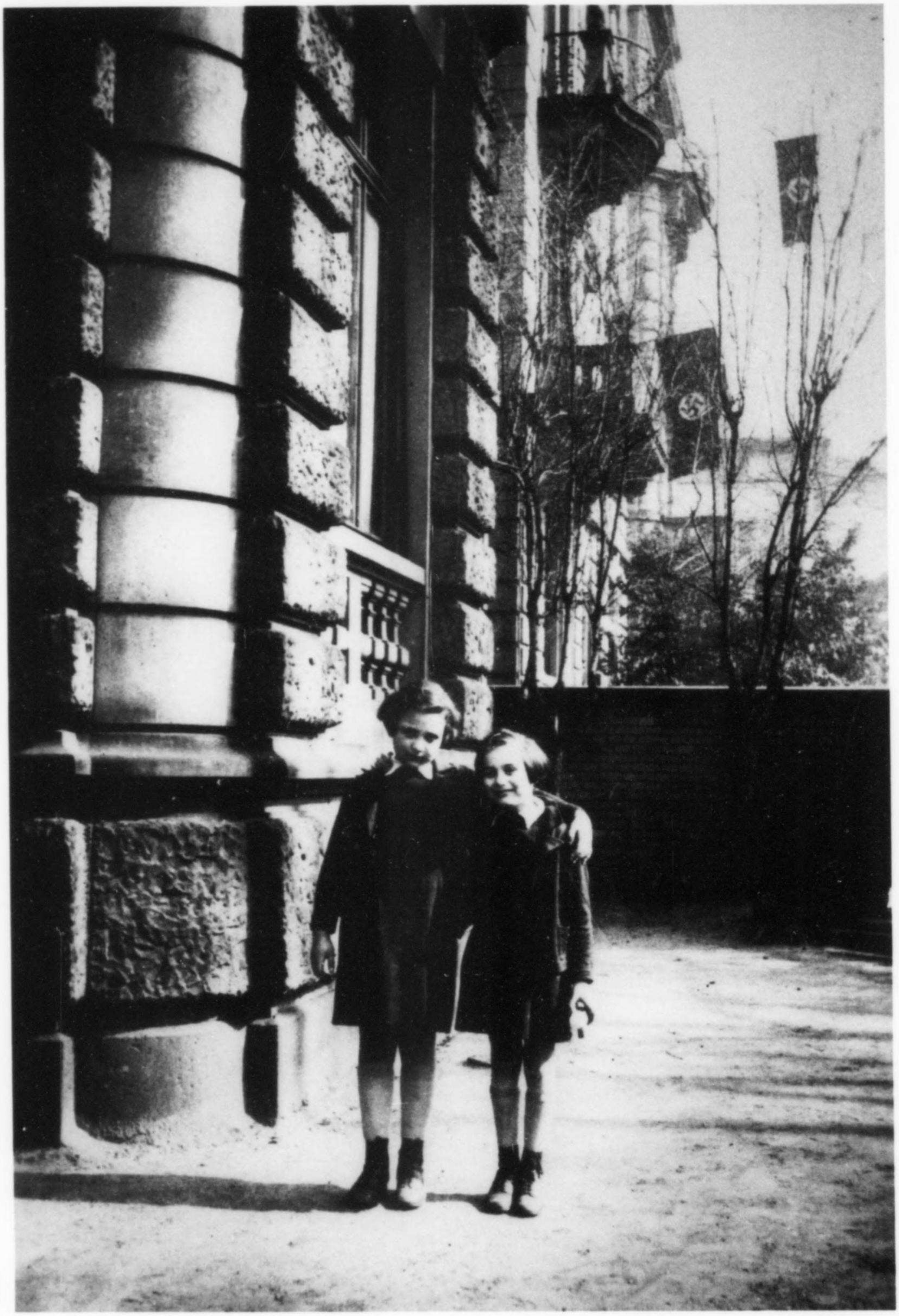
Paradoxically, Oedipus's final reterritorialization in *Edipo Re* is also an act of resistance, a final line of escape. If this present-day Oedipus reterritorializes himself back into the claustrophobic geometry of his complex, he does so also because far worse prisons await him outside the Oedipal enclosure. At the end of modernization, Oedipus returns to the "old" and superseded fascism of the now dead father in order to flee from the "new" fascism of the supermarket, the "fascism of consumer society"—a fascism, this latter, that Pasolini denounces as being all the more pernicious precisely because it is now in complete synchronism with itself, precisely because it is now a decentered, fatherless fascism.

41. In *Oedipus at Colonus*, the messenger reports:

> In what manner Oedipus passed from this earth, no one can tell. Only Theseus knows. We know he was not destroyed by a thunderbolt from heaven nor tide-wave rising form the sea, for no such thing occurred. Maybe a guiding spirit from the gods took him, or the earth's foundations gently opened and received him without a pang, without a grief or agony—a passing more wonderful than that of any other man.

(*Oedipus at Colonus*, trans. E. F. Watling [London: Penguin Books, 1974], p. 121.)

42. It is only by historicizing these territorial fluxes that one might detect in each of them overlapping currents moving in several opposite directions, that one might understand each of them as the articulation of several contradictory desires.



Two Jewish schoolgirls, Frankfurt am Main, 1938. The artist's mother and aunt. Display of German flags. (Photographer unknown.)

The Art of Hitler*

STEVEN KASHER

This project presents a sampling of artifacts from a collection metonymically entitled "The Art of Hitler." Assembled in Manhattan over the last several years, the collection contains several hundred items. It was exhibited at Rutgers University in early 1991. This photo/text essay follows in large part the structure of that exhibition: Part One documents Nazi visual culture; Part Two demonstrates some ways that Nazi culture has surfaced in recent years.

Only a few of the documents from each of the various sections have been selected for reproduction here because of space constraints. Footnotes and most citations have also been omitted; they are available from the artist upon request.

Part One

Hitler Designs the Swastika Flag

The swastika, though ancient in origin and found in many cultures worldwide, was no longer merely a benign symbol of life and sun in the Germany of 1920. Since the turn of the century the swastika had been appropriated by various *völkisch*, anti-Semitic, and reactionary groups. It had achieved widespread currency as a symbol of these groups by the time Hitler in turn appropriated it.

It is little appreciated that the Nazi swastika flag was designed by Hitler himself—in Munich in 1920. He describes its origin and meaning in *Mein Kampf* (vol. 2, chap. 7), explaining how each color and shape was selected, and con-

* I would like to acknowledge the generous help I have received from dozens of people over the last several years in collecting, researching, writing, editing, and mounting "The Art of Hitler" in its various formats. For invaluable suggestions and constructive criticisms, I thank Martha Buskirk, Hal Foster, Atina Grossman, Hans Haacke, Andy Miller, Diane Neumaier, Christopher Phillips, Anson Rabinbach, Martha Rosler, Sally Stein, Yocheved Weinfeld, and, particularly, Benjamin Buchloh.



cluding: "[We see] in the swastika the mission of struggle for the victory of the Aryan man, and, by the same token, the victory of the idea of creative work, which as such always has been and always will be anti-Semitic."

Three "struggles," three "victories," are equated in Hitler's explanation of the meaning of the swastika: that of "the Aryan man," anti-Semitism, and "the idea of creative work." The latter refers to the notion of an aestheticization of labor and social relations that would negate class conflicts and unite the *Volk*. To Hitler, the swastika symbolized the struggle for a totalized society rigidly stratified along sexual, racial, and class lines. It stood for a program of aggressive racial, sexual, and cultural purification, a struggle toward a single transcendent culture. Nazism called for the imposition of this culture across Europe and the world. Whatever lesser cultures stood in the way were to be expunged.

On September 15, 1935, Hitler convened a special session of the Reichstag in Nuremberg to mark the closing of the annual party congress. Among the "Nuremberg Laws" promulgated that day were: a law proclaiming the swastika flag the sole state flag of Germany; a law depriving those subjects not of "German or cognate blood" of citizenship; and the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor, which forebade marriage between Jews and Germans, sexual relations between Jews and Germans, the employment by Jews of German female domestic servants under forty-five years of age, and the flying of the German national flag by Jews.

Detail of book jacket. Robert Harris, Selling Hitler *(New York: Pantheon, 1986). (Illustration: Susannah Kelly; design: Louise Fili.)*

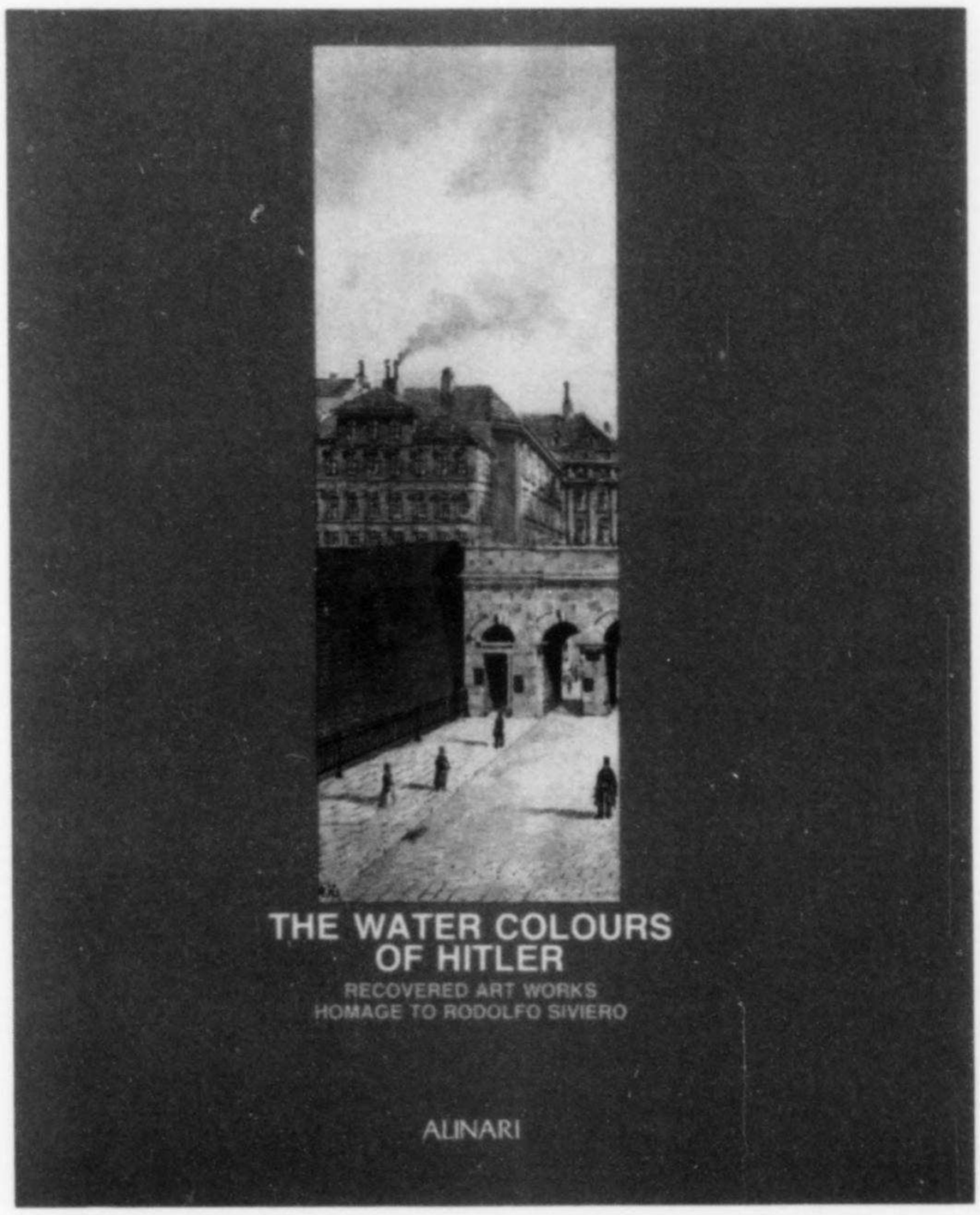
The Art of Adolf Hitler

Between the ages of nineteen and twenty-five Adolf Hitler worked as an artist. He painted and sold watercolors of views of Vienna and Munich. He produced several commercial advertisement and poster designs.

Hitler continued to produce art and design in his years as a soldier (1914–18), as propaganda head of the Nazi party (1920–22), as leader of the Nazi party (1923–33), and as Führer (Leader) of national socialist Germany (1933–45).

Hitler's drawings and paintings depict architectural monuments and ruins in an amalgam of conventional styles. Human figures are awkwardly rendered, diminutive, and scarce.

No other modern person has exercised the same degree of personal control over the visual culture of his nation as did Hitler. He did not, however, control all aspects of the visual arts under the Third Reich; other separate interests were also at work.



A watercolor by Hitler as reproduced on the 1984 catalog jacket for The Water Colours of Hitler, *ed., Amilcare Bardi (Florence: Fratelli Alinari, 1984).*



The Day of German Art, the House of German Art, and the Great German Art Exhibitions, 1937–45

In 1937 the Nazis consummated their takeover of the visual arts in Germany. Various factions—those for and against the incorporation of German Expressionism, for instance—had been brought into consensus. A period of relative cultural liberality instituted to impress foreign visitors to the 1936 Olympic Games was terminated. A demonstrable Nazi style was compounded for display at the German Pavilion of the 1937 Paris International Exposition.

1937 was the year that the Nazis inaugurated their major representative art institutions, foremost among them the House of German Art, a new national museum of contemporary German art, located in Munich. The building itself had been the first official architectural project initiated by the new Nazi state, commissioned by Hitler in 1933 from his favorite architect, Paul Ludwig Troost. It was designed to hold two annual juried exhibitions: the Great German Art Exhibition (of new painting, sculpture, and graphics) and the German Architecture and Crafts Exhibition.

July 16 was proclaimed the Day of German Art, a yearly holiday and parade planned to coincide with the openings of the Great German Art annuals. Hitler presided over the opening festivities, as he did over the juries that selected the exhibited artworks. The annual party/state line on acceptable art practices was in large part communicated through these selections. The placement of the works within the major or lesser galleries, their prices, whether or not they were purchased by the state, which official or office made the purchase: all of these practices were used to establish a hierarchy of favor.

Die Kunst im Dritten Reich (Art in the Third Reich), an official national magazine devoted to contemporary art, was also founded in 1937; Albert Speer, Richard Klein, and other associates of Hitler were appointed as editors.

Parade celebrating the opening of the House of German Art, Munich, 1937.
From Les Realismes *(Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1979).*

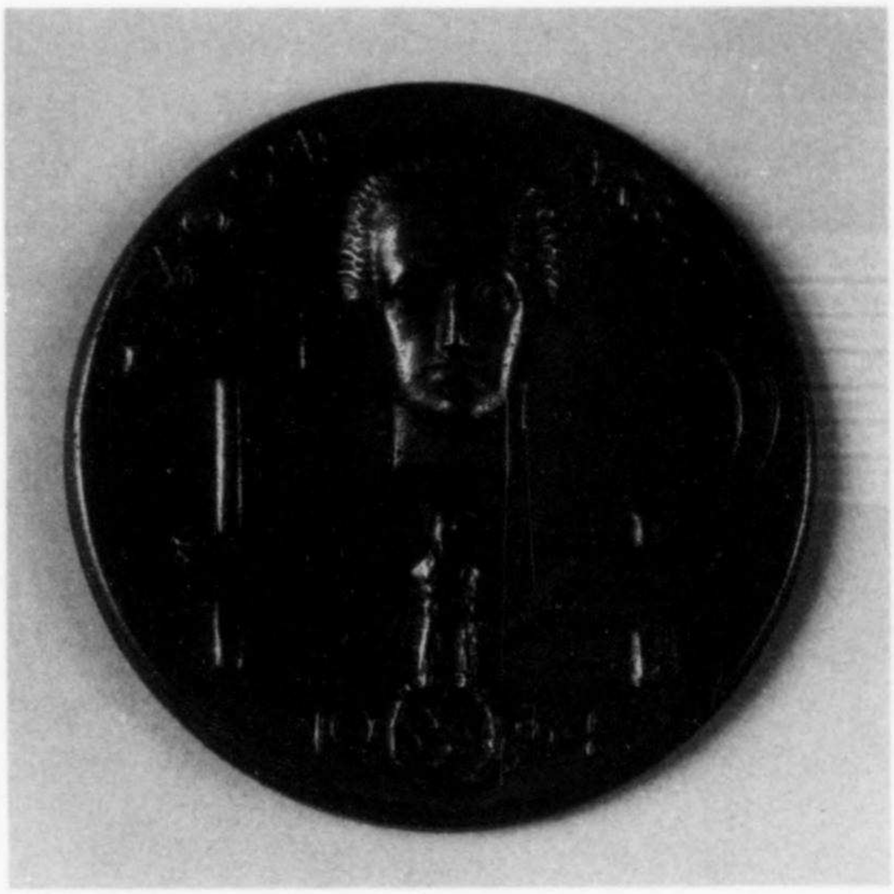
Two Emblems: Nazi Art and the Day of Labor

An emblem of Nazi art was designed to symbolize and advertise the new art institutions. This emblem was utilized on the cover of catalogs and magazines and was issued on medals and postcards to accompany the Day of German Art holidays. It was designed by Richard Klein, a painter of high standing in the Nazi art world.

The logo of Nazi art combines three symbols: a burning torch, the helmeted head of Athena/Minerva, and the imperial eagle bearing a swastika wrapped in an oak wreath. The torch stands for Promethean creativity; Athena represents the continuity of Aryan culture; the eagle with swastika signifies the imperial anti-Semitic state. Except for the swastika, which now had become specifically German, these symbols were widely employed, with varying connotations, throughout Europe and the U.S. in the 1930s.

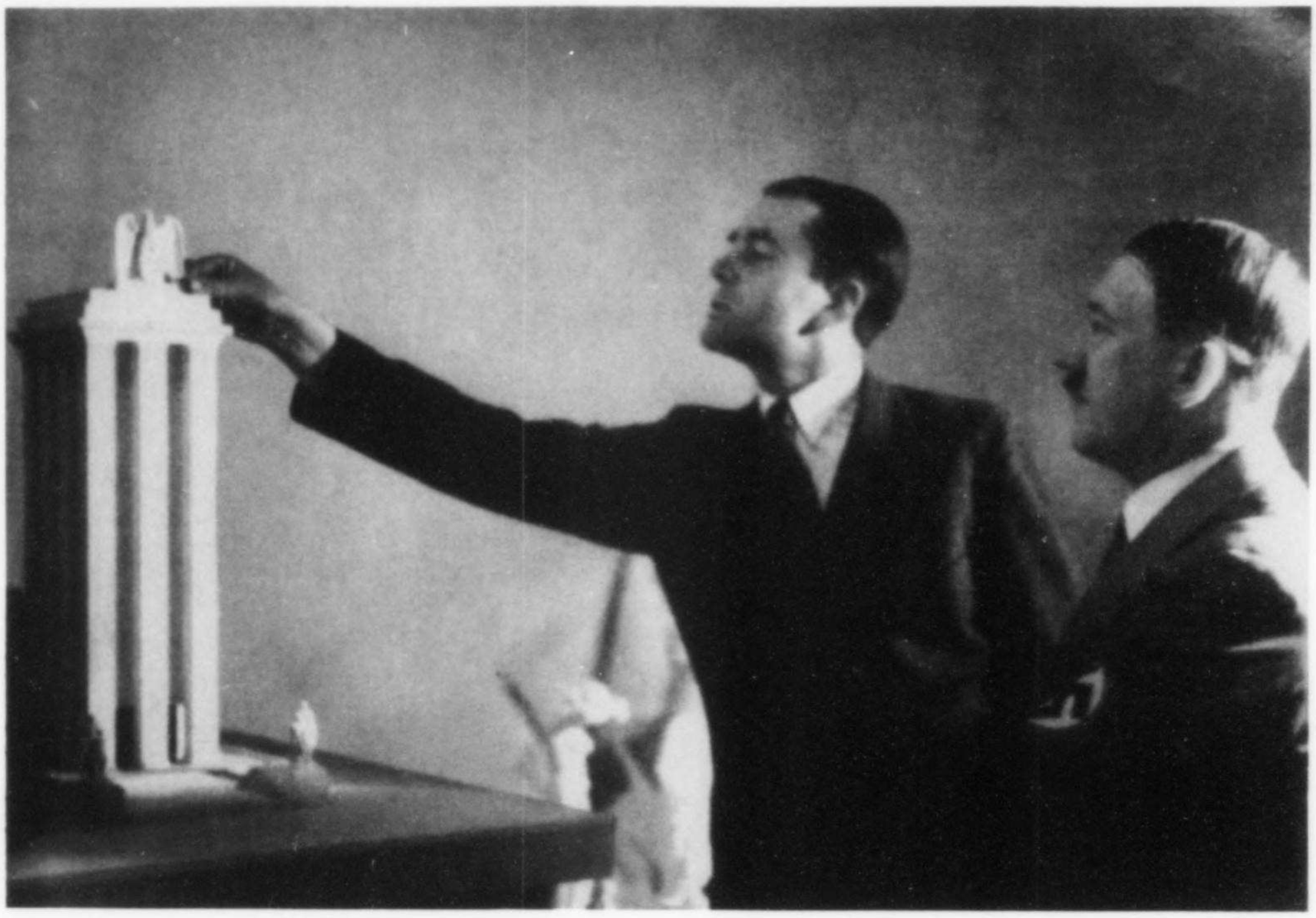
Klein designed other emblems, including several for the Day of Labor, a holiday the Nazis devised to replace May Day. Several Day of Labor emblems appropriate the socialist hammer and sickle; in one example they are conjoined to a bust of Goethe and the Nazi eagle-and-swastika. The holiday and the emblem were parts of an energetic campaign to win over to Nazism its opponents among the German workers.





Above: Medal for the Tag der Arbeit (Day of Labor), 1934. (Design: Richard Klein.)

Left: Official catalog of the first Grosse Deutsche Kunstausstellung *(Great German Art Exhibit) (Munich: Knorr und Hirth, 1937). (Design and illustration: Richard Klein.)*



Ein neues Denkmal nationalsozialistischer Baugesinnung ist nach dem Willen des Führers errichtet worden. So wie die Schöpfungen des verstorbenen Baumeisters Professor Troost in München und die Aufbauten des Reichsparteitaggeländes in Nürnberg, so soll auch dieser Bau ein Wegweiser für das künftige Bauen in Deutschland sein. Wir Bauleute sind stolz darauf, daß wir die Ideen des Führers verwirklichen dürfen.

Un nouveau monument, conception d'architecture nationale-socialiste, a été érigé selon la volonté du « Führer ». Ainsi que les créations à Munich et les constructions du « Reichsparteitag » à Nuremberg de feu l'architecte professeur Troost, cette construction doit être un indicateur pour l'architecture future en Allemagne. Nous, les exécuteurs, nous sommes fiers que nous puissions réaliser les idées du « Führer ».

By will of the "Führer", a new monument in the National-Socialistic architectural sense has been erected. Even as the creations of the late master-builder Professor Troost in Munich and the erections of the National Party Day Field in Nuremberg, so too shall this building be a guide for the future construction in Germany. We construction people are proud to be permitted to bring about the realization of the ideas of our "Führer".

Un nuovo monumento improntato al carattere costruttivo nazionalsocialistica è stato elevato secondo la volontà del Führer. Come le creazioni del compianto architetto, il Professor Troost, a Monaco e gli edificî dell'Assemblea del Partito a Norimberga, questa costruzione deve essere una guida per la futura architettura tedesca. Noi costruttori siamo fieri di aver potuto realizzare le idee del Führer.

Albert Speer

The frontispiece of an unofficial catalog of the German Pavilion of the 1937 Paris International Exposition showing Speer and Hitler admiring a model of the pavilion. From Heinrich Hoffman, Deutschland in Paris *(Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1937). Speer won the Grand Prix in architecture at the Exposition for his design of the Nuremberg Reichsparteitaggëlande (State Party-Day Field).*

The Architecture of Albert Speer

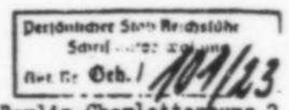
Albert Speer was the leading architect in Nazi Germany. The son and grandson of successful architects, Speer studied architecture at the Institute of Technology in Berlin under Heinrich Tessenow, becoming one of Tessenow's teaching assistants. Tessenow was a leading proponent, as architect, writer, and teacher, of a radically simplified but still traditionalist architecture. (Playing Tessenow with flamboyant intensity in the 1982 made-for-television movie *Inside the Third Reich*, Trevor Howard steals all his scenes from Rutger Hauer's stolid Speer.)

In 1931 Speer joined the Nazi party and received his first Nazi commission: to redecorate the interiors of the district headquarters in the Grunewald section of Berlin. After the Nazi seizure of the German state in 1933, Speer went to work first for Goebbels, the minister of propaganda, and then for Hitler, who was by then involved in numerous architectural projects. When Troost, Hitler's favorite architect, died in 1934, Speer took his place and remained close to Hitler ever after.

Speer became the chief architect in the Third Reich, occupying several official posts. He was a major proponent of the resurgent state-sponsored neoclassicisms of the industrialized nations in the 1930s and '40s. In his hands the authoritarian and racist components of this tradition were exacerbated.

While retaining his posts as chief architect, Speer was also appointed by Hitler in the midst of the war as minister of armaments and munitions. His zeal in this critical office earned Speer such epithets as "the second man in the Reich" (Eugene Davidson) and the "real criminal of Nazi Germany" (Hugh Trevor-Roper). In his dual offices Speer supervised a wide range of state architectural and construction projects, including the reconstruction of the capital city of Berlin. The New Berlin was being rebuilt as the capital not only of Germany but also of the Nazi world empire. Speer projected the expenses in tens of billions of Reichsmarks. Gargantuan monumental structures were to be constructed from extra-thick stone walls, according to the "theory of ruin-value," which mandated that the eventual ruins of the thousand-year Nazi Reich would be as impressive as the Roman ruins that Speer and Hitler admired.

At the same time, Speer oversaw the construction of the concentration, slave-labor, and elimination camps, such as the one at Auschwitz. In March of 1943, after a personal visit to the Mauthausen camp, he initiated an extensive review of construction procedures at all concentration camps as part of an effort to conserve scarce materials. In response to the review Speer ordered the erection of thinner plank walls for prisoners' housing units. On May 30, 1943, however, Speer authorized a special allocation of metal pipe for construction and sanitation at the Auschwitz camp. He concluded this order with the following handwritten remarks: "I am delighted that the inspection of the other concentration camps resulted in a highly positive picture."



DER REICHSMINISTER
FÜR
BEWAFFNUNG UND MUNITION
GB 26/1-1oo27 g

Berlin-Charlottenburg 2
[redacted], den 3o. 5.43
[redacted]verl. Jebensstr.

Geheim!

An den
Herrn Reichsführer H und Chef
der Deutschen Polizei H i m m l e r

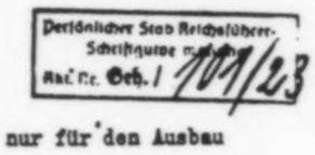
B e r l i n SW 68.
Prinz-Albrecht-Str. 8

Betr.: Baueisenkontingent für H, insbesondere KZ-Lager Auschwitz.

Lieber Parteigenosse H i m m l e r !

Auf Grund der vorliegenden Berichte und der Besichtigung des KZ-Lagers Auschwitz durch meine Herren Desch und Sander bin ich bereit, über die im III/43 zur Verfügung gestellte Baueisenmenge in Höhe von 45o moto für den Bedarf im Reichsgebiet und 18o moto für den Bedarf in den angeschlossenen und besetzten Gebieten einmalig folgende Mengen zuzuteilen:

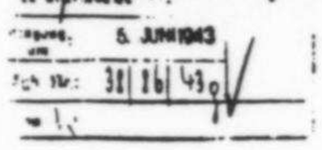
1.) 1 ooo t Baueisenbezugsrechte.
2.) 1 ooo t Gußrohre, für die die H aus ihrem Gesamtkontingent 3oo t Eisenbezugsrechte zur Verfügung stellt.
3.) Rd. 1oo t Wasserleitungsrohre 1/2 " aus dem Verfügungslager des GB-Bau in Hamm.
4.) Rundstahl 8 - 2o mm aus Hartstahl in der erforderlichen Menge.



Diese Baueisenmengen sind nur für den Ausbau der KZ-Lager, insbesondere Auschwitz, zu verwenden. Für zusätzliche Behelfsbaumaßnahmen für die Aufstellung neuer Divisionen der Waffen-H kann ich leider keine weitere Baueisenmengen zuteilen. Der Bedarf muß aus den im Rahmen des Gesamtbaueisenkontingentes des GB-Bau an die H zugeteilten Mengen entnommen werden. Die Einzelfragen der Zuteilung werden zwischen Ihren Dienststellen und meiner Rohstoffstelle geregelt. Die Beschaffung der Bezugscheine für 1 ooo t Gußrohre, sowie der Versand der Wasserleitungsrohre ist bereits in die Wege geleitet.

H e i l H i t l e r !

Ich freue mich, daß die Besichtigung der anderen K.-Z.-Lager ein durchaus befriedigendes Bild ergab.



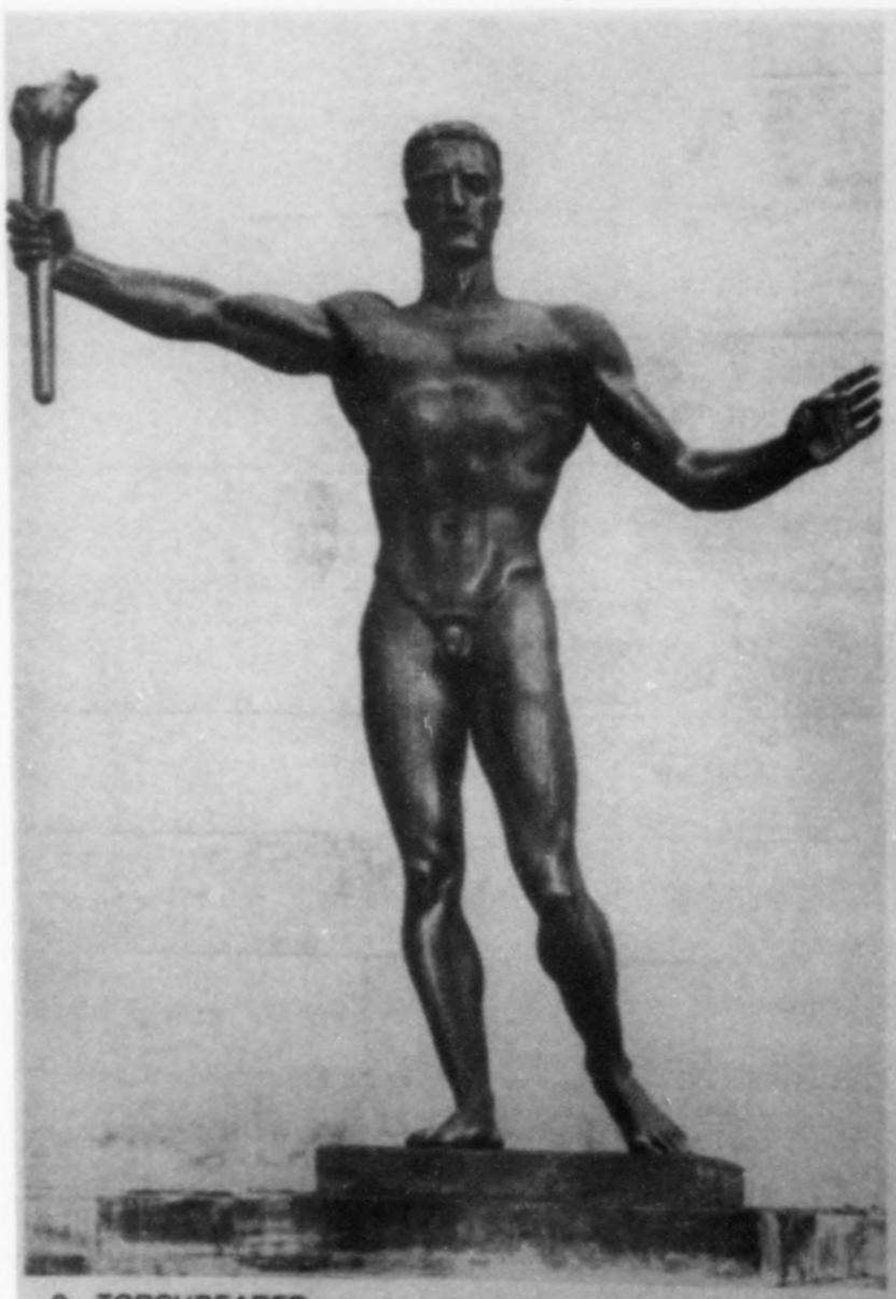
The Sculpture of Arno Breker

Arno Breker, the premier sculptor of the Third Reich, had studied sculpture in Paris and Berlin. His early work, in an expressionist-classicist style, was influenced by Maillol, Despiau, Kolbe, and others. Breker came to the attention of the Nazi hierarchy after his statue *Decathlete* won second prize in the sculpture competition of the 1936 Olympics held in Berlin.

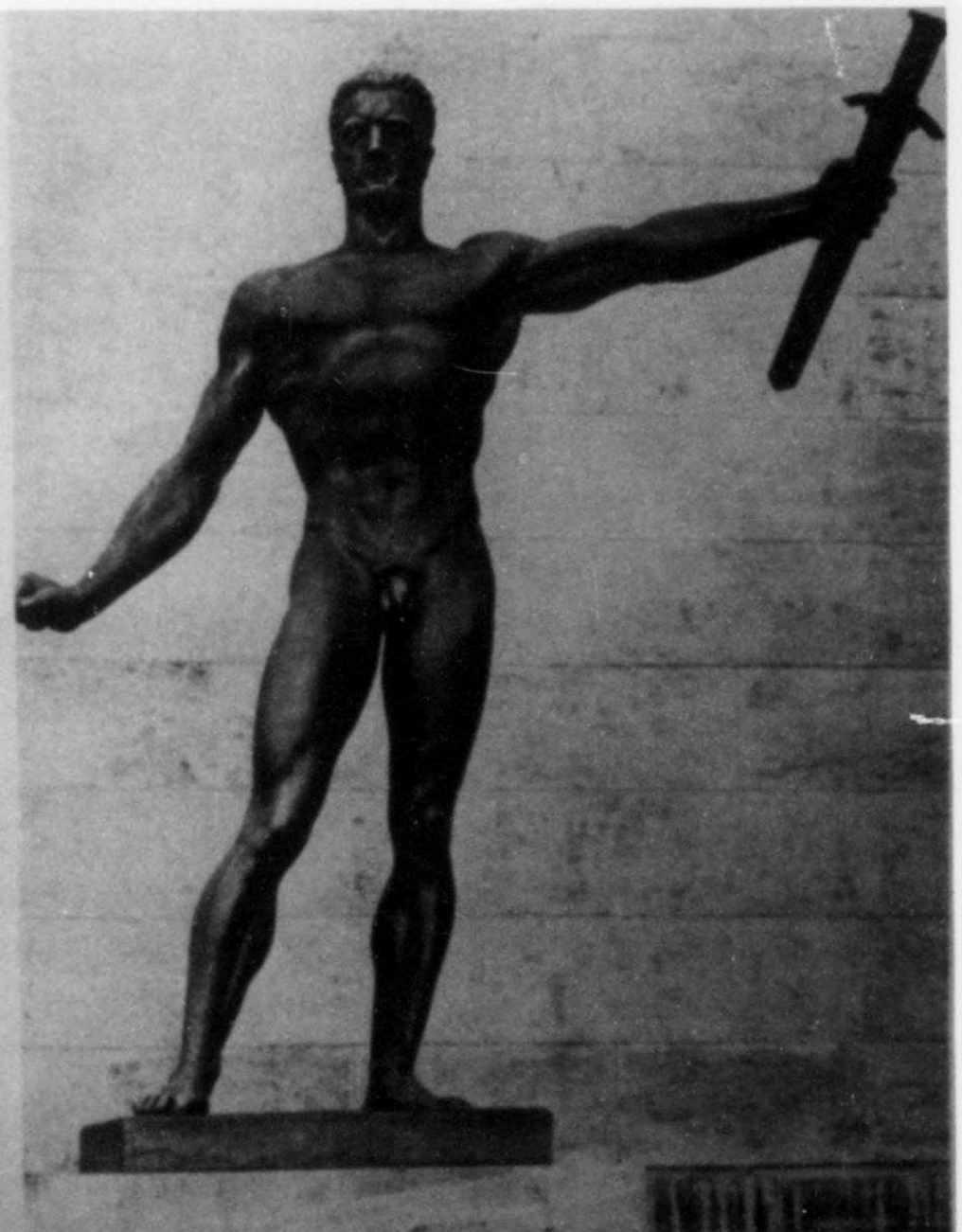
After 1938, sponsored by his friend Albert Speer, Breker was awarded the majority of the major state sculpture commissions—for the Zeppelinfeld in Nuremberg and for the Reichschancellery and the Arch of Triumph in Berlin. These statutes by Breker were, and still are, considered the most typical Nazi art and have been widely reproduced both then and now.

Breker's best-known works belong to a nineteenth-century European tradition of sculpting a "decent and respectable" (George Mosse) male nudity as a symbol of national strength and purity. These monuments featuring male nudes were erected to symbolize a nation young, natural, healthy, and moral: the Nation Before the Fall. Such statues were designed to convey the "natural" harmoniousness of nationhood and of the bourgeois family. They were images of chaste and self-controlled virility: their sexuality is never that of passionate love; rather, it is sublimated in a desexualized male bonding, in sport, or in martial posturing.

Memo from Speer to Himmler approving a requisition of building materials for Auschwitz. From Matthias Schmidt, Albert Speer, The End of a Myth *(New York: Collier, 1982).*



9 TORCHBEARER 1938



10 SWORDBEARER 1938

Between these earlier monuments and those of Breker, expressionism and Aryanism had intervened. Breker portrays a new passion, a resexualization through his characteristic swelling and tightening of body parts—but not of the uncircumcised one. It is as if sexual excitation has been drained from the genitals and used to pump up the limbs and torso: the whole figure becomes tumescent. As before, this energy suggests no outlet in love. Rather, as has been often observed, these are musclemen who are acting as guards; they are cocked, primed to release a potential blow. What they guard is *Führer*, *Reich*, and *Volk* —and Manhood itself. They are projections of an Aryan masculinity that is equated with power.

Breker's statues can be understood as antitypes, purposive negations of certain preexisting stereotypes. They were erected to stand ready to fight the whole array of those defined by the Nazis as *Untermenschen*, including Jews, Negros, women, homosexuals, moderns, Bolsheviks, and urban degenerates.

Using renowed athletes for models, Breker helped to disseminate a body type that is an antecedent of the "fascist body" (Hilton Als) built today at the gym.

A pair of statues by Breker: Partei *(Party) and* Wehrmacht *(Armed Forces), the most important sculptural commission installed during the Nazi dictatorship. From B. John Zavrel,* Arno Breker His Art and Life *(Amherst: West-Art, 1983). The statues were renamed* Swordbearer *and* Torchbearer *for this American promotional publication.*



Das Fernsehen

Am 1. März 1936 eröffnete die Deutsche Reichspost das Fernsehgegensprechen auf der Strecke Berlin—Leipzig. Dies ist die erste und einzige Betriebseinrichtung dieser Art in der Welt.
Nach dem Erlaß des Führers wurde der Fernsehrundfunk im Jahre 1935 eingeführt. Für den technischen Ausbau des Fernsehens ist die Deutsche Reichspost zuständig; den Programmbetrieb nimmt die Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft wahr.
In 12 öffentlichen Fernsehstellen Berlins wird den deutschen Volksgenossen unentgeltlich der Fernsehrundfunk vorgeführt. Bei den Olympischen Spielen im Jahre 1936 wurden die sportlichen Kämpfe durch den Fernsehsender übertragen.
Für die Fortentwicklung des Fernsehens ist am 1. Januar 1937 die Forschungsanstalt der Deutschen Reichspost in Berlin gegründet worden.



La télévision

Le premier mars 1936, la poste de l'Etat allemand inaugurait sur la ligne Berlin—Leipzig la télévision téléphonique. C'est la première et la seule installation de ce genre dans le monde.
La radio-télévision fut introduite en 1935, à la suite du décret du « Führer ». La poste de l'Etat allemand est compétente pour la construction technique de la télévision; la « Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft » établit le programme.
Dans 12 stations publiques de télévision de Berlin, la radio-télévision est présentée gratuitement aux citoyens allemands. Lors des Jeux Olympiques de 1936 les luttes sportives furent retransmises par télévision.
On a fondé à Berlin, le premier janvier 1937, une institution de recherches de la Poste de l'Etat allemand pour le développement de la télévision.

Television

On March 1st 1936 the Deutsche Reichspost opened the television-telephone-service on the line Berlin—Leipzig. This is the first and only service of its kind in the world.
According to the decree of the Führer the television-broadcast was introduced in 1935. The competent authority for the technical development of television is the Deutsche Reichspost; the programme is being taken care of by the Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft.
In twelve public television-stations television-broadcast is performed for German citizens free of charge. On the occasion of the Olympic Games 1936 the sportive contests were transmitted by the television-transmitter.
For the further development of television the research institute of the Deutsche Reichspost was founded in Berlin on January 1st 1937.

La televisione

Il 1° Marzo 1936 la Deutsche Reichspost inaugurò le comunicazioni telefoniche con televisione sulla linea Berlino—Lipsia. È questa la prima e sola installazione del genere in tutto il mondo.
La televisione per radio fu introdotta nel 1935 con decreto del Führer. Essa è di competenza della Deutsche Reichspost: i programmi sono regolati dalla Reichs-Rundfunk-Gesellschaft.
A Berlino, in 12 stazioni pubbliche di televisione vengono gratuitamente presentate trasmissioni di televisione. Durante i Giuochi Olimpici nell'anno 1936 le lotte sportive furono trasmesse con questo mezzo. — A fine di sviluppare la trasmissione dell'immagine a disianza fu fondato il 1° Gennaio 1937 a Berlino l'Istituto di ricerche della Deutsche Reichspost.

A photomontage purporting to represent a working videophone system. From Heinrich Hoffman, Deutschland in Paris *(Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1937).*

Nazi Media

The expanding Nazi party of the 1920s and early '30s had developed extremely effective propaganda techniques operative in the public sphere. These were low-budget and improvisational; they were centrally organized but locally tailored and funded; and they were based on the convening of meetings ranging from the very small to the very large and spectacular.

A critical element of the Nazi seizure of power in 1933 was the programmatic *Gleichschaltung* (coordination) of the communications media. The press and radio, the film and photo industries were mobilized in order to reproduce, expand, and institutionalize the earlier forms of Nazi propaganda.

Radio broadcasting was organized as an efficient means of garnering obedience and consent. Inexpensive receivers, the *Volksempfänger*, were developed, manufactured, and marketed under an intensive effort initiated by the Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment.

Under the Nazis, the German film studios produced large numbers of films featuring various combinations of entertainment and propaganda. Beginning in 1934, Hitler, Himmler, Goebbels, and Speer were closely involved in the production of *The Triumph of the Will*, which was directed by Leni Riefenstahl.

The world's first multiline public television broadcast was organized by the Propaganda Ministry to televise the closing festivities of the 1936 Berlin Olympics. In 1937 the German state apparently exhibited a videophone in their pavilion at the Paris International Exposition. "On March 1st 1936 the Deutsche Reichspost opened the television-telephone-service on the line Berlin-Leipzig. This is the first and only service of its kind in the world." It is not clear whether this service was ever more than a propagandistic fantasy.

The national socialist party/state eventually achieved control of all media activities in Germany.

Nazi Photography

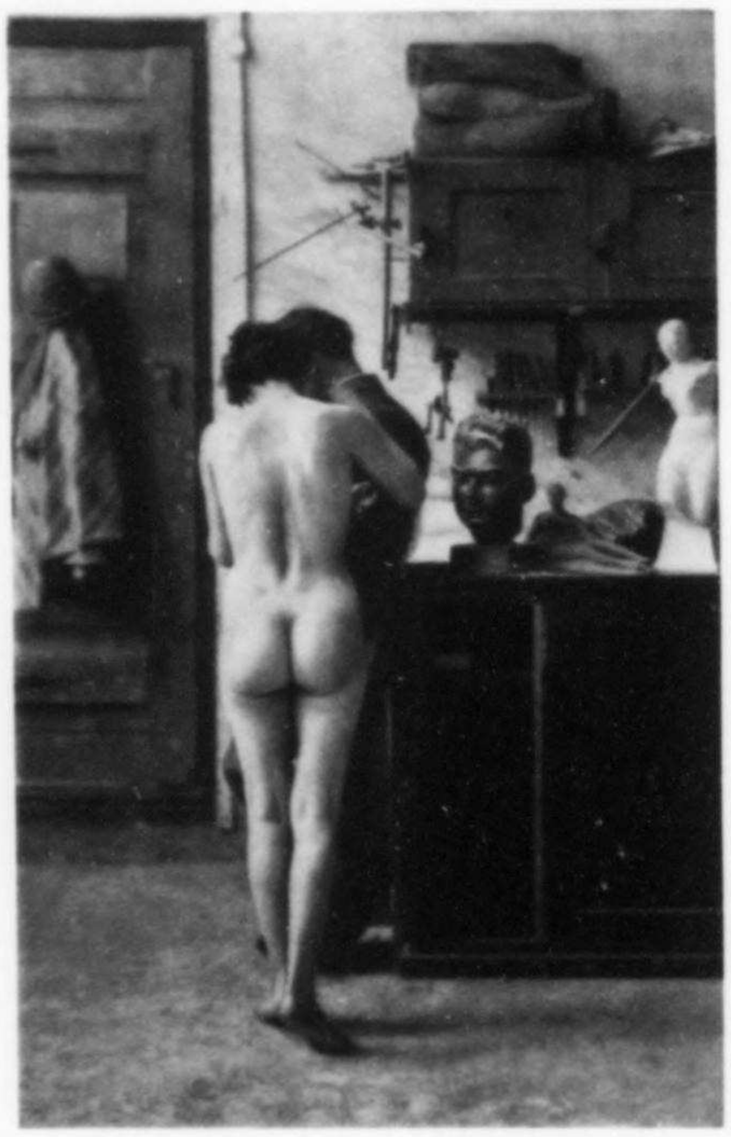
The transition from Weimar to Nazi photography entailed a complex mixture of continuity, change, and rupture. Many German photographers of the pre-Nazi era participated in an antisocialist, racist, misogynist, and nationalist ideology. Their views and practices were readily incorporated into Nazi photography. Other photographers who had been active in Weimar Germany did not cooperate with the new regime. These photographers were not allowed to publish or exhibit their work; they were driven out of business and into seclusion or exile, or they were imprisoned or murdered.

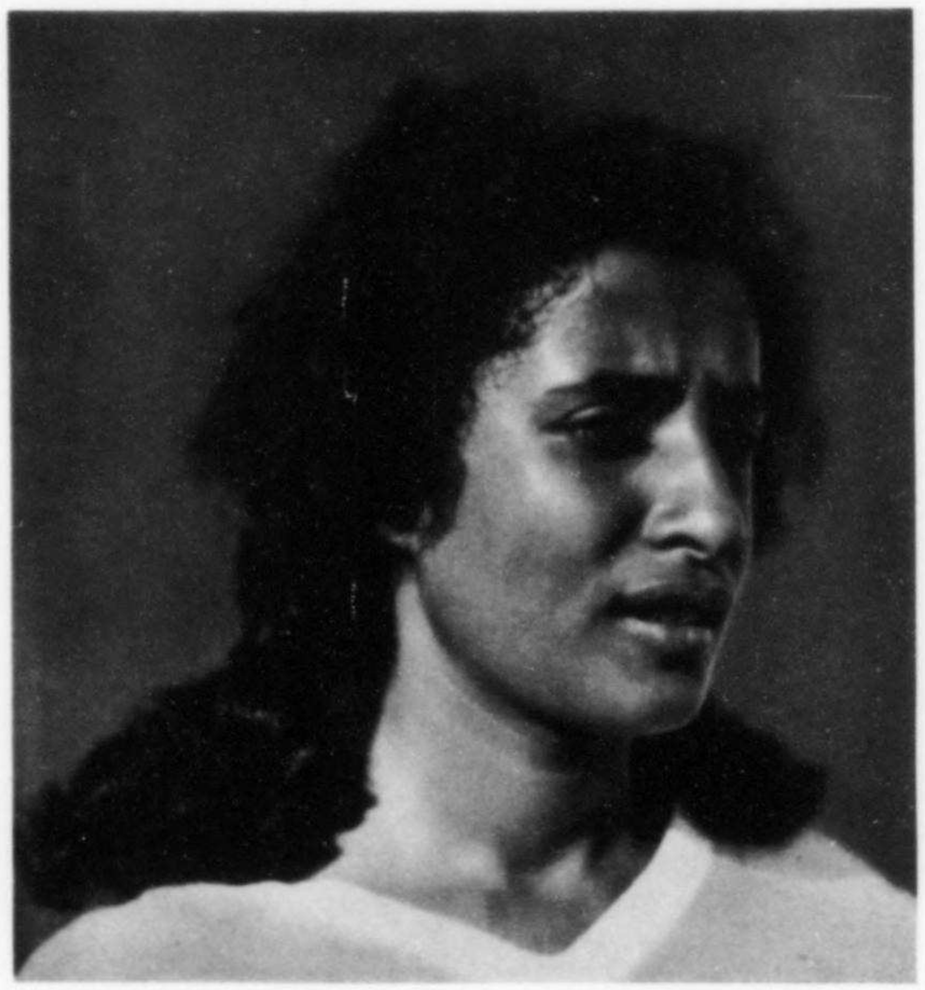
A particular Nazi style of photography was developed, as evidenced in the successive issues of the photographic annual *Das Deutsche Lichtbild*. This style was characterized by a special blend of monumentalism and threat. The overriding theme of this photography was the resolution of social conflicts through the nation, through "creative work," and through war.

Pages from the photographic annual Das Deutsche Lichtbild *(German photography), published in Berlin from 1927 through 1938. Displayed here is a chronological sampling of representative images of men and women.*



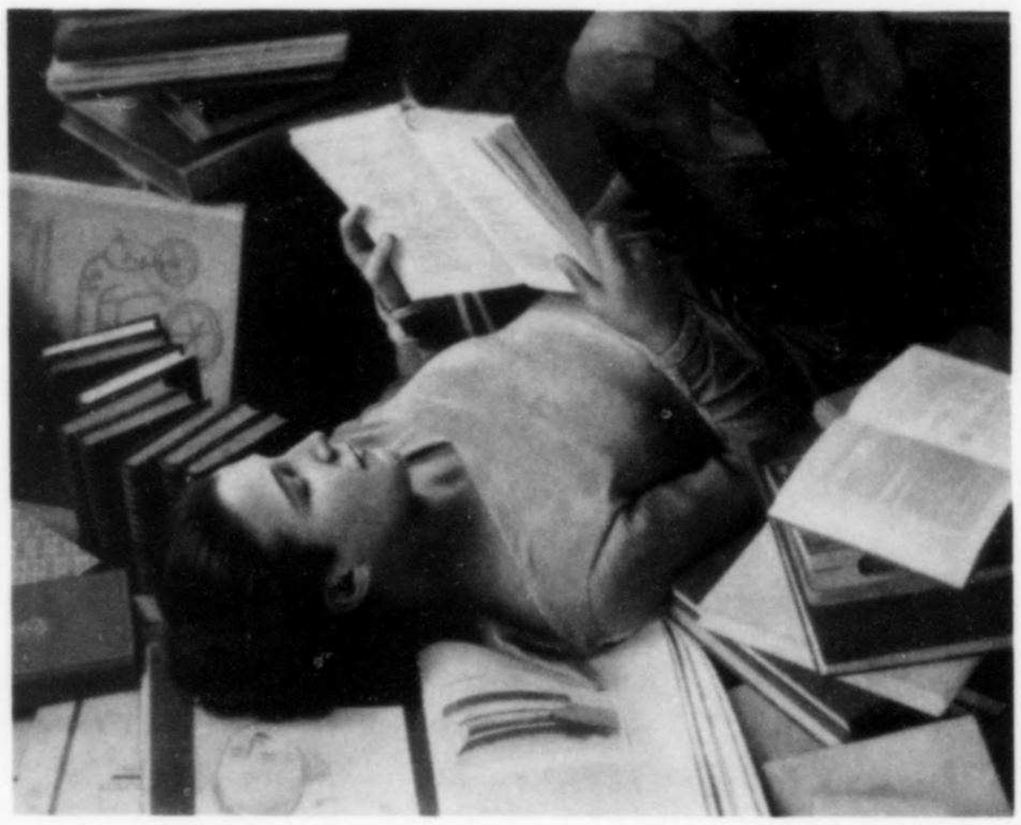




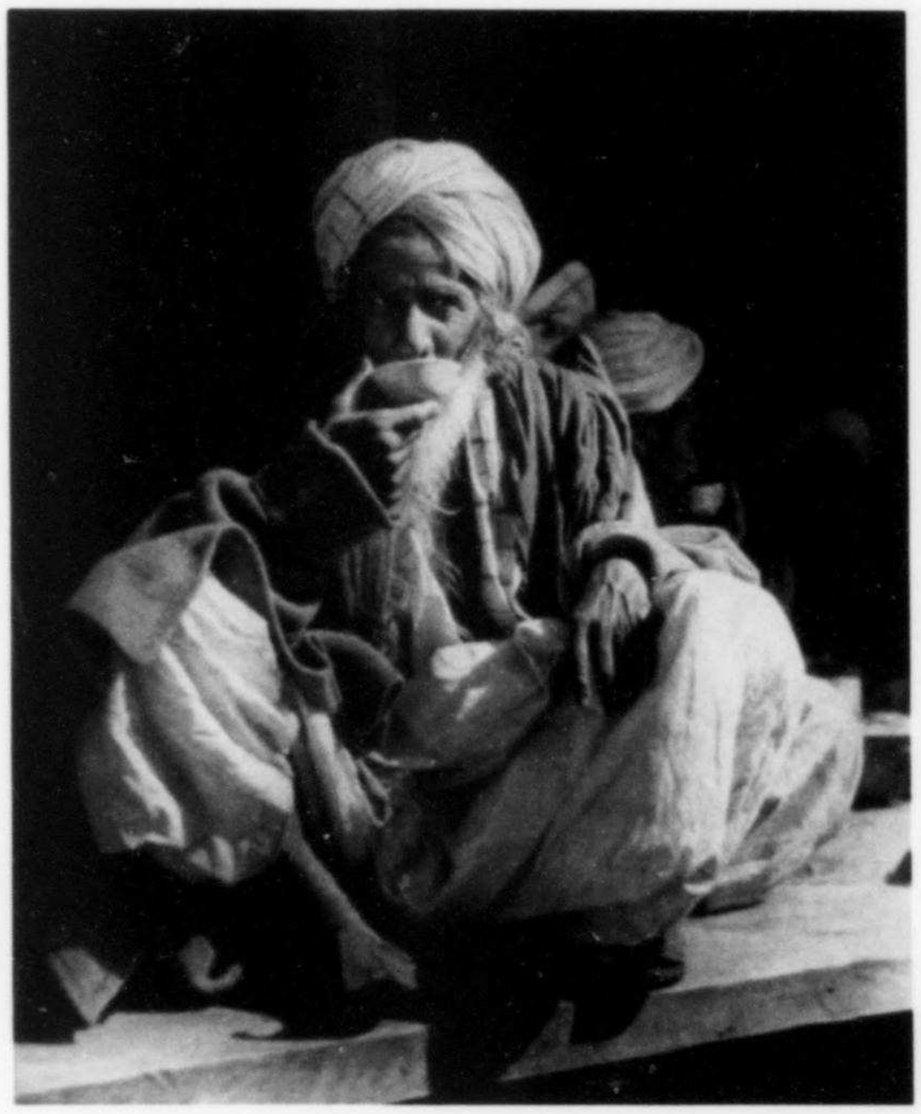


Das Deutsche Lichtbild 1930. *Above: Eduard Schlochauer*, Gas. *Below: Hannes Flach*, In the Studio.

Das Deutsche Lichtbild 1931. *Above: Geiringer-Horowitz*, Carry Hauser. *Below: Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss*, South Arabian Jew.







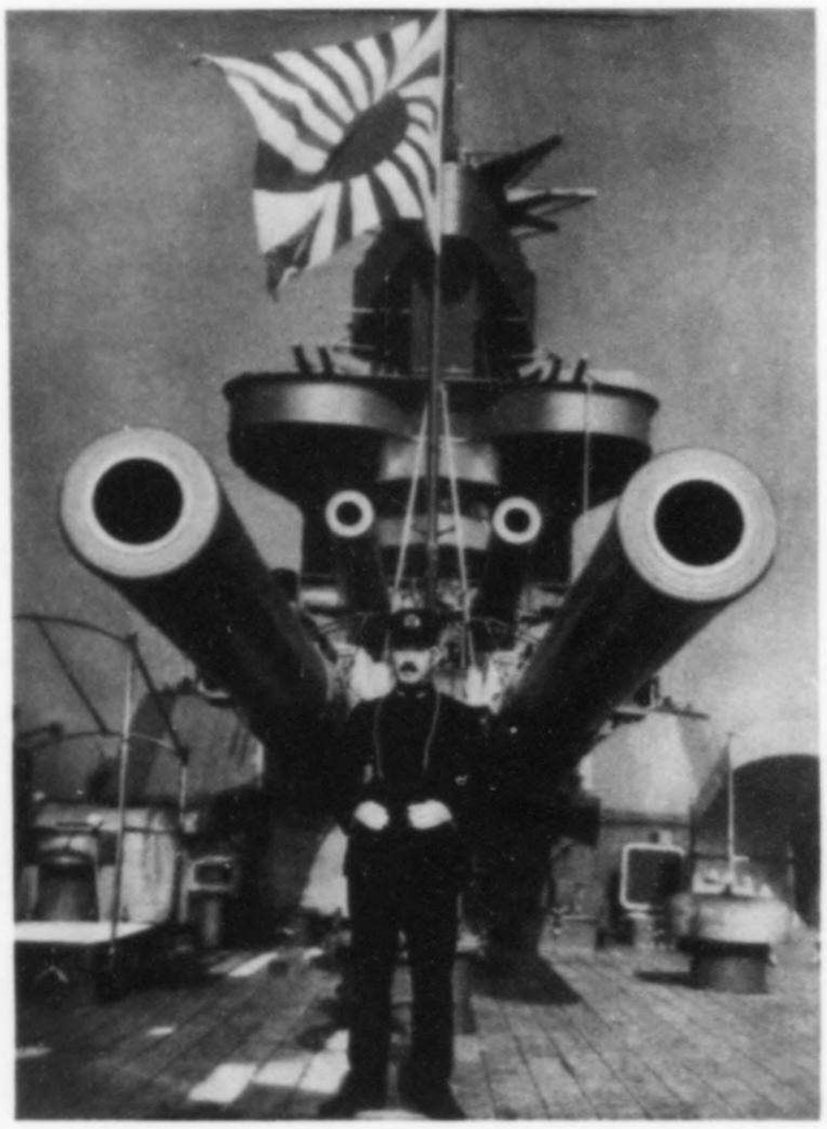


Das Deutsche Lichtbild 1932. *Above: Elsbeth Gropp*, Bookworm. *Below: Martin Hürlimann*, Elderly Indian in the Peschawar Bazaar.

Das Deutsche Lichtbild 1934. *Above: Heinrich Hoffman*, Hermann Goering. *Below: Emil Kiesel*, Portrait of a Lady.









Das Deutsche Lichtbild 1936. *Above: Ludwig Ferdinand Clauss*, Frisian Peasant. *Below: Anonymous*, Untitled.

Das Deutsche Lichtbild 1938. *Above: Hannes Schmitt*, Sculptor. *Below: Georg Ludwig Hahn-Hahn*, Pimpfe.

Heinrich Hoffman, the Leading Nazi Photographer I

Heinrich Hoffman, born in 1885, was a Munich photographer. During the Munich revolutions of 1919–20, when a Workers' and Soldiers' Soviet took power only to be soon repressed by the Weimar Republic and its *Freikorps* mercenaries, Hoffman went into business selling photographs of the historic events and their protagonists. He began a photo service to distribute the pictures, and he published them as postcards and booklets.

In the 1920s Hoffman was drawn to Hitler and became his friend and associate. He documented the rise of the Nazi party. In 1933 he was appointed by Hitler as the first and only *Reichsbildberichterstatter* (national photojournalist). He had the exclusive right to issue photographs of Hitler. Hoffman ran an enormous photo business, employing numerous photographers (who remained anonymous), publishing many photo books, and distributing his pictures to the press through his own agency. He became very wealthy.

Besides his duties as official photographer, Hoffman performed many other functions for Hitler as well. He arranged for Hitler to be paid royalties for each use of his image on postage stamps, which became a main source of Hitler's immense personal wealth. Hoffman introduced Hitler to one of his studio assistants, Eva Braun, who became Hitler's mistress. He helped Hitler select the art works to be exhibited in the annuals held at the House of German Art. Hoffman acted as an art dealer, selling Hitler many paintings for his collection, which was meant to become the basis of the world's greatest art museum.



20 pfennig postage stamps.



Heinrich Hoffman: Portrait of Marcel Duchamp. *From Rudolf Herz and Dirk Halfbrodt*, Revolution Und Fotografie: Munchen 1918–19 *(Munich: Munchner Stadtmuseum, 1988).*



The inscription reads: "To the battles: Munich. A loyal East-African fighter. Freikorps Letow-Vorbeck. May, 1919. (Photo: Heinrich Hoffman.)



Eva Braun, one of Hoffman's studio assistants, later Hitler's mistress. (Photo: Heinrich Hoffman.)

Museology, Archaeology, Art History, and Art Collecting in the Third Reich

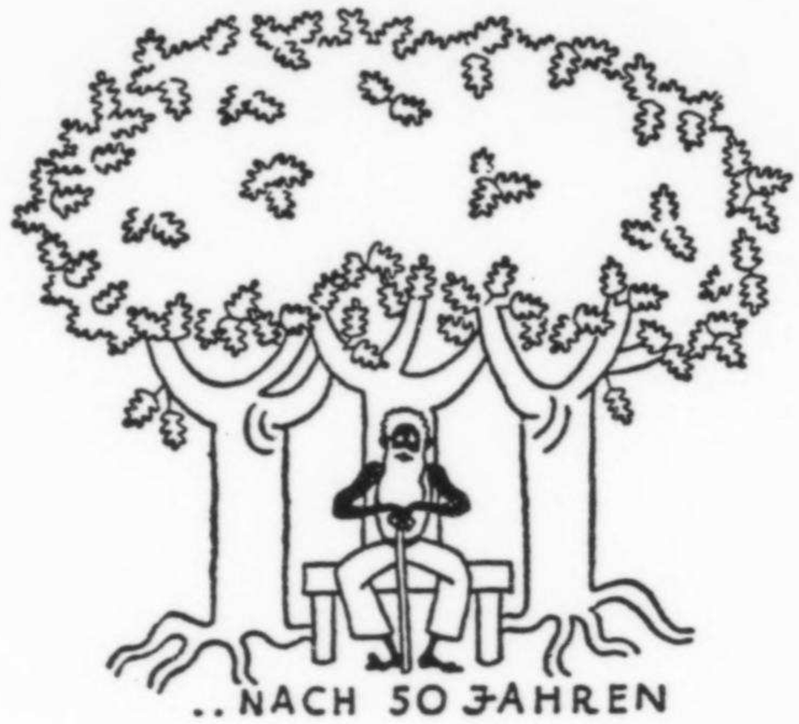
The study, collection, dissemination, and display of cultural artifacts were all controlled from the highest levels during the Third Reich. Hitler, Goebbels, Goering, Himmler, and other leading Nazis directed these activities.

Plunder for personal or party/state enrichment played a significant role. Of greater importance was the use of cultural institutions in promoting the key Nazi doctrine of German racial and cultural superiority. Artifacts, and the peoples that produced them, were continually reclassified in a convoluted effort to establish a pellucid racial hierarchy topped by the Aryan.



In the Karl May Museum, near Dresden, after 1933. The sign by the window reads: "Dogs and Niggers not allowed." From John Toland, Hitler: The Pictorial Documentary of His Life *(New York: Ballantine, 1976).*





Part Two

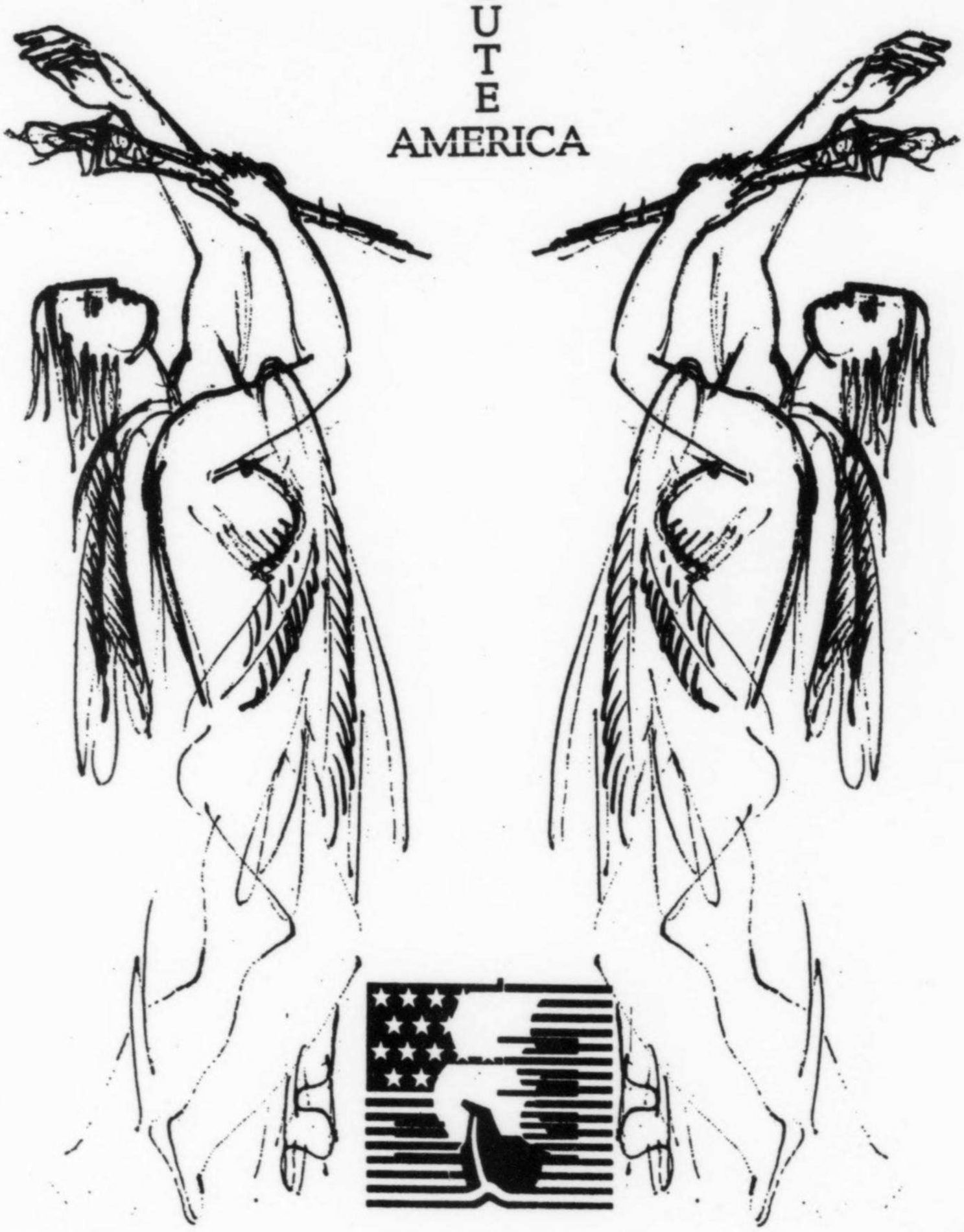
The Taboo Against Nazi Art I

In Germany since 1974, Nazi art has frequently been displayed in museums in the context of antifascist historical exhibitions. Germans have been discussing Nazi art and what to do with it. This widespread public discussion has been explicitly and complexly related to the struggle of Germans of the various generations to deal with their past and to forge a new national identity. Still, Nazi art has not yet been publicly exhibited as art even in Germany.

In the United States the taboo against exhibiting Nazi art is even stricter. An exhibition entitled "'Degenerate Art': The Fate of the Avant-Garde in Nazi Germany" was recently shown at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Smithsonian Institution in Washington. It was an ambitious, informative re-creation of the infamous 1937 Munich show of banned modern art, a show that the Nazis mounted to counterpoint the opening of the first Great German Art Exhibition at the House of German Art. As "'Degenerate Art'" demonstrated, the fate of the avant-garde in Nazi Germany was to be mocked, hounded out, and replaced. Yet the replacement, Nazi art, though repeatedly invoked, was but negligibly represented in the recent exhibition, with only some ephemera on display and a half dozen small photographs in the extensive catalog. The sole full-page reproduction of a Nazi work in the catalog, a photograph of Breker's *Readiness*, is misdated to 1937 rather than 1939. This is a crucial misrepresentation of Breker's work and of Nazi art in general in respect to its iconography of war, revealing a strange inattention on the part of the curators to the brief chronology of Nazi art.

A taboo against the exhibition of Nazi art as such remains in force throughout the world. Yet there is a continuous return of the repressed: the following sections will offer some further examples, reflecting a variety of national, institutional, and personal histories.

Jesse Owens receiving oak-sapling trophies and "50 years later."
A cartoon from an album on the 1936 Olympic Games, Die Olympishen Spiele 1936 *(Hamburg: Cigaretten-Bilderdienst, 1936).*



1 The Angels of Light **1983**
57x39 cm

SALUTE AMERICA has been published on the occasion of the 300th Anniversary of German immigration to America.
The original lithographs were created by Arno Breker. The text was written by President Ronald Reagan, Vice President George Bush, West German President Prof. Dr. Karl Carstens and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Announcement of the publication of a suite of lithographs by Arno Breker. From B. John Zavrel, Arno Breker: His Art and Life *(Amherst: West-Art, 1983).*

"The Water Colours of Hitler," Florence, 1984

In 1984 the city of Florence mounted an exhibition in the Palazzo Vecchio entitled "The Water Colours of Hitler." In the accompanying catalog (which was issued in separate Italian and English editions) a politician writes that the show was mounted "on the occasion of the fortieth anniversary of the liberation of the city from the Nazi-fascists. . . . The presence of Hitler's paintings is a symbol of the defeat of Nazism." No mention is made in this preface, or in any of the six texts in the catalog, of the collaboration of Italians with the "Nazi-fascists." Rather, Hitler's watercolors are presented as spoils captured from the evil Nazis over whom the Florentines eventually triumphed.

In another prefatory text, a curator writes: "One could . . . credit Hitler with being a precursor of the type of painting, fashionable today and not without a certain curious validity, known as 'anachronism,' 'hypermannerism,' or 'quotationi.'" In other words, Hitler the painter is being presented here as a proto-postmodernist.

In a third text, a critic writes: "Hitler's water colours are . . . in fact, lightweight works which any young art student could have produced. Any young art student, that is, who was devoid of any exceptional gifts or any artistic talent. Thus may the matter be quickly disposed of. Nor, on the other hand, could it be otherwise: Hitler is what he is, as we all know him. Anything further such as we are about to say is idle reflection, 'degenerate' fantasy."

In all three of these descriptions, Hitler's watercolors are used to cast blame or to expiate guilt. These texts from "The Water Colours of Hitler" exemplify ways that certain people—people from Western European countries that colluded with the Nazis—have used Nazi art to distance their own histories rather than to examine them.



Piazza della Republicca, Florence, 1984: banner advertising "Gli Acquarelli di Hitler" (the watercolors of Hitler). (Photo: Steven Kasher.)



Ford—Ford—Kiefer

Henry Ford was the one American that Hitler professed to admire; he was impressed with Ford's productive-technological achievements and with his anti-Semitism. Hitler seems to have derived sections of *Mein Kampf* from Ford's writings. On July 30, 1938, his seventy-fifth birthday, Ford was presented with the Grand Cross of the German Eagle, the highest award that Hitler could grant.

Ford admired Hitler as well. According to one of Ford's biographers, David L. Lewis, "if any one American were to be singled out for his contribution to the evils of Nazism, it would have to be Henry Ford." Ford continued to support the Nazis even after the outbreak of war in 1939.

After the war, the Ford Motor Company, under Henry's son Edsel, undertook a well-publicized espousal of liberal causes, particularly civil rights. The Ford Foundation has contributed to numerous progressive projects.

Yet, as late as 1989, the public relations arm of the Ford Motor Company was still involved with some sort of correction of the notorious anti-Semitic and pro-Nazi activities of the company's founder. Ford's sponsorship of the American tour of the Anselm Kiefer exhibition, undertaken in partnership with the West German government, must be considered in this light (notwithstanding other motivations that were, of course, involved).

The touring Kiefer exhibition was the most grandiose and expensive showing of any living European artist produced since the end of the Second World War. Kiefer is an artist known for his attempts to exorcise Germany's Nazi past with aesthetic resolutions. He has received exorbitant accolades, primarily from the United States. For instance: "Kiefer's imagination reunited Germany before

Goethe—Hitler—Ford. From John Toland, Hitler: The Pictorial Documentary of His Life *(New York: Ballantine, 1976).*

the fact. . . . Kiefer made Germanness available again to the imagination. He took the taboo off it. Kiefer's work embodied a consciousness true to the best and chastened by the worst of the German past and therefore fit for an integral future. Kiefer may not have changed the world, but . . ." (Peter Schjeldahl, *Art in America*, September 1991).

Kiefer creates monumental icons that incorporate images drawn from the German Romantic-Nazi tradition; he treats these images with an ambiguous awe that suggests both dread and admiration. In their mythification and lack of concrete historicity, they offer little space for working through, as opposed to magically resolving, the German historic burden.



Something big is happening at The Museum of Modern Art.

But the huge scale of Anselm Kiefer's work is only a small part of his art. Kiefer paints public memories mixed with private dreams—as he shuns the comfort of custom and fashion. Only 43 years old, he has already challenged Europe's ideas of what an artist is and does. Now New York can join in the discovery.

"ANSELM KIEFER: A RETROSPECTIVE" is the artist's first comprehensive exhibition in the United States. And The Museum of Modern Art is the final stop on its American tour. Kiefer's work demonstrates that boundaries of time and place need not be barriers to creativity. That is why Ford Motor Company is proud to sponsor this exhibition.

ANSELM KIEFER: A RETROSPECTIVE
The Museum of Modern Art, October 16, 1988–January 3, 1989
11 West 53 Street, New York, N.Y.
For information call: 212 708-9480

GERMANY'S SPIRITUAL HEROES, 1973.
oil and charcoal on canvas 120¾" x 268½"
© Anselm Kiefer, 1973
Collection of the Eli Broad Family Foundation

This exhibition is sponsored by

Ford

THE NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE / OCTOBER 16, 1988 43

Advertisement for Anselm Kiefer exhibition and Ford Motor Company. New York Times Magazine, *October 16, 1988*.

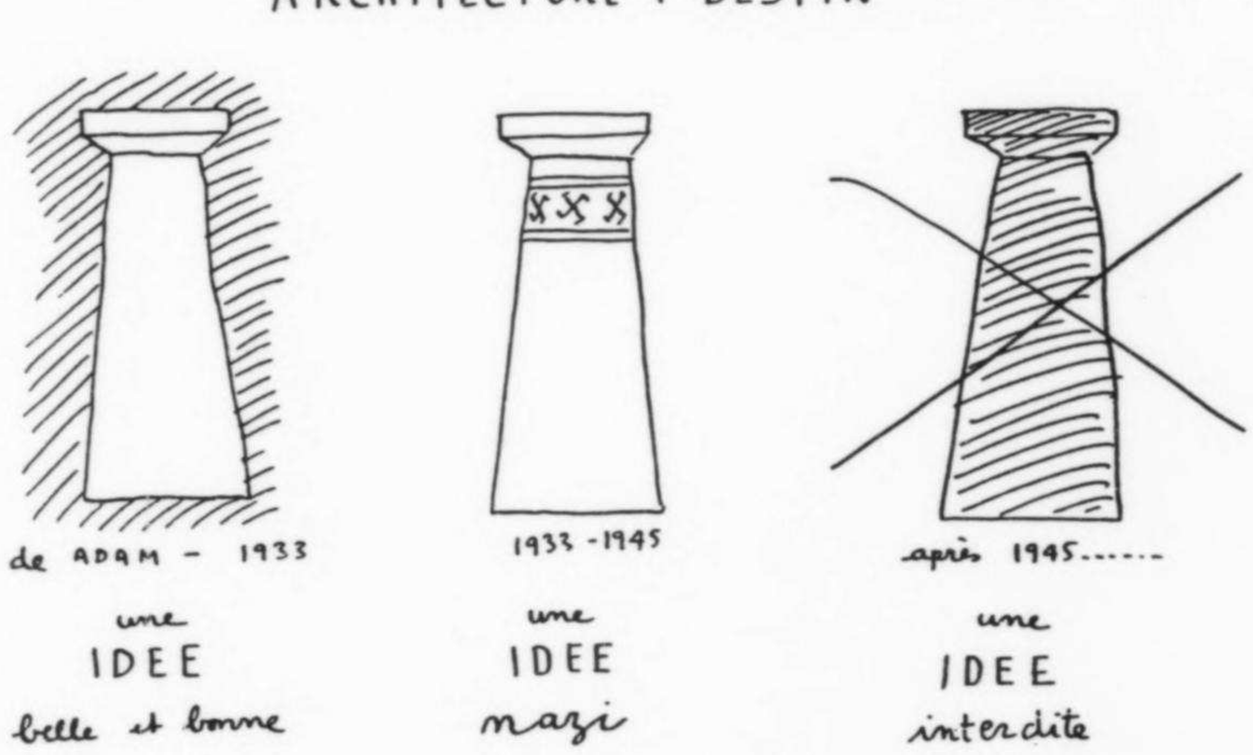


Speer—Krier—Prince Charles

Leon Krier is an influential theoretician of architecture. He is guide and ghostwriter to Prince Charles in the prince's campaign against modernist architecture and for traditionalist architecture in Britain, and he has worked for the prince on several highly publicized projects.

Krier's most important influence, self-confessed, has been the architecture of Albert Speer. Krier has portrayed Speer as the spiritual forefather of a postmodern classicism that he promotes as a cure-all not only for modernist architecture but also for the social ills of modernity. Krier believes that Speer's architecture was produced in spite of any Nazi ideology to which it may be linked, rather than as a reflection or promotion of that ideology. (In 1984 Speer took occasion to disagree with this contention of Krier's.)

Two images from Leon Krier, Albert Speer Architecture 1932–1942 *(Brussels: Aux Archives d'Architectures Modernes, 1984). Opposite: the frontispiece, depicting Speer and Hitler reviewing architectural plans (cropping and book design by Krier). Below: "Architecture and destiny," an illustration by Krier.*



Designers for Dorset

The Prince of Wales meets Leon Krier and John Thompson at last weekend's planning think-in in Dorset. More than 1,200 people saw Leon Krier's masterplan for the expansion of Dorchester, the county town, by the close of the two-day public exhibition at the County Museum on Monday night.

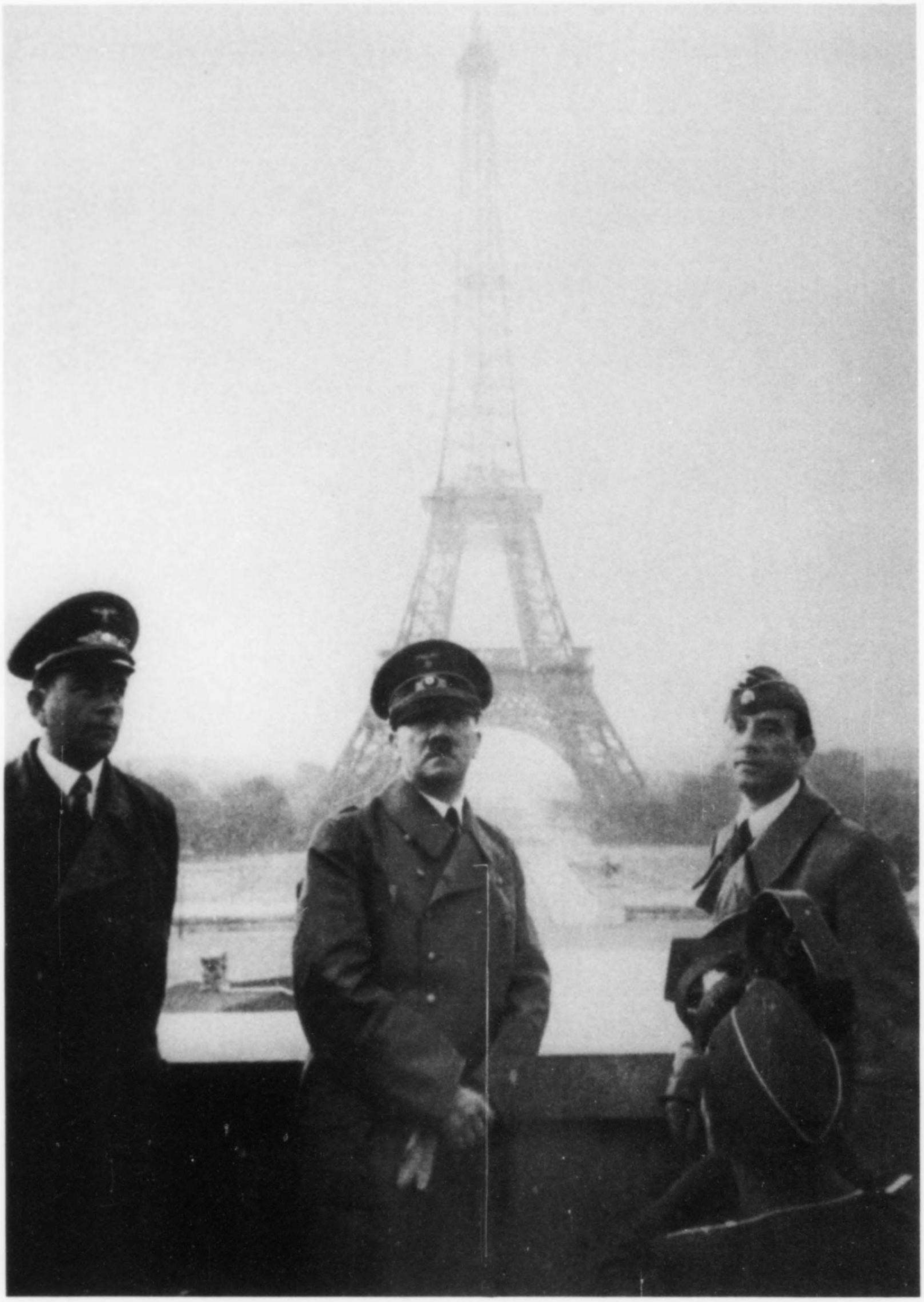
The scheme, for four model villages to the west of the town, is intended to house 8,000 people over the next 15 to 20 years, on Duchy of Cornwall land. Prince Charles, who as Duke of Cornwall commissioned Krier last year, made a surprise visit by helicopter to the Poundbury Planning Weekend, organised by Hunt Thompson as community development consultants, last Friday. He spent 90 minutes taking part in working party discussions.

An exhibition exit poll by User Research, a Hunt Thompson subsidiary, disclosed that 67 per cent thought the public participation exercise had been useful, while another 16 per cent thought it worthwhile. More than 90 per cent said they wanted to see further consultation.

Full report and pictures, back page



From an article about a development project of Krier and Prince Charles, Building Design, *June 23, 1989.*



Hitler, Speer, Breker, and a cameraman in front of the Eiffel Tower, June 1940, several days after the surrender of France to the German armies. Hitler celebrated his greatest military victory with an "art tour" of Paris and invited three of his favorite cultural practitioners to accompany him. The tour was widely publicized in Germany. From Robert Wernick, Blitzkreig *(Alexandria: Time-Life, 1977).*

Breker—Ludwig

Peter Ludwig is the most powerful private art patron in Germany. He has directorial positions in at least seventeen museums worldwide, extensive loans in over thirty, and at least two bear his name.

In the 1940s, while a teenager, Ludwig was, according to his biographer, Reiner Speck, "a sort of cultural official of the Hitler Youth and, in this capacity, was sent to a conference in Berlin." There, presumably, he saw Breker's statues installed at the Ministry of Propaganda or at the Reichschancellery.

Ludwig has sought to include Breker in the canon of great Western artists. In 1984 Ludwig commissioned from Breker marble portrait busts of himself and his wife. During their public unveiling at the opening of the Museum Ludwig in Cologne, he called Breker a "great artist" and linked him to a desirable postmodernism, claiming: "Certainly, all over the world there is a conservative trend. . . . Postmodern—what else does that mean but to be traditional?" Ludwig has also purchased earlier works by Breker for his collection in the Museum Ludwig, though these remain unexhibited.



Ludwig, Breker, and Breker's busts of Mr. and Mrs. Ludwig, Art News, *April 1988. (Photo: Sven Simon.)*

Thyssen—Thyssen

Fritz Thyssen, a leading German industrialist, was the most important early financial supporter of Hitler and the Nazi party, donating large sums of money himself and persuading other major industrialists to do the same. He has been called "the most important single figure behind Hitler's struggle for power" (*Current Biography 1940*).

In 1928, after a Nazi electoral success, Thyssen gave Hitler a special grant to renovate new party offices. Hitler and Troost decorated in a heavy, anti-modern style; the resulting headquarters came to be known as the "Brown House" and set precedents for certain later developments in Nazi art, architecture, and design.

Fritz Thyssen's nephew, the primary heir to the Thyssen fortune, is the Baron Hans Heinrich Thyssen-Bornemisza. Baron Thyssen is one of the world's wealthiest individuals and is the owner of the most important art collection in private hands. He has a large collection of paintings by the German expressionists, "which he particularly likes, he says, because the Nazis banned them as 'degenerate.'"

In 1988 *Der Spiegel* revealed that the baron had commissioned portrait busts of himself and his wife from Arno Breker, whose work he particularly likes even though Breker was not banned by the Nazis.

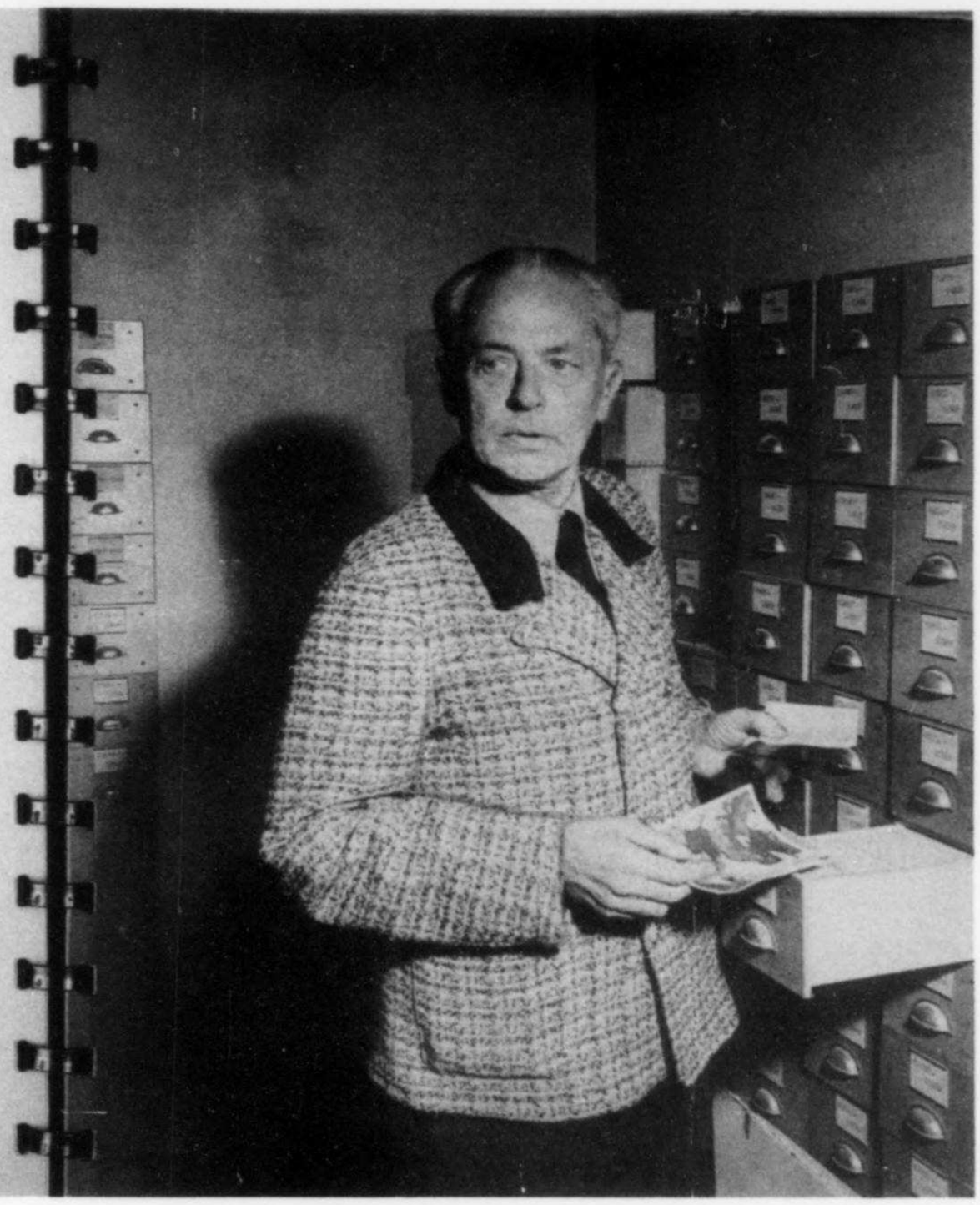


Left: Photomontage representing the importance of Fritz Thyssen in the Nazi hierarchy. From M. Lincoln Schuster, ed., Eyes on the World *(New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935). Right: Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza. From* Architectural Digest, *October 1987.*

HEINRICH HOFFMAN, Hitler's ex-photographer was employed in the Courthouse at Nuernberg. His job was to classify 500,000 captured German negatives. Hoffmann was closely guarded. He was put to work because of his vast knowledge of pictures taken during the Hitler reign.

Hoffmann owned one of the largest photo news agencies in Germany and as early as 1922 tried to get pictures of Hitler. Hitler ignored him then, but after his rise to power, the Fuehrer asked Hoffmann to accompany him on all his trips. In 1938 Hoffmann quarreled with some of the Hitlerites and after that his employees made the trips with Hitler.

When Goering was shown this picture in a U. S. Army Newspaper he said, "The swine made a million marks on my pictures and now he's sorting photographs to hang me."



Heinrich Hoffman, the Leading Nazi Photographer II

In 1945 Heinrich Hoffman was employed by the International Military Tribunal to catalog photographs for use as evidence in the Nuremberg trials of leading Nazis. Many of Hoffman's negatives and prints were confiscated by the U.S. Army and are held in the U.S. National Archives in Washington. The U.S. government claims the rights to these images, which it generally licenses upon request, free of charge.

Since 1945 Hoffman's photographs of the Nazi era have been reproduced continuously in huge numbers. The legal rights to many of these images have remained the property of Hoffman and his heirs, who have charged market rates for permission to reproduce. Leading publications, such as *Time*, often purchase these rights from the Hoffman agency. Others have opted to pirate or forgo the Hoffman images rather than pay the requisite fees and tributes.

Heinrich Hoffman at work for the International Tribunal at Nuremberg in 1945–46. From Charles W. Alexander and Anne Kesshan, Justice at Nuernberg *(U.S.A.: Marvel, 1946).*

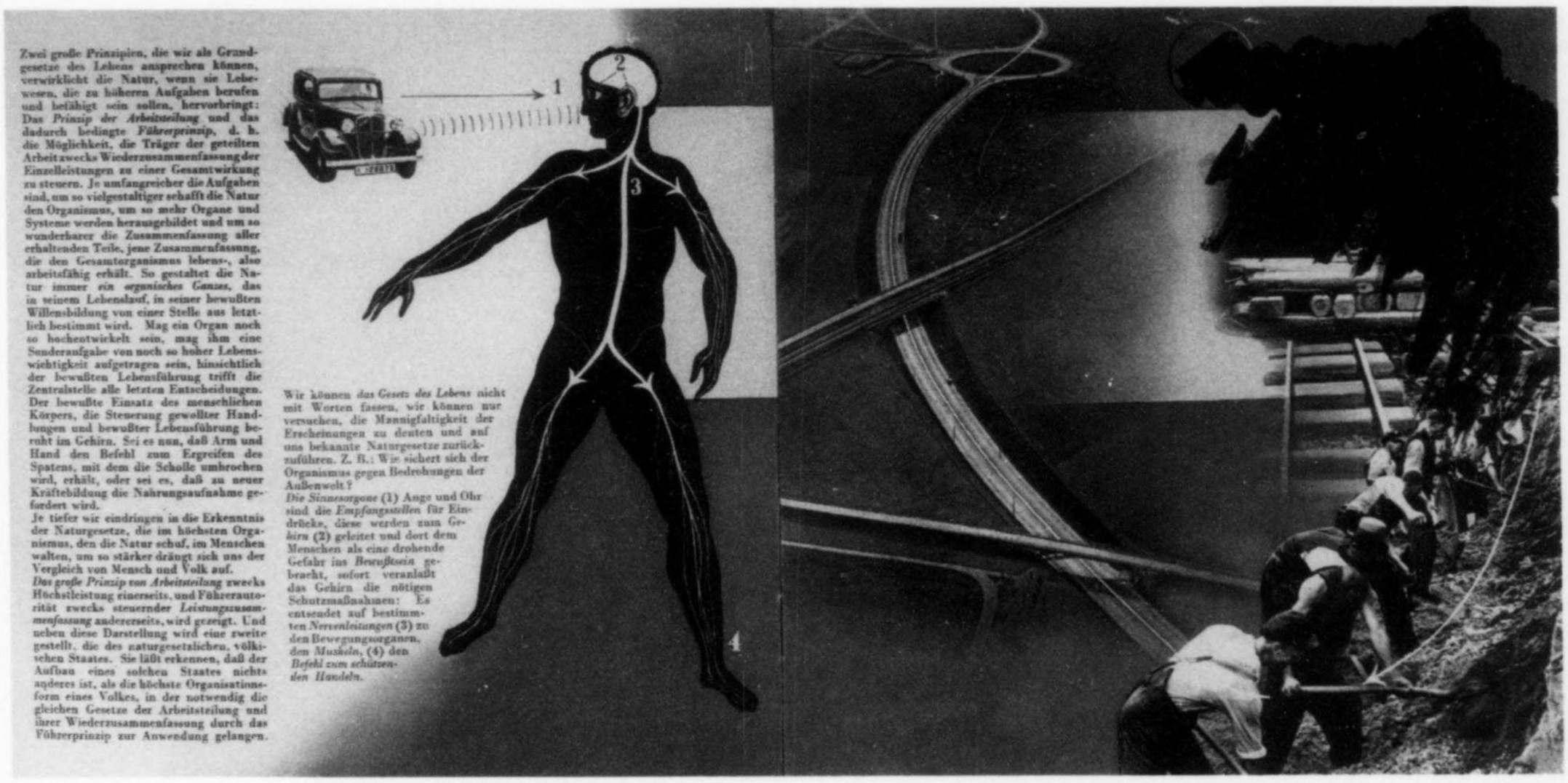
MOMA and the Nazis

Propagandistic projects undertaken by the Museum of Modern Art in conjunction with the Office of War Information, the Office of Inter-American Affairs, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the United States Information Agency have previously been brought to public attention. It is less well recognized that MOMA has repeatedly supported proponents and past proponents of Nazism while occluding their Nazi sympathies. Unlike the work with the above-mentioned governmental agencies, which was deliberate if often secret, the activities and associations listed below have been permitted (perhaps with distaste) as inevitable consequences of the museum's aesthetic and political positionings.

Philip Johnson, the museum's first director of the Department of Architecture (and its *éminence grise* to this day), took leave from his post in December of 1934 to found the National party, modeled after the Nazi party, with which Johnson had become familiar during his several visits to Germany. His partner in this venture was Alan R. Blackburn, Jr., the museum's executive director. They tried to enlist Huey Long, the demagogic governor of Louisiana, but were rebuffed. (See, for instance, *Esquire*, December 1983.)



Montage from the brochure for the exhibition "Das Wunder des Lebens," designed by Herbert Bayer in 1935. (Illustration: Herbert Bayer.) The spread illustrates "the two great principles of life . . . the principle of the division of labor . . . and the Führerprincip" [the Leader-principle, a key concept in Nazi ideology]. Left: A detail that includes a photo of Hitler. From Herbert Bayer, Das Kunstlerische Werk, 1918–1938 *(Berlin: Bauhaus-Archiv, 1982). Opposite: From a copy that belonged to Bayer and was censored by him with black ink.*



Ludwig Mies van der Rohe, the architect whom Johnson and MOMA have most energetically supported, made repeated efforts between 1933 and 1938 to gain Nazi patronage. In 1933 Mies joined the architects' branch of the *Reichskulturkammer*, the organization established by the Ministry of Propaganda to control arts professionals. Membership required proof of racial purity, which Mies supplied.

Herbert Bayer, after his emigration from Germany in 1938, was hired to work at MOMA. He created the influential exhibition designs for "Road to Victory" (1942) and "Airways to Peace" (1943). Previously, Bayer had contributed to the design of comparable exhibitions for the Nazis: "Deutschland Ausstellung" (1936) and "Wunder des Lebens" (1938).

In 1985, a year after the publication of his elaborate tribute to Speer, Leon Krier was given an important exhibition of his own architectural projects at MOMA.

Two recent historical survey exhibits at MOMA gave surprising prominence to the Weimar-period work of two artists who were soon to become leading Nazi artists. MOMA featured the earlier work with no reference to the later careers. Ludwig Hohlwein (shown in "The Modern Poster") was the leading poster designer of the Third Reich. Hugo Erfurth (in "Photography Until Now") was one of the most celebrated photographic portraitists in Nazi Germany.

Peter Ludwig is a member of the International Council of MOMA and has contributed generously to the museum.



The Modern Poster. *MOMA installation, 1988.*
(Photo: Steven Kasher.)

The Taboo Against Nazi Art II

What, then, makes Nazi art inadmissible—unmentionable without embarrassment, barely chronicled, unexhibitable—especially in the United States? No doubt this taboo is partly due to a belief in that standard equation in the discourse of modernism, the false syllogism stating that since the Nazis were anti-modernist then modernism must be inherently anti-fascist. The tenacity of this belief is demonstrated when prominent postmodern anti-modernists defend "quality" Nazi art (a stance that remains a profound liability to the holders of these anti-modernist positions).

More profoundly, most contemporary discourse continues to cast Nazi art not only as the antitype of modernism, but also as the antitype of culture itself. We have been brought up to believe that the Nazis were the enemies of real culture, of living culture, of culture as we know it. It can hardly be allowed that there was Nazi culture at all. Over and over our culture reinscribes denials of Nazi culture in the attempt to establish an inherent cultural uprightness of our own.

I am not suggesting that we resolve this dilemma by adjudicating among Nazi art works in order to permit some with aesthetic merit to be exhibited as art. Rather, I am suggesting that an examination of the taboo against Nazi art can reveal the operation of a set of politicized myths. Among those myths is that of the political neutrality of aesthetic canons. Rather than incorporate Nazi art, we might use reconsiderations of Nazi art to increase awareness of the politics of aesthetic judgments and to help dismantle notions of a universal canon.

Dismantling the taboo against Nazi art will also permit us to encounter the virulence, both blatant and subtle, that undergirds the ways in which Nazi art works construct heroes and sub-humans—an encounter that can illuminate parallel constructions in other cultures, including our own. Furthermore, the denial of Nazi art reinforces the popular myth of the Nazi as super-villain, a myth central to our political imaginations in the United States. Nazi metaphors and Hitler analogies are a pervasive everyday expedient in all media, rhetorical weapons always ready at hand. Turning others into Nazis or Hitlers has become a convenient way for the American interlocutor to attribute a surpassing evil to his opponent. Unremitting castigation of the Nazi masks both the historic complicity of the United States with Nazi crimes and our own racist and genocidal histories. Compulsively assigning the labels "Nazi" and "Hitler" serves to reinform an image of ourselves as innate anti-fascists—anti-fascists without having to work at it, without having to actively make democracy.

Helms and the Arts: Some Nazi Analogies

tions on the NEA, he has now edged back | we have to be the art police?" | works, even the "Tits and Ass" song and the

The Right Wing's Cultural Warrior

When Sen. Jesse Helms invites you to see his etchings, he's not kidding. As Capitol Hill's point man against obscenity, he keeps a small stash of Robert Mapplethorpe's homoerotic photographs in his office. He often makes viewing them a condition for news interviews. When a television station refused his request that they air the pictures, Helms had made his point. If showing Mapplethorpe's work on television could cost a broadcaster his license, he argued, why should the NEA get a free ride? Helms insists he is not a prude or a censor. He just doesn't want the NEA spending tax money to offend God-fearing Americans. "If America persists in the way it's going, and the Lord doesn't strike us down," he says, "he ought to apologize to Sodom and Gomorrah."



NANCY PIERCE—BLACK STAR

No subtlety: *Protesting against Helms, the senator*

nothing subtle about a Helms campaign. When his opponent, Harvey Gantt, recently made history as the first black to win a Democratic senatorial nomination, Helms strategist Carter Wrenn declared

tions from across the country. One appeal said that when Mrs. Helms saw some of the pictures, she cried, "Lord have mercy, Jesse, I'm not believing this"—and slammed the book shut.



AL STEPHENSON—PICTURE GROUP

lar. Democrats also question whether Helms can make Mapplethorpe a metaphor for discontent about cultural values. "People are concerned about the state of American morality, but Hollywood gets a lot more blame than the NEA," says Democratic pollster Geoffrey Garin.

A Jesse Helms Citizenship Center is scheduled to open

JESSE HELMS' VALIANT WAR AGAINST FILTH IN THE ARTS

THE "Senate's most persistent yahoo," bellowed Tom Wicker in the New York Times.

"As wily and contemptible a character as one could hope to meet," bayed Jonathan Yardley in the Washington Post.

What's got the boys bananas is an amendment by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) to ban federal funding, through the National Endowment for the Arts, for "obscene or indecent materials, including . . . depictions of sadomasochism, homoeroticism, the exploitation of children, or individuals engaged in sex acts."

Whistled through without dissent, the amendment will become law if a conference committee does not peel it off the $10.9 billion Interior bill.

Propulsion for Helms' amendment comes from the now-famous photographic exhibit by the late Robert Mapplethorpe, tossed out of the Corcoran Gallery, which features a little girl with her dress up, one man about to urinate in the mouth of another, an elephantine penis hanging out of a pair of pants, and the "artist's" nude photo of himself, with a bullwhip sticking out of his rectum.

"The artistry is transparent," coos Hank Burchard of the Washington Post: "His eye for the human figure, male and female, is superb, but what is most compelling about his nude studies is the lack of any suggestion that the models are being manipulated."

(Query: If Mapplethorpe's photos are that good, why doesn't the Washington Post publish them?)

Jeffrey Tucker of the Ludwig Von Mises Institute, however, was revolted, especially by "Tie Rack," an icon of the Virgin Mary, desecrated and constructed to hold neckties.

"Mary's hands were pierced with pins and strung between them was a crucifix. Her mouth was bleeding from both sides. And her halo was changed so that it stabbed her on the side of her bleeding neck."

The photos would "be great stuff for any Bible-belt yahoo to wave in front of the folks back home," mocks Burchard. But Swift's "Gulliver's Travels," where the squalid creatures first appear, reveals yahoos to be moral twins of the dead pervert with the bullwhip whose work so enthralled Hank Burchard.

Excuse me, but God bless Jesse Helms!

His retabling of this issue, after the House thought it had sidetracked it with a tiny nick in the NEA budget, is a deliverance.

For the Mapplethorpe exhibit, along with the NEA-underwritten "Piss Christ" (Andreas Serrano's self-titled photo of a crucifix in a vat of his own urine), and the paralysis that has gripped the "arts" crowd as decent folks demand they condemn such filth, is raising America's consciousness to the moral squalor of so much modern art, and the amorality and cowardice of art "critics" whose duty it presumably was to maintain some standards.

This episode is going to do for the "arts community" what the cave-in to the Filthy Speech Movement and student riots did for the academic community in the '60s, i.e., strip them of respect and make them objects of ridicule.

America's self-anointed art critics have forfeited the public's trust

"Art is the signature of man," said G.K. Chesterton; sculptor and art historian H. Reed Armstrong adds: "Whether it be the religious fervor of the Middle Ages, the humanism of the Renaissance or the romanticism of the 19th Century, the visual artist is the medium who most faithfully reflects the spirit of the age.

"'The 'Art' of the 20th Century is a fearful indictment of our culture. It is the fruitless art of 'liberated man,' disunited from the cause of his being . . . The 'artist' of today 'fulfills himself' as does the cancerous cell, in total disregard of the life of the organism which feeds and nourishes it."

T.S. Eliot saw it coming. Culture, he wrote, 50 years ago, is the "incarnation . . . of the religion of a people.

"If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes. Then you must start painfully again, and you cannot put on a new culture ready- made. You must wait for the grass to grow to feed the sheep to give the wool out of which your new coat will be made. You must pass through many centuries of barbarism.

". . . But we can at least try to save something of those goods of which we are the common trustees: the legacy of Greece, Rome and Israel, and the legacy of Europe throughout the last 2,000 years.

"In a world which has seen such material devastation as ours, these spiritual possessions are in imminent peril."

Barbarism! The precise word, as we observe journalistic yahoos hail poor, pathetic Robert Mapplethorpe for having photographed, for their amusement, the degraded acts by which he killed himself.

What's to be done?

We can defund the poisoners of culture, the polluters of art; we can sweep up the debris that passes for modern art outside so many public buildings; we can discredit self-anointed critics who have forfeited our trust. America is not yet Weimar.

"A whole paradigm shift to New Age paganism has taken over the arts," Reed Armstrong wrote me recently. "Conservatives had best become interested in art if they wish to see civilization survive into the 21st Century."

This is all-important: Not simply to cut out the rot, but to seek out, to find, to celebrate the good, the true, the beautiful. But first, tell Jesse to hold the fort; help is on the way.

DIVIDING LINE



PATRICK J. BUCHANAN

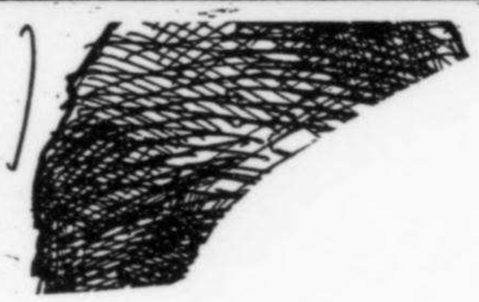
Bush on Auschwitz

1988 DAILY NEWS 49

Bush is unbearably light

46, control: "Hit a lick for peace!" Touring Auschwitz: "Boy, they were big on crematoriums, weren't they?" His helium-filled campaign has been made possible by his proximity to Reagan and the fact that so many early contests have been concentrated where Reagan is particularly popular.

Bush's November vulnerability is re-
vealed in the simple arithm-



Above: fragment of Daily News *column. Bush's comment was made during his tour of Auschwitz on September 29, 1987.*

Opposite top: section from "The Right Wing's Cultural Warrior," Newsweek, *July 2, 1990. (Photos: Nancy Pierce — Black Star; Al Stephenson — Picture Group.)*
Opposite bottom: syndicated column by Patrick J. Buchanan. From the New York Post, *August 2, 1989.*

Saddam Hussein: The Hitler Analogy (Civil Defense Kit, Israel, 1991)



(Photo: Steven Kasher.)

Half-Time



U.S. Athletes at the 1936 Olympic Games. From Die Olympishen Spiele 1936 *(Hamburg: Cigaretten-Bilderdienst, 1936).*

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Advertisement for Cleopatra. Motion Picture News, *November 10, 1917.*
(Courtesy of George Eastman House.)

The Curse of the Pharaoh, or How Cinema Contracted Egyptomania*

ANTONIA LANT

When, in 1945, André Bazin asked himself "What is Cinema?" he proposed in reply that at the origin of all the plastic arts might be a "mummy complex," a fundamental psychical human need to reverse the finality of death.[1] Egyptian embalmment, he argued, was merely the earliest instance of an essential human drive to preserve life by the representation of life, a drive producing statues, paintings, prints, and photographs, and satisfied most recently, and most thoroughly, through the new medium of the cinema. Through his identification of such a transhistorical plight for humanity, under which these widely divergent representational practices could be grouped, and through his own religious convictions, which endowed reality with God-given meaning, Bazin would come to find it incumbent upon cinema to strive for the greatest possible evocation of reality through analogical representation even while recognizing the inevitable failure of the medium ultimately to achieve its goal. Cinematic representation, he argued, would approach reality only asymptotically, never merging with it. The art of cinema would thus inevitably thrive on a "fundamental contradiction which [was] at once unacceptable and necessary": the contradiction between aspiring to become identical with reality but expiring—ceasing to exist as cinema—at the point of its success.[2]

* In writing this paper I have benefited from discussions with Annette Michelson, Tom Gunning, Richard Allen, and Andrew Brower. I would also like to acknowledge the contributions of two audiences to whom I have delivered parts of this paper, at the Society for Cinema Studies Annual Conference, Washington, D.C., 1990, and at the First Annual Screen Studies Conference, Glasgow, 1991, and especially the comments of Richard Abel, Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, and Peter Wollen. The research for this paper was assisted by a Presidential Fellowship from New York University, and by Ava Rose and David Lugowski. The development of this work into a book-length study is being supported by the J. Paul Getty Program.

1. André Bazin, *What is Cinema? Vol. I*, trans. Hugh Gray (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 9.

2. André Bazin, *What is Cinema? Vol. II*, trans. Hugh Gray (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 26.

Bazin came to champion those film stylists whose work demonstrated a "faith in reality" over a "faith in the image"; he deplored German Expressionism, which did "every kind of violence to the plastics of the image," and he also rejected Soviet montage, since it "added" to reality, creating a meaning "not objectively contained in the images themselves but derived exclusively from their juxtaposition," hence imposing an "interpretation of an event on the spectator."[3] He favored instead the work of Jean Renoir, William Wyler, Robert Flaherty, and others whose cinematic language and, especially, whose use of the long take and the shot-in-depth was best able to approximate the nature of reality in its combination of perceptible ambiguities within a spatially and temporally unified whole. Above all, Bazin praised the Italian neorealists and singled out Rossellini and de Sica for their efforts to "transfer to the screen the *continuum* of reality," for their "wonderfully sensitive antennae" and "cinematographic tact."[4]

Bazin's answer to the ontological question, and his consequent arguments for a realist film style, have since been at the heart of debates about the political and aesthetic nature of cinema—debates raging virtually since his death in 1958. The limits of a prescriptive criticism such as Bazin's, which impugns the validity of metaphorical meaning and consequently calls into question such practices as surrealist and abstract cinema as well as Soviet montage, have been forcefully pointed out.[5] Several essays appearing in *Screen* magazine during the 1970s—the peak period of "Bazin-bashing"—criticized Bazin's analysis of the cinema for its naïveté and its teleological form, and rejected his apparent proposal that the projected image simply transmits reality's meaning transparently, an idea stridently at odds with the structural and psychoanalytic understanding of the film text and its spectator that was being developed within the pages of the journal.[6] But for this Manichaean opposition to have been erected, as John Belton has pointed out, it was necessary to flatten out Bazin's far more complex investigation into representation and subjectivity.[7] It required the suppression of Bazin's insight into the fundamental contradiction that is cinema, to which Christian Metz had readily proclaimed himself indebted; for Metz's formulation in "The Impression of Reality in the Cinema" that "the secret of film is that it is able to leave a high degree of reality *in its images,* which are, nevertheless, still perceived as images" harkens back to Bazin.[8]

3. Bazin, *What is Cinema? Vol. I*, pp. 24, 25, 26.
4. Bazin, *What is Cinema? Vol. I*, p. 37, and *What is Cinema? Vol. II*, p. 32.
5. Annette Michelson, "Review of *What is Cinema?*" *Artforum* (Summer 1968), pp. 67–71.
6. See, for example, Colin McCabe, "Theory and Film: Principles of Realism and Pleasure," *Screen* 17 (Autumn 1976). "Bazin-bashing" is Philip Rosen's phrase, from his essay "History of Image, Image of History: Subject and Ontology in Bazin," *Wide Angle,* vol. 9, no. 4 (1987), pp. 7–34.
7. John Belton, "Bazin is Dead! Long Live Bazin!" *Wide Angle*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1987), pp. 74–81.
8. Christian Metz, *Film Language*, trans. Michael Taylor (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 14.

Bazin's work has survived the vicissitudes of disputation and praise to find a central place in film theory and history. Perhaps the most recent evidence of this is the issue of *Wide Angle* commemorating the thirtieth anniversary of Bazin's death, which is comprised of five new essays that both rehabilitate and expand on the Bazinian base.[9] There Philip Rosen reads Bazin's ideas as symptomatic of their intellectual and historical moment, arguing that while Bazin may have stressed the importance of spatial continuity in cinematic representation, temporal continuity is as significant, if not more so, if we are to understand the direction of and pressures on his writing.[10] Even the indexical quality of the cinematographic image, Rosen argues, and Bazin's explication of the process of image-making as being equivalent to forming a death mask, a mold, a decal, has a fundamentally temporal character, inevitably implying a pastness, a past lost despite the presence of the image. The apparently eternal human obsession with overcoming death, the mummy complex, is also then, paradoxically, a temporal or, rather, historical product, a product of the nineteenth century, with its growing industrial challenges to previous perceptions and classifications of time.

I also return to Bazin's most famous trope, the mummy complex, but to a different end, for what has not been remarked as yet is that Bazin's explanation of cinema's origins and power in terms of a relation to Egypt (and particularly the ancient civilization) is not unique. We may, in fact, trace the descent of his essay from a plethora of earlier printed, painted, architectural, and filmic texts that infuse the cinema with a pharaonic past or that associate it with an exotic though distant Arabian present. The alliance between optically novel and illusory forms of representation and ideas about Egypt precedes even the invention of cinema. It is detectable at least since the French Revolution and persists throughout the nineteenth century—across lantern shows, panoramas, dioramas, photographs, and photographic criticism, and on into the emerging sphere of cinema itself. Further, the intersection between Egyptianate material and prefilmic and filmic culture has both a physical and conceptual component: projected moving images and traces of Egypt can and do inhabit the same tangible architectural space; but there is also a magnetism between conceptual accounts of the nature of entertainment by projected light and Egypt—an imaginative association pulling together the ancient culture and modern spectacular invention.

While the historical material accumulated in this essay could be seen to be arranged and acting teleologically, one representation handing on the Egyptophilic baton to the next until it infects the cinema and, ultimately, Bazin, this would be to underestimate the density and complexity of the objects and con-

9. *Wide Angle*, vol. 9, no. 4 (1987).
10. Rosen, "History of Image, Image of History."

cepts at hand. There was an association between the blackened enclosure of silent cinema and that of the Egyptian tomb, both in theoretical texts and in the use of Egyptianate architectural style for auditoriums: a perception of cinema as a necropolis, its projections mysterious and cursed, issuing a warning to spectators;[11] an understanding of cinema as a silent world that speaks through a pictorial language, as hieroglyphics revealed by light, and a consequent ennobling of the newest visual medium through alignment with some of the oldest word-images; a noted parallel between mummification as preservation for a life beyond life and the ghostliness of cinematic images, whose production and arrangement also manifest a power over the ordering and representation of time; a link between the chemistry of mummification and that of film development and printing; an alliance between modern sexuality, particularly female screen sexuality, and myths surrounding the sphinx and its silent unreadability; and lastly, an uncanny parallel between archaeologists' descriptions of their discoveries of tombs and the effects and conditions of film projection. In these accounts Egypt parallels cinema in serving as a portal to the revelation of mystery and the fantastic. Howard Carter inevitably (and suggestively) invokes the onset of cinema when he writes of puncturing the entrance to Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb with "a hole large enough to insert an electric torch" and of "its light reveal[ing] an astonishing sight."[12] He dramatizes the moment when, the wall pierced, a beam of light penetrates the darkness, falling directly onto the dazzling object—in his case "what to all appearance was a solid wall of gold."[13]

The sheer extent of the evidence of overlap between Victorian visions of Egypt and early motion picture culture impels us to ask what function the aura of Egypt served in cinema's beginnings that it took root there with such tenacity. What did it enable contemporaries to grasp? For in all the ways I have sketched above, it seems that Egypt, and what it came to mean in the century between Champollion's unlocking of the Rosetta stone in 1822 and the coming of sound to cinema in the late 1920s, provided a means of explaining, legitimating, but above all conceptualizing the new motion picture medium. It became central to debates over the nature of cinema itself, and it was this legacy to which Bazin, inevitably, referred.

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11. Maxim Gorky, "A Review of the Lumière Program at Nizhni-Novgorod," 1896, reprinted in translation in Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1960).
12. Howard Carter, quoted in Shirley Glubok, *Discovering Tut-ankh-Amen's Tomb*, abridged and adapted from Howard Carter and A. C. Mace, *The Tomb of Tut-ankh-Amen* (New York: Macmillan, 1968), p. 71.
13. Ibid.

To begin to make the case that Western notions of Egypt shared an intellectual and physical arena with cinema, we could do worse than to reexamine Etienne Gaspard Robertson's *Fantasmagorie*, that ghoulish and popular entertainment of immediately postrevolutionary France. Painter, teacher of physics, and pioneer balloonist, Robertson staged his illusions in pitch blackness in a disused chapel (replete with crumbling tombs) in the vicinity of an old Parisian Capuchin monastery.[14] By the light of concealed magic lanterns, Robertson shone glass slides painted with images onto columns of smoke or cambric screens, moving the slides forward and back in relation to the receiving surfaces so as to vary the scales of the projected shapes. On the far side of the screen (or smoke) his audiences saw visages of the recently deceased Robespierre, Marat, and Danton (among others) materialize in the dust. Contemporary accounts record audiences shuddering and cowering before the phantasms, whose ethereality was intensified by Robertson's blackening of the majority of the slide in order to preclude any projection of its straight edges.[15] His shows centered on satanic and macabre topics, topics of haunting, loss, and the past. Occasionally they evoked the context of Egyptological archaeology, as in one scenario about "A Grave Digger" who, "with a lantern, searches for treasure in an abandoned temple; he opens a tomb, and finds a skeleton, whose head is still ornamented with a jewel; at the moment when he attempts to remove this, the corpse makes a movement and opens its mouth; the grave digger falls dead with terror. A rat was lodged in its skull."[16] Other dramas prefigured the subject matter of early trick films, as in "A Mad Woman" who is "little by little illuminated from behind, and ends by being metamorphosed into a skeleton"; such crossings of the boundary between death and life were to be staged again and again in Méliès's films and in *The Haunted Curiosity Shop*, an R. W. Paul trick film discussed below.[17]

In his *Mémoires*, published in 1830, Robertson remembered the necromancy in Simmelesque terms—the *Fantasmagorie* as a haven from crowded Paris, a passage into the hush and deathliness of the mausoleum. He recalled that he compelled patrons to pass through "several detours appropriate to eliminate impressions still lingering from the profane noise of a great city" before per-

14. Erik Barnouw, *The Magician and the Cinema* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 19. There is some dispute as to when Robertson's *Fantasmagorie* began, but all agree that it was certainly underway by 1799. See X. Theodore Barber, "Phantasmagorical Wonders: The Magic Lantern Show in Nineteenth Century America," *Film History* 3 (1989), p. 85n.
15. Barber, "Phantasmagorical Wonders," p. 76.
16. Etienne Gaspard Robertson, *Mémoires Récréatifs, Scientifiques et Anecdotiques d'un Physicien-aéronaute*, published in 1830, republished by Langres: Café-Clima Editeurs, 1985, and quoted in David Robinson, "Robinson on Robertson," *New Magic Lantern Journal*, vol. 4, nos. 1–3 (1986), p. 10. Translated by Robinson.
17. Ibid., p. 9.

mitting them to cross "the paved cloisters of the ancient convent, decorated with fantastic paintings" and to arrive "before a door of antique form, covered with hieroglyphics and seeming to announce the entrance to the mysteries of Isis." Inside was "a somber place, hung with black, weakly illuminated by a sepulchral lamp . . . whose purpose [was] announced only by some gloomy images; [the] profound calm, an absolute silence, a sudden isolation on coming from a bustling street, were like preludes of an ideal world."[18] For Robertson, the physical presence of the antique gate presages the onset of another world. The entering ceremony, passing down passages and across courtyards and ultimately through the pharaonic door, provides a spatial separation between the present of Paris and the past of ghostliness, the mysteries of Isis.[19] The spatiotemporal transition into an "ideal world" is amplified but also embodied in the conjunction of the entertainment with Egypt. Robertson understood the *Fantasmagorie*—a protocinematic experience in that it depended on projected, moving images—in terms of entering the architectural and cultural space of the Nile necropolis; the Capuchin setting of ancient tombs and the darkness of the interior, insulated from the Paris beyond, had an Egyptianizing effect on the performance enclosure, which was made concrete in the hieroglyphically embellished gate and enhanced through the quality of temporal revisitation that ghosts, mummies, and reproduced images all possess.

Versions of Robertson's show spread through Europe and America, as Ted Barber has documented.[20] Its Egyptian associations were augmented when, in late 1801, the anglicized *Phantasmagoria* was transferred by the magician Paul de Philipsthal to London, where it ran for two years at the Lyceum on the Strand.[21] The poster advertising the show's "Optical Illusions and Mechanical Pieces of Art" promised to "introduce the Phantoms or Apparitions of the DEAD or ABSENT, in a way more illusive than has ever been offered to the Eye in a public Theatre," but this claim was also accompanied by a cautionary note: "To prevent mistakes, the public are required to notice, that the *Phantasmagoria* is on the left-hand, on the ground floor, and the *AEGYPTIANA* on the right-hand, up stairs."[22] The imaginary and physical alliances with Egypt that Robertson made are here reinforced by the suggestion that two concurrently running shows may be confused—the *Aegyptiana* was a series of "eighteen scenic

18. Ibid., p. 6.
19. It is worth noting here that Cecil B. DeMille's *Cleopatra* of 1934, set mostly in Egypt, opens and closes with the visual motif of entering and leaving a granite tomb. The film's first image is of two stones parting to reveal the action beyond. The end of the film mirrors this movement, with the stones rejoining and shutting out the spectacle.
20. Barber, "Phantasmagorical Wonders."
21. Barnouw, *The Magician and the Cinema*, p. 21.
22. Ibid., p. 23. A Boston showing of the *Phantasmagoria* in 1804 included an Egyptian Pygmy Idol in the show, which changed into a human skull. See Barber, "Phantasmagorical Wonders."

pictures" based on prints in Dominique Vivant Denon's brand-new book, *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt*, a prelude to his *Description of Egypt* (1809–22).[23]

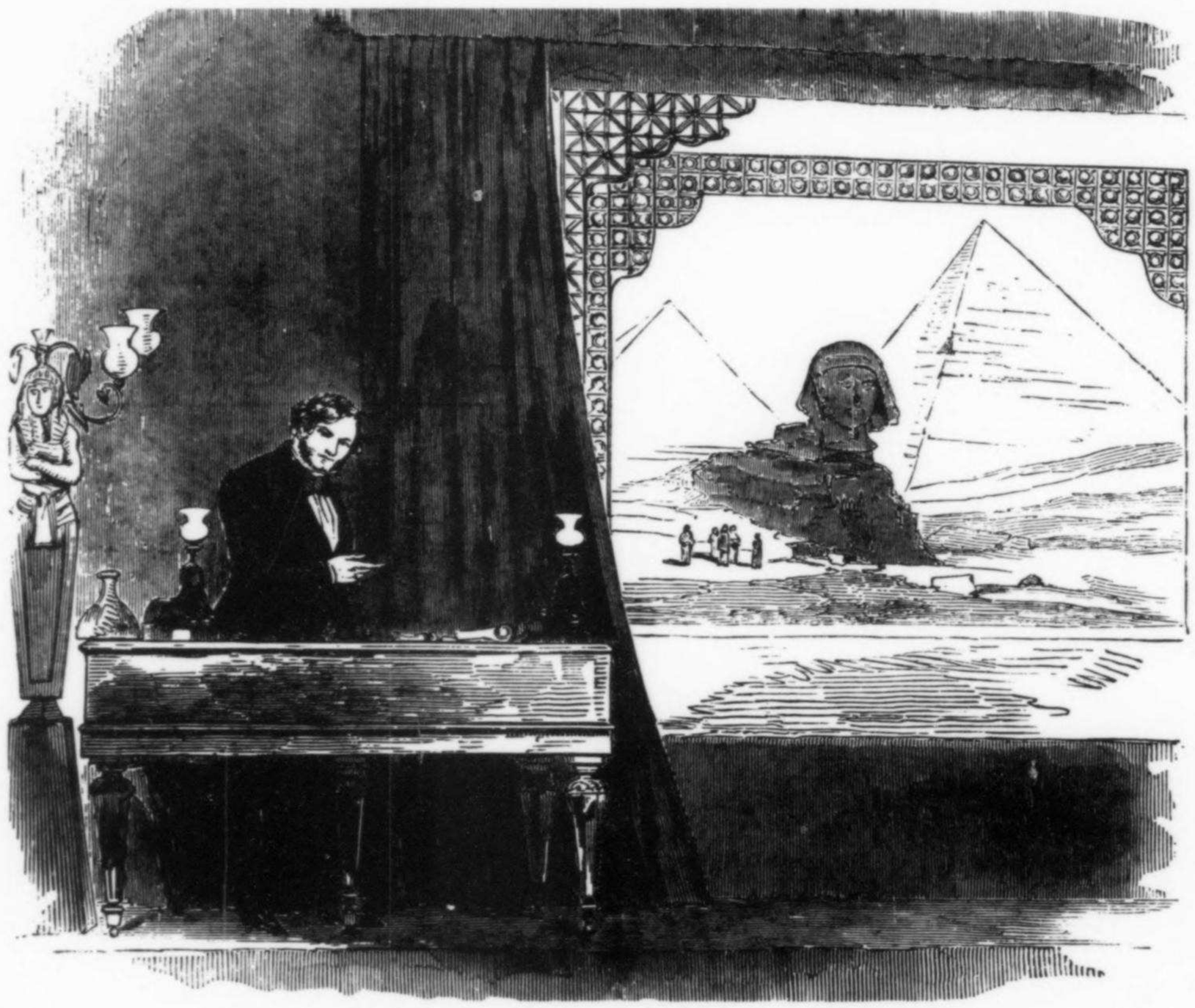
Robertson, Philipsthal, and other purveyors of magic lantern shows persistently associated the "ideal world" of projected images with death and bereavement, with the "dead or absent" of Philipsthal's poster. Far from encountering levity and happiness, an effect now commonly attributed to the cinema of Hollywood's studio era, Robertson likened the experience of *his* viewers to that of a woman who had lost her love and who "after a thousand detours" had arrived in the middle of the pyramids or catacombs. "There, surrounded by the inmates of death, alone with the night and her imagination, she awaits the apparition of the object of her love."[24] He called his shows "séances," affirming again the rehearsal of or meeting with death offered to his spectators, a pleasure (or need) understood by both Gorky and Kracauer in their later accounts of the nature of cinema.[25] Here begins the affinity between ideas about ancient Egypt, with its elaborate culture of death, and an entertainment form produced out of the dark—dependent on it, its methods concealed, and its substance intangible, contained in a crypt entered through the gate of the "priests of Memphis."[26] The crepuscular world of the *Fantasmagorie*, both strangely removed from and linked to daily experience, could be explained by its contiguous existence with the structures, motifs, and names of the pharaohs.

The concatenation of Egypt with ancestral cinematic forms—panoramas, dioramas, and lantern shows—intensified in Britain with the opening of the overland trade route to India in the 1840s, which crossed over Egyptian soil. The "first feature-length, British-made panoramic river trip" was a transparent panorama of the Nile, opening in London at the appropriately named Egyptian Hall on July 16, 1849.[27] This panorama had two halves, one the journey upstream of the west bank, the other downstream of the east—and a tableau of the torchlit interior of Abu Simbel was projected at the halfway point. A second panorama, the "Overland Route to India," began at the Gallery of Illustration, Regent Street, in April 1850 and drew a quarter of a million customers before it closed. It consisted of a moving middle section for the overland part of the route, but still images of Gilbraltar and Malta at the outset and Ceylon and

23. Richard D. Altick, *The Shows of London* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1978), p. 199.
24. Robinson, "Robinson on Robertson," p. 6.
25. A recurring motif of Kracauer's post-1940, post-Holocaust notebooks, as presented by Miriam Hansen in her paper "Kracauer's 'Kermesse Funèbre': *Theory of Film*, Marseilles, 1940," given for the Columbia Seminar, Museum of Modern Art, March 28, 1990. Gorky, "A Review of the Lumière Program."
26. Robinson, "Robinson on Robertson, " p. 8.
27. Altick, *The Shows of London*, p. 206. The Egyptian Hall is illustrated in Brian M. Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile: Tomb Robbers, Tourists, and Archaeologists in Egypt* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975), p. 239.

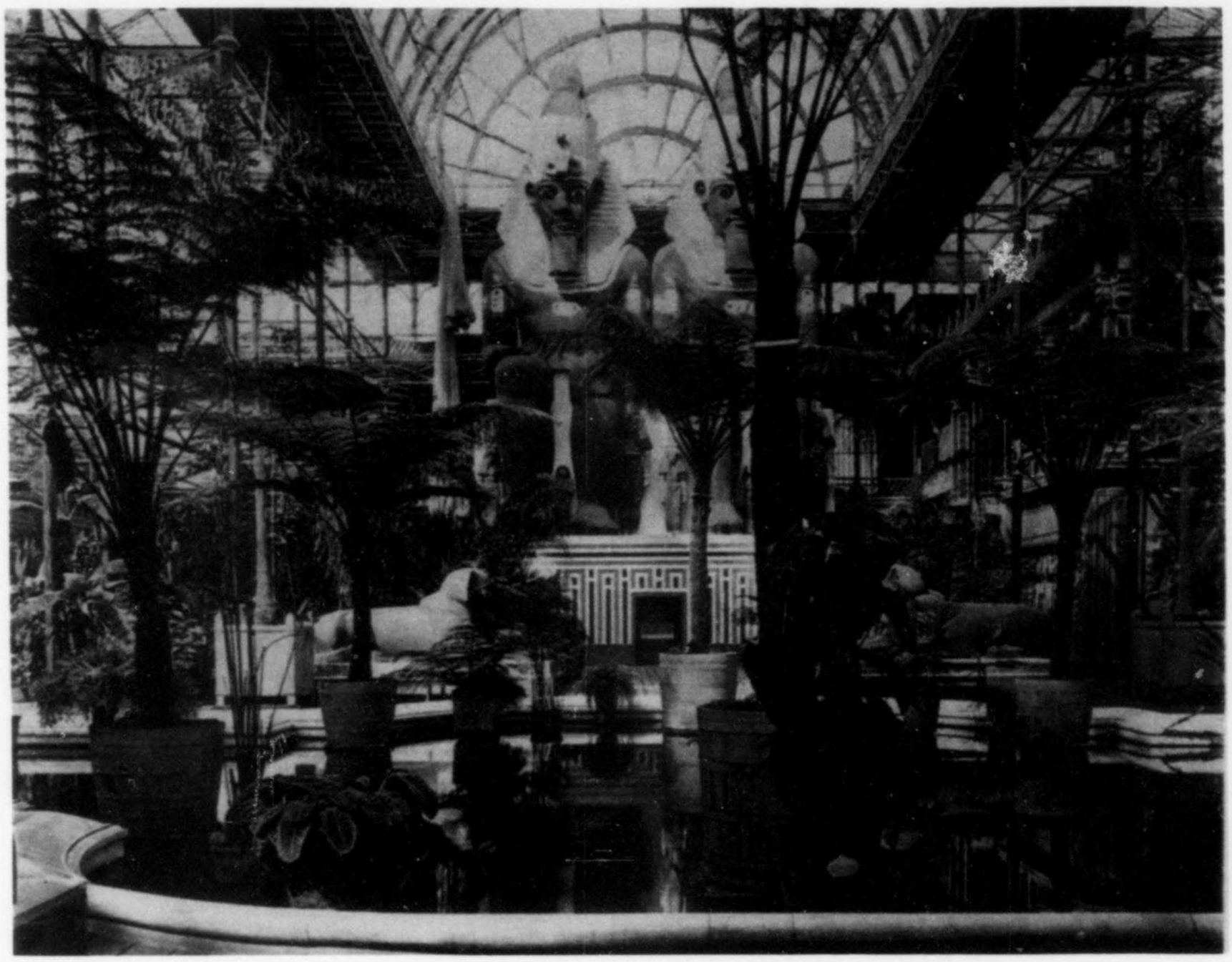


Engraving of the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, London. c. 1821.
(Courtesy of the British Museum.)



MR. ALBERT SMITH'S ENTERTAINMENT—"THE OVERLAND MAIL," AT WILLIS'S ROOMS.

"The Overland Mail" Panorama, With Mr. Albert Smith Commenting.
The Illustrated London News, *June 8, 1850.*
(Courtesy of the Olin Library, Cornell University.)



Calcutta at the end; a traveling painted scene was unwound to illustrate the journey from Cairo to Suez.[28]

This central part of the route—Alexandria, Cairo, Suez—rapidly became the most popular subject of the new *touring* panoramas. "The Overland Mail," also of 1850, was enhanced by the presence of its designer, Albert Smith, as an expert commentator and by musical accompaniment.[29] Smith did not use projected slides, but lighting effects were included in the show by deploying cutouts and illuminated candles. After opening at the Egyptian Hall, it visited forty-eight English municipal centers in two months during the fall of 1851 before closing. Three years later, when the Crystal Palace was moved to Sydenham from Hyde Park (after the Great Exhibition of 1851), one of the main displays incorporated full-scale plaster casts of two figures from the temple of Ramses at Abu Simbel, with a sphinx avenue extending before them. The casts were melted to twisted fragments in the Crystal Palace fire of 1938, but their likenesses survive in Delamotte's beautiful photographs.[30] Here, the apogee of

28. Patrick Conner, ed., *The Inspiration of Egypt: The Influence on British Artists, Travellers and Designers, 1700–1900* (Brighton: Brighton Borough Council, 1983), p. 147.
29. Ibid. Albert Smith's entertainment is illustrated on p. 146.
30. One of Philip Delamotte's photographs of the Colossi of Abu Simbel, 1854, published in the *Sale Catalogue of the Crystal Palace*, November 28, 1911, is cited and illustrated in Conner, *The Inspiration of Egypt*, pp. 92–93.

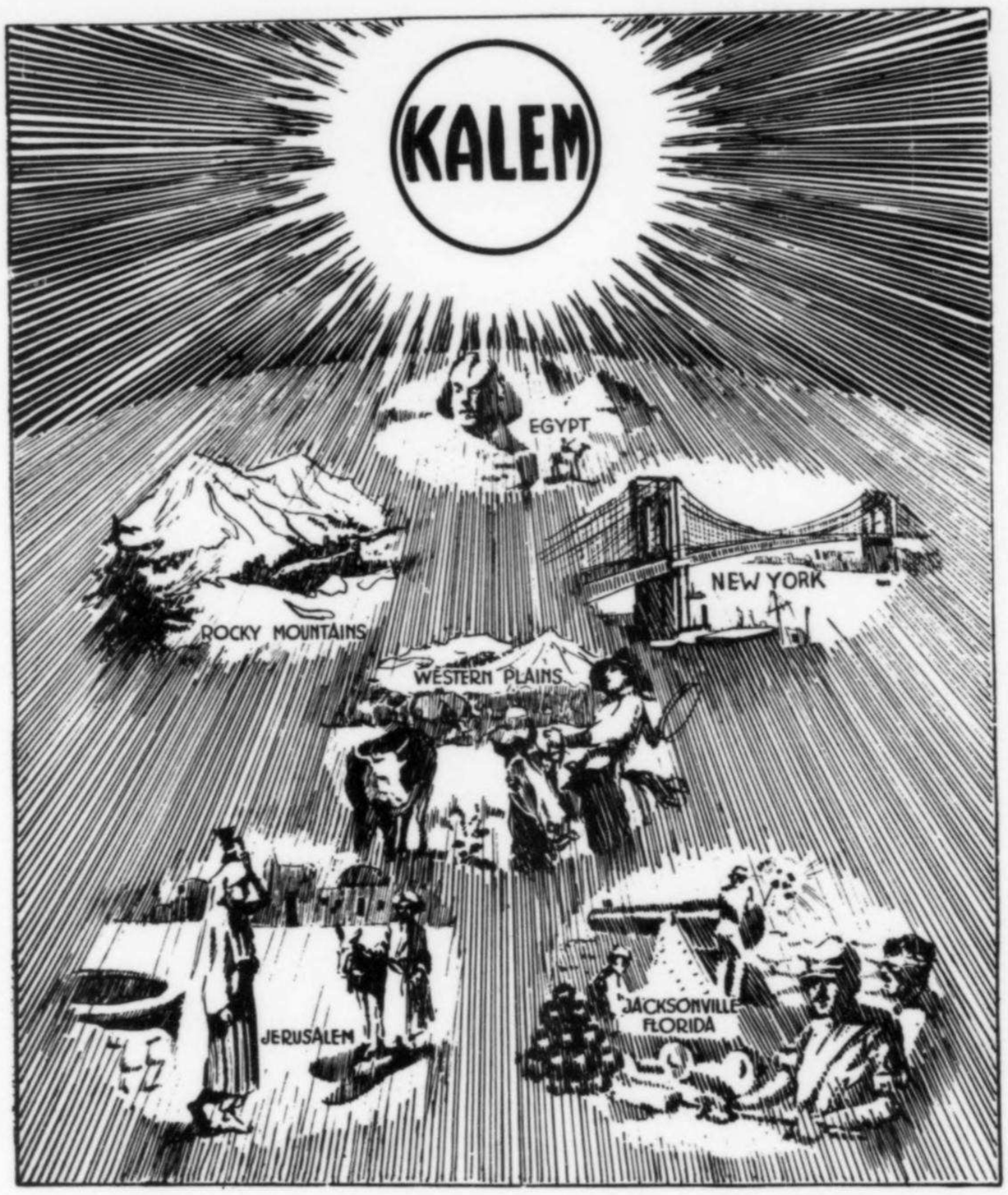
Philip Delamotte's 1854 Photograph of the Plaster Colossi of Abu Simbel Installed at the Crystal Palace, Sydenham.

Victorian architectural achievement—the highly modern glass and iron conservatory—encases reproductions of some of the world's oldest and largest sculptures. They are fully integrated into the Victorian exhibition space, with British greenhouse technology surrounding the statues with a lush tropical vegetation that the Upper Nile habitat lacks.

Clearly the burgeoning of images of Egypt is part of the colonialist project that involved mapping and photographing, claiming both territory and subjects by reproducing them in visual form—Delamotte's photographs incorporate Egypt and the tropics into urban Britain. These are habits well-noted as defining characteristics of nineteenth-century European politics and culture, spurred by imperialism and accompanied by the rise of the classifying disciplines of anthropology, geography, archaeology, ethnography, and so on.[31] The linkages between Egyptology and the origins of cinema, which are part and parcel of these imperialist obsessions, are expressed through the very existence of the photographic image and through the writings of early filmmakers and critics, who themselves perceived (and celebrated) the colonizing powers of cinema. Photographic images taken (an operative word) outside Europe and exhibited within Europe functioned as symbols for taking possession and could thereby assuage the "irresistible desire for spaces to conquer."[32] An article from 1906 entitled "The Grand Tour" described the reaching of far-off lands via cinema as a contracted and willfully rearranged geography: "You can have them [other places] in the moving pictures, by which, literally, distance is annihilated and, in the words of Puck in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, you may 'put a girdle round the earth' in 40 minutes."[33] The members of the Kalem Company, dubbing themselves "The International Producers" on the strength of their far-flung location shoots—in Ireland, Egypt, and the Holy Land—encapsulated the aggrandizing thrust of their work through a promotional image of a globe on which their company literally shone. The advertisement was accompanied by the caption: "the Kalem lens is turned upon all parts of the world."[34]

But even viewed from this broader, colonialist perspective, Egypt still carries a particular signifying weight. It is not simply any old place for which any number of other Others—Oriental, non-Western countries—could have been substituted. While the intersection of "things Egyptian" with cinema is

31. See, for example, Jean-Louis Comolli, "Machines of the Visible," in *The Cinematic Apparatus*, ed. Teresa de Lauretis and Stephen Heath (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1980), pp. 121–42, and the writings of Michel Foucault, especially *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979).
32. Riciotto Canudo, "The Birth of a Sixth Art" [1911], in Richard Abel, *French Film Theory and Criticism, Vol. 1: 1907–1929, A History/Anthology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 60.
33. "The Grand Tour," *Views and Films Index* (*Film Index/Films Publishing Co.* after September 19, 1908), no. 2 (May 5, 1906), p. 6.
34. *Kalem Kalendar*, June 15, 1912, p. 8.



The International Producers

THE Kalem lens is turned upon all parts of the world and the resultant feature films represent the highest achievement in photographic and dramatic art.

certainly part of the larger Western effort to girdle the earth, it demands a more careful and flexible explanation than that allowed for by a simple binary formulation of the East as the Other, which would buttress the West's understanding of itself. This could not explain why it was Egypt—both Arabic and ancient—rather than India or China, for instance, that had a special affiliation with spectacle, with the moving panoramic image, and ultimately with the cinema in the Victorian psyche. It could not explain why it was the overland section, the one on Egyptian soil, that moved in the panorama of the "Overland Route to India" of 1850, or why the sequence along the Suez Canal in *A Policeman's Tour of the World* (Pathé, 1906) is the most cinematically adventurous of the entire film because of its inclusion of several intercut traveling shots and

Advertisement in the Kalem Kalendar, *June 15, 1912.*
(Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.)

binocular mask shots (the only moving and masked shots in the film) and its resultant instantiating of the spectator as "master tourist."[35] Further, in Kalem's globe advertisement, why is it Egypt that takes the closest and most privileged position in relation to the company's sun/lens, represented there by a Shakespearean-looking sphinx, a pyramid, and a camel, and presiding over five other locations at which Kalem had studios or had shot films: New York, the Rocky Mountains, the Western Plains, Jerusalem, and Jacksonville, Florida?

I have already suggested that cinema's overlap with Egypt is bound to discourses on death, on preservation, on silence, and on light projection, all resonant with pharaonic import via recent Victorian excavation and exhibition. But the two fields are also bound through the contemporary politics and economics of Egypt, particularly as they pertained to imperial ambition and questions of national and racial identity. Egypt was not only an idea but a place—and the tension between these two aspects had its own repercussions for the cinema. Egypt could not be held in place simply as an Other, for it served as the *entry point* to the East, the "Gateway to India" for Europe, and particularly for Britain; it signified a foothold, a staging point. The use of Egyptianate elements in cinema design may thus be feeding precisely on this transitional aura, on this power to signify a passage to a new scene, a promise of changing experience. (Here, in part, is the significance of *The Policeman's* elaborate Suez Canal shots.) That Egypt was both a Christian and Moslem country, with a history of pharaonic religions as well, contributed to its status as a point of interchange between Europe and Africa, the Middle East, and beyond. Richard White writes of this "ambiguity" of Egypt along similar lines, noting that while it was "indisputably part of the Orient, the Orient being less a place in the East than part of a discourse in the West," it was not easily placed within Africa or Asia, or within the East or the West.[36] This quality of undecidability about Egypt (for the West) also had explanatory power for cinema, for it could nourish expressions of uncertainty about the nature of the new motion picture medium itself. But in order to support this claim it is first necessary to lay out in a more concrete way how, and then why, cinema "contracted" Egyptomania.

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The Egyptian Hall was erected in Piccadilly in 1812, several decades before the overland panoramas showed there. Lessee and showman William Bullock titled it "The London Museum of Natural History" for exhibiting "curiosities"

35. Philip Rosen, "Disjunction and Ideology in a Preclassical Film: *A Policeman's Tour of the World*," *Wide Angle* 12 (July 1990) p. 24.
36. Richard White, "Sun, Sand and Syphilis: Australian Soldiers and the Orient, Egypt 1914," *Australian Cultural History* 9 (1990), p. 50. I thank Ian Craven for drawing my attention to this article.

of all kinds—including the spoils of Egyptology.[37] (Indeed, one of the biggest attractions of 1804, when Bullock's museum was still in Liverpool, had been the display of an Egyptian mummy that had been brought from Egypt by Napoleon's fleet and then captured by an English privateer. Perhaps the pull of this object, a trophy of Anglo-French rivalry over Egypt, encouraged Bullock to encase his entire entertainment in the Egyptianate style when he moved to London.)[38] Colossal figures of Isis and Osiris decorated the building's entrance. Bullock's personal passion was stuffing birds, and in 1817 he published a book, "Concise and Easy Method of Preserving Objects of Natural History," effectively modernizing, or perhaps disguising, mummification as taxidermy.[39] In 1821, under his auspices, the Egyptian Hall came to house Giovanni Battista Belzoni's vast array of Egyptian antique booty; the mummies, papyri, and statues he had amassed from his Nile sojourns attracted a crowd so huge that nineteen hundred people paid half a crown each to visit the hall on the first day, and it stayed open for a year.[40]

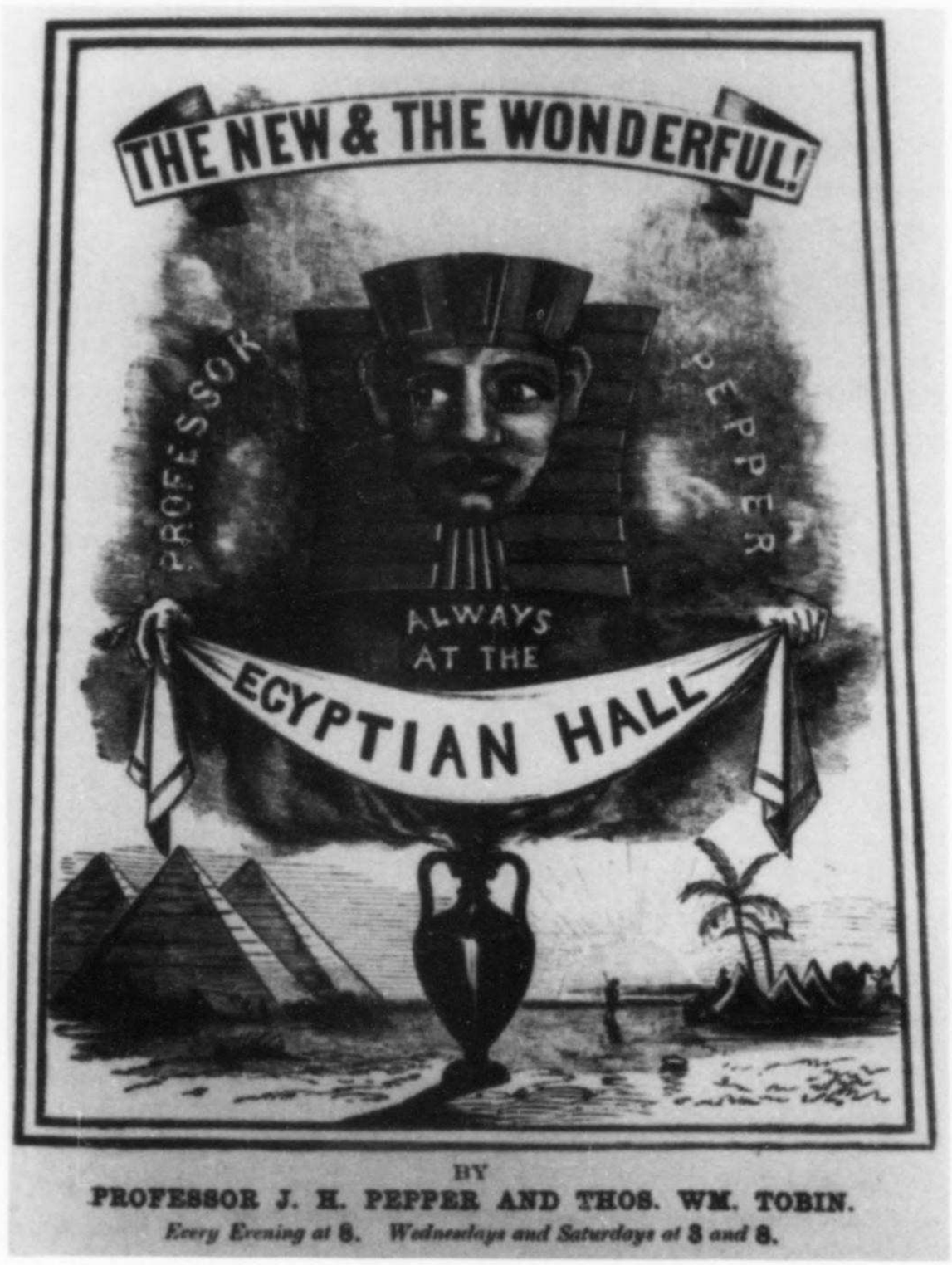
The hall changed ownership several times through the nineteenth century but continued to present a wide assortment of public entertainments, from Laplanders with live reindeer to Tom Thumb, Géricault's *Raft of the Medusa*, Napoleon's captured carriage, stuffed animals in a jungle setting, Siamese twins, and, in 1865, ventriloquist Colonel Stodare's speaking head, called "The Sphinx."[41] Albert Smith reported finding Egyptian mummies and other "accumulated rubbish" in the hall's cellars when working there in the early 1850s;[42] in the 1860s and '70s several conjurers (Hermann, Dr. Lynn, and the Fakir of Ooloo) entertained with Egyptian magic, and a poster campaign for Professor Pepper's performances boasted: "The New and the Wonderful! Always at the Egyptian Hall."[43] By the turn of the century, when the hall was operated by magician Nevil Maskelyne, with David Devant as a partner, visitors (including filmmakers Georges Méliès and Emile Cohl) still flocked to curiosity and magic shows, but they were also attracted by another spectacle: the Egyptian Hall had become a cinema on March 19, 1896, when it began presenting Edison and

37. William Bullock, *A Companion to the London Museum and Pantherion, containing a brief description of upward of 1500 natural and foreign curiosities, antiquities and productions of the fine arts, now open for public inspection in the Egyptian Temple* (1813), p. 1. Catalog consulted at the National Art Library, London.
38. Ibid., p. 104.
39. Bullock had the dubious honor of owning the last great auk shot in England, a flightless bird now extinct. One should remember this Victorian passion for wax museums and glass cases of stuffed birds in the context of the origins of cinema.
40. Altick, *The Shows of London*, p. 245, and Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, p. 240.
41. Exhibition references from Egyptian Hall Catalog Index, National Art Library, London. Bullock sold his interest in the Egyptian Hall in 1826–27.
42. *The Times*, September 18, 1854, quoted in Altick, *The Shows of London*, p. 250.
43. Illustrated in Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, p. 241.

R. W. Paul films—only the second venue (by a few weeks) for films in England.[44] By now a billboard affixed to the outside of the building promoted "Improved Animated Photographs" and dubbed the hall "England's Home of Mystery."

By the mid-1890s, then, popularized Egyptology and the infant cinema were rubbing shoulders under the same roof, and through both the rhetoric of advertisement and their physical juxtaposition, Egyptology's version of Egypt was being fed into the understanding of the cinematic experience. The cinema's dark world of projected, mute images, realized in a newly invented social

44. John Barnes, *The Beginnings of the Cinema in England* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1976), p. 117. Photograph of the Egyptian Hall is illustrated in Fagan, *The Rape of the Nile*, p. 341. The Egyptian Hall was demolished in 1904 when Piccadilly was widened. A new building named the Egyptian Hall replaced the previous one, but it is quite unlike it in design. It is, however, marked by a commemorative plaque to Maskeleyne and Devant, installed by the Magic Circle, London. I am grateful to Donald Crafton for the information that Cohl visited the Egyptian Hall, which he noted as "L'Egyptien" in his unpublished diaries.



Advertisement for Professor Pepper's Show at the Egyptian Hall, London. c. 1865. (Courtesy of the Hulton Picture Library, London.)



space—disjunct from reality, but part of it—was given meaning through its contiguity with the silent relics of ancient Egypt, sometimes actually present, but always permanently invoked by the building's imposing facade. The cohabitation of mummies and cinema was realized.

But Egypt played midwife to film's birth in a further sense: as subject matter. It was present in fictional scenes, including stagings of both modern and historical events, in trick films, and as actuality footage, shot on location.[45] At least four film companies sent crews to Egypt before the First World War: the Lumière Brothers, Edison Company, Pathé, and Kalem Film Company.[46]

45. Actuality films included Pathé's *Boat on the Nile* (1905), *From Cairo to the Pyramids* (1905), *A Corner of Ancient Egypt* (1910), and Urban's *Lord Kitchener in Egypt* (Urban Movie Chats, 1911–14).

46. In 1903, cameraman A. C. Abadie, working for the Edison Company, traveled to the Middle East and Europe for three months, completing many films in Egypt, including: *Egyptian Fakir with a Dancing Monkey*; *Panoramic View of an Egyptian Cattle Market*; *Primitive Irrigation in Egypt*; *Going to Market, Luxor, Egypt*; *Excavating Scene at the Pyramids of Sakkarah*; and *Tourists on Donkeys at the Pyramids of Sakarrah*. The Kalem films included: *A Prisoner of the Harem*; *Egyptian Sports*; *Egypt the Mysterious*; *Captured by Bedouins*; *An Arabian Tragedy*; *Ancient Temples in Egypt*; *Egypt, as It Was in the Time of Moses*; *A Tragedy of the Desert*; *Winning a Widow*; and *How Photoplays are Made in Egypt* (released as *Making Photoplays in Egypt*). See Robert S. Birchard, "Kalem Company, Manufacturers of Moving Picture Films," *American Cinematographer* 65 (August/September 1984), pp. 34–38.

Photograph of the Egyptian Hall, Piccadilly, London. c. 1898. (Courtesy of the Hulton Picture Library, London.)



Five versions of *Cleopatra* were filmed between 1908 and 1918 alone, in 1908, 1909, 1913, 1917, and 1918, well before the more famous sound versions by DeMille and Manciewicz in 1934 and 1963, respectively. Filmed Bible stories with Egyptian settings included *La Vie de Moise* (Pathé, 1906), *The Prodigal Son* (Pathé, 1909), *The Life of Moses* (Vitagraph, 1909–10), and *I Maccabei* (Itala, 1911). "The Flight into Egypt," a core element of Christ's life story, was signified by the sphinx against which Mary and child rest in *La Vie et La Passion du Christ* (Pathé, 1902–5). With its very large but human features, the sphinx was obviously a painted flat, but by Kalem's *From the Manger to the Cross* (1912) and *La Vie et La Passion de Notre Seigneur Jésus-Christ* (Pathé, 1913) location shooting had secured a more realistic image of those very monuments old enough to have witnessed the flight itself. The sphinx and pyramids, as disseminated by photography, had become bearers of the authenticity of the story on account of their age.

Tales of Egypt also boosted exploration of cinema's particular capacity to reproduce an object "freed from the conditions of time and space that govern

Publicity Artwork for The Dust of Egypt. *1915.*
(Courtesy of the New York Public Library.)

it," in Bazin's words.[47] Tales of awakening mummies and magical amulets facilitated, even gave form to, cinema's power to rearrange time and space, as well as providing resonances with death. It is partly for these reasons that mummy films proliferated in America: there were two of *The Egyptian Mummy* (1913 and 1914); two of just *The Mummy* (1911 and 1914); *The Egyptian Mystery* (1909); *An Egyptian Princess* (1914); *The Mummy and the Cowpunchers* (1912); *The Mummy and the Hummingbird* (1915); and so on. *The Egyptian Mystery* (Edison, 1909) told the story of a pendant found in an ancient Egyptian tomb that would cause anything its wearer's hands rested upon to disappear.[48] After a series of vanishings, accomplished with ease through cinematography, resolution comes when an iceman, the last owner of the charm, touches his reflection, and he, the reflection, and the pendant all vanish together, literally blacking out the fiction, with Egypt providing the logic for cinema's magic. In *The Mummy* (Thanhouser, 1911), contact with a live household electric wire brings a mummy accidentally to life. The resulting "visitor from the distant past," a dancing Egyptian princess, eventually marries her owner—a New York science professor and amateur Egyptologist—"in spite of the fact that there is a difference of several thousand years in their ages."[49] Here again the power of the modern inventions of electricity and cinema can be expressed through Egypt, which also furnishes the titillating story of a younger man's love for an older woman. *The Dust of Egypt* (Vitagraph, 1915) starts in the past, on the banks of the Nile, where a princess drinks a potion and wakes up in present-day Manhattan by hatching from a mummy case.[50] The film, and its publicity, dramatize the contrast between twentieth-century and ancient ways, but to the former's advantage: "Imagine the wondrous and peculiar actions of an individual who has lived three thousand years ago, planted in the heart of New York in the present era." It promises comedy produced out of the princess's use of "telephone, matches, cigars, and other conveniences of modern times."[51]

One of the first of the mummy series may be *The Haunted Curiosity Shop*, directed by the British magician Walter Booth in 1901, and produced by R. W. Paul, who had provided the projectors, his second Theatrographs, for the Egyptian Hall shows in 1896.[52] *The Haunted Curiosity Shop* is a one-scene trick

47. Bazin, *What is Cinema? Vol. 1*, p. 14.
48. The film is described in *Moving Picture World*, July 10, 1909, p. 61.
49. *The Mummy* is reviewed in *Motion Picture World*, vol. 8, no. 10, March 11, 1911, p. 546.
50. *Vitagraph Bulletin*, 1915, p. 42.
51. Publicity material, *Dust of Egypt* clippings file, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts. I thank Bruce Brasell for drawing my attention to this film.
52. John Barnes, *Pioneers of the British Film: The Beginnings of the Cinema in England*, vol. 3, 1898: The Rise of the Photoplay (London: Bishopsgate Press, n.d., 198?), p. 8. Paul was probably the first British film entrepreneur to build a studio in Britain specifically for filmmaking. He too had made a film called *Cleopatra*, in 1898, described in his catalog as a panorama again, though this was a "panoramic picture of the Thames embankment from Cleopatra's Needle to Waterloo Bridge." Catalog of R. W. Paul films, consulted at National Film Archive, London.

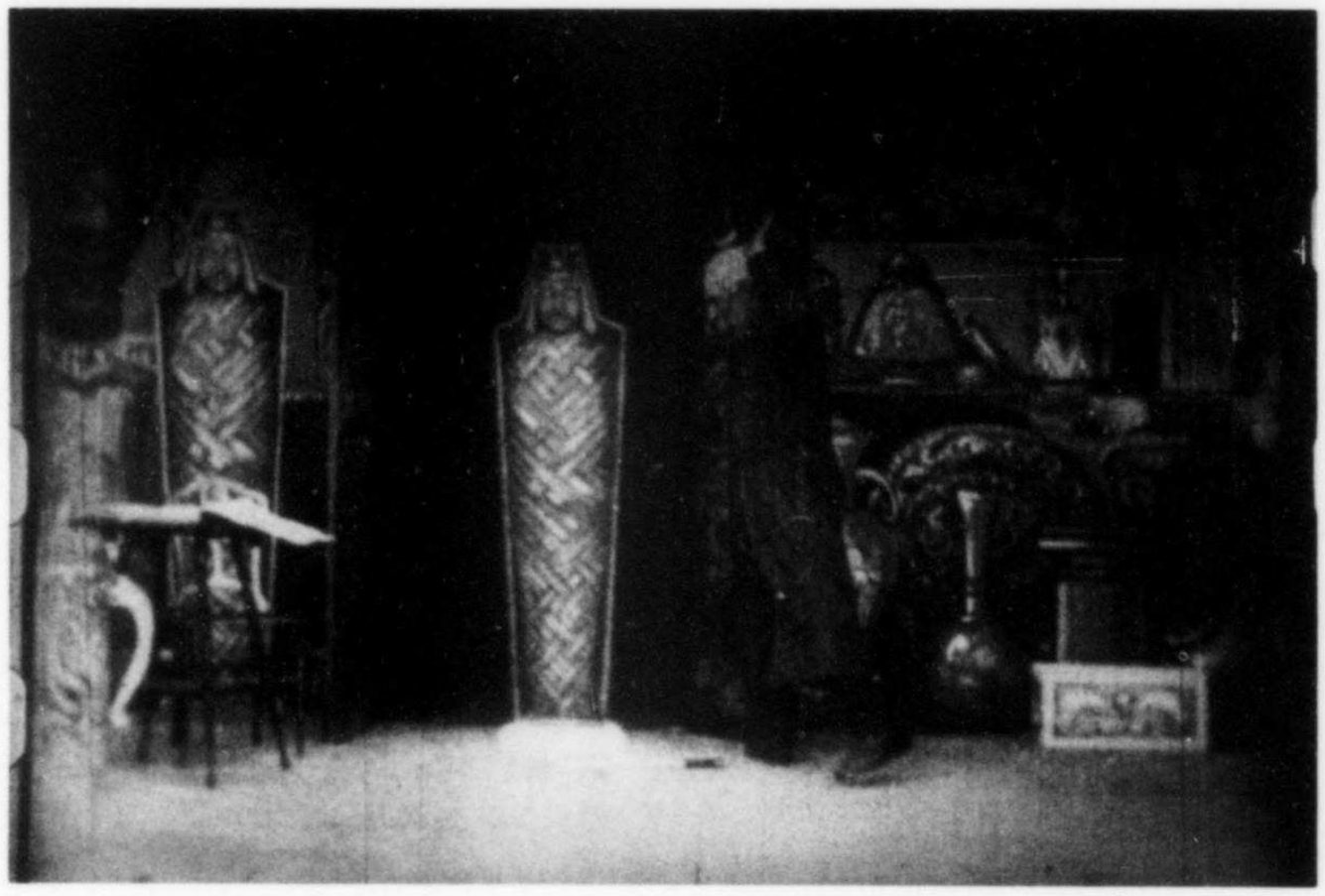
film with a single, frontal, static camera position. The setting is an interior, with a pedestal, cupboard doors, and a painted backcloth decorated with a mummy case, statues, canopic jars, plinths, busts, and figurines—a veritable Victorian fantasy of the Egyptian burial chamber. An old curio dealer, leafing through his catalog, is startled by the sudden appearance of a disembodied hand with a wand (or sword), and then of a skull, wearing an Egyptian headdress. Cupboard doors fly open, and the skull floats off the table and leftward to a shelf, where it turns into a woman's upper body and head. While the shopkeeper closes the cupboard, the woman's lower body enters from left and attaches itself to her waiting upper half. The woman dances, and as she turns she becomes a black woman—or rather, a white woman in blackface—with black gloves. Horrified, the dealer shuts her in the cupboard, but as he closes it she turns white again, and she then appears as a ghost outside the cupboard. He opens the cupboard again to discover a mummy, which changes into a man in ancient Egyptian tunic and headdress. He in turn becomes a skeleton, which prods the dealer and disappears. That is the last we see of the performing mummy, although the immobile painted mummy remains on the backcloth throughout the rest of the film, which continues with the transformation of an armored man into three gnomes and of the gnomes into a fleeting image of a man's face, wreathed in smoke. This face, bearded and triangular in shape, may be that of producer Paul, and is also reminiscent of Robertson's fuliginous masks.

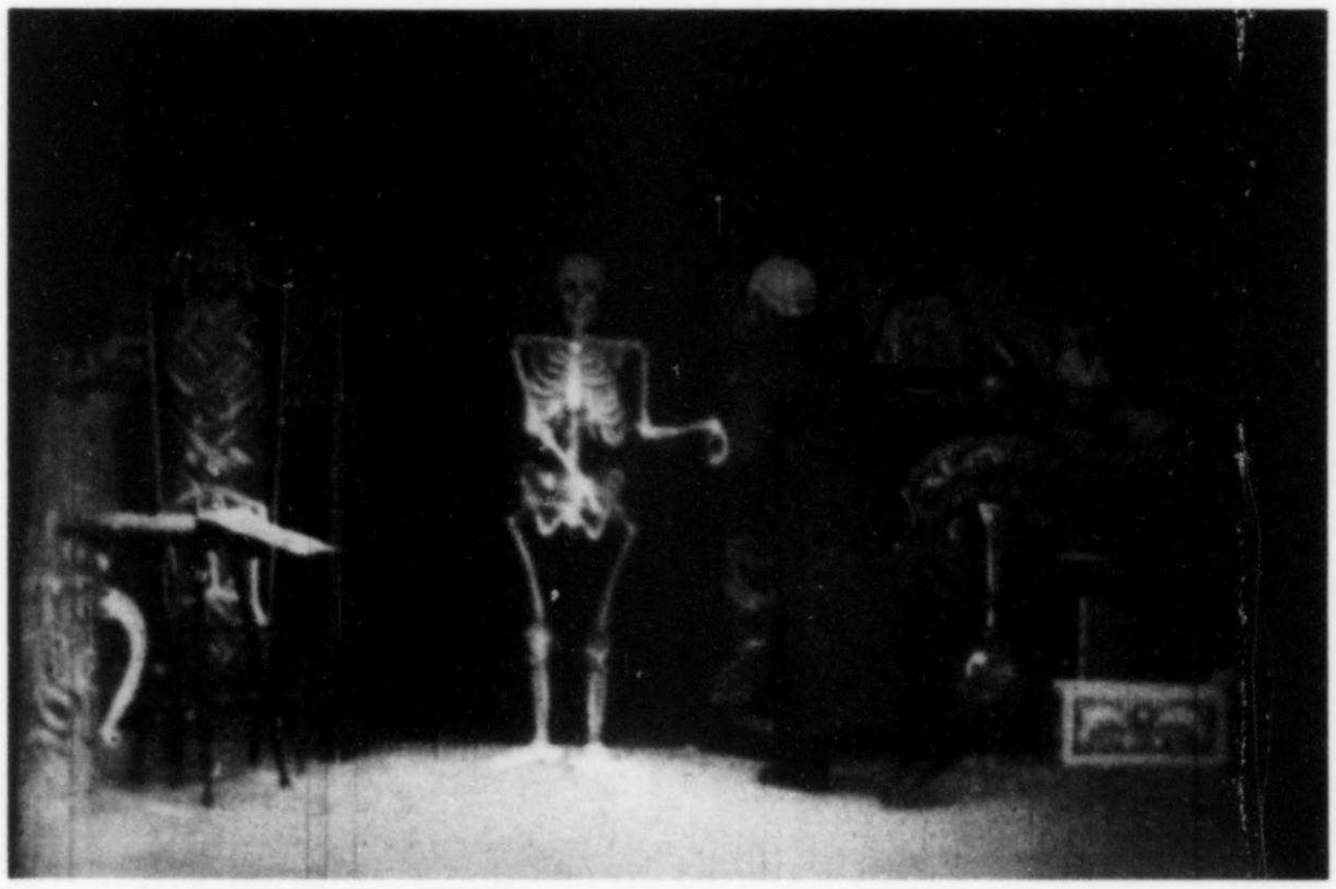
This very short film of 140 feet narrates several bizarre metamorphoses: sexual (from male to female to male, via the closet), racial (white to blackface to white), and corporeal, both in the sense of fragmentation and regeneration and in the sense of a life cycle that extends from preserved life as the mummy to flesh, to skeleton, and to ghost—themes developed to the hilt in Karl Freund's *The Mummy* and its offspring, *Charlie Chan in Egypt*, *The Mummy's Hand*, and so on. Why did Egypt become embedded in the cinema in this way, even developing its own subgenre, the mummy film? On one level, Egyptology and the cinema have utterly separate lineages: they would seem to share the same century purely by chance. As Egyptology's triumphs were drawing to a close, the cinema was just emerging. The final great discovery of Tut-ankh-Amen's tomb in 1922 marked the hundredth anniversary of Champollion's discovery, and only coincidentally the flourishing of the narrative motion picture in a more standardized form, which itself celebrated Egyptology's riches in a film, *Tut-ankh-Amen's Eighth Wife* (1923). But at another level, we should not be surprised that Egyptology had a legacy for the cinema, that Egypt became a mode of expressing the new experience of film, a way of embodying it, of placing it, of giving it a concrete referent. Even before the arrival of cinema, writers on Egypt associated that culture with magic, preservation, and silent, visual power—all qualities that anticipate the character of cinema.

Florence Nightingale, who began her travels in Egypt in 1849, in almost the same month as Flaubert, wrote home of the country that "there is not a

The Haunted Curiosity Shop. *1901.*
(Courtesy of the National Film Archive, London.)







corner [of it] which is not a picture."[53] She described statues as "gigantic phantoms . . . of a dead past," and her description of the Nile after leaving Cairo for a five-month voyage reads like an account of film spectatorship: "The strange effect of the atmosphere makes the figures on the shore appear gigantic. You lose all feeling of distance. You seem to lose all feeling of identity too, and everything becomes supernatural."[54] Her seeing of the Egyptian world as moving scenes and tableaux, as if the objects were changed through her vision of them, can be understood as another symptom of the habits of imperialism, of the need to conceive and grasp the rest of the world "as though it were an exhibition" for Western delectation and use.[55]

Oscar Wilde matched Egypt to the photographic in his short story "The Sphinx Without a Secret," a tale of a man besotted with a society woman whose photo is the last trace he has of her. Consoling him, the man's friend describes her as "a woman with a mania for mystery. . . . She had a passion for secrecy, but she herself was merely a sphinx without a secret."[56] "Do you think so?" asks the doting man as he stares at her photograph. The inability of the woman's photograph to answer, to have a voice, is expressed by Wilde through the metaphoric link to the silence of ancient Egypt, an association continued in the images of Bara as sphinx, Garbo as sphinx, and reexamined in Mulvey and Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx*.[57]

Egyptology and the cinema are pulled together through the needs and obsessions of the nineteenth-century imagination. At its crudest, this need can be described as a question of self-identity. The Victorian psyche celebrates the massive cultural upheavals of industrialization even as it seeks reassurance through them. It aspires to the imperial grandeur of past kingdoms while confronting again and again in this desire earlier demises and losses. Cinema can be understood to express and partially satisfy these desires. This seems at least to be the hope of *The Bioscope*'s text on Kalem's 1912 Egyptian films, which it found to "re-people ruined cities . . . revivify vanished civilizations, [and] make the grave give up its dead . . . for the cinematograph interprets dead facts into the language of life."[58] This ability of cinema to breath life into the

53. Florence Nightingale, *Letters from Egypt: A Journey on the Nile, 1849–1850* selected by Anthony Sattin (New York: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1987), p. 39.
54. Nightingale, *Letters from Egypt*, p. 72 and p. 48.
55. Tim Mitchell, *Colonizing Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 6 and 13. Mitchell includes a chapter entitled "Egypt at the Exhibition" and takes Heidegger's phrase "the fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as a picture" as his epigraph. Mitchell's entire book is germane to this discussion.
56. Oscar Wilde, "The Sphinx Without a Secret," in *The Complete Works of Oscar Wilde* (Leicester: Galley Press, 1987), p. 218.
57. I thank Ben Singer for drawing my attention to the advertisement for *Cleopatra* in *Motion Picture News* that shows Bara as the sphinx.
58. "Some Egyptian Pictures," *The Bioscope*, June 27, 1912, p. 937.

dust of Egypt continues the function of the cult of the ruin, updating it, even surpassing it.

By the late nineteenth century the Roman and Greek empires within Europe were to a large extent already claimed, but bringing home an obelisk, as Napoleon did, could bestow on this society the status of ancient Egypt, the status of a founding civilization, eternally present through its magnificent monuments and mummified bodies. Georg Simmel theorized this consolation of the antique for his contemporaries in his essay *The Ruin* (1911): "The ruin creates the present form of a past life. . . . [In the apprehension of an antique] we command in spirit the entire span of time since its inception; the past with its destinies and transformations has been gathered into this instant of an aesthetically perceptible present."[59] Here we understand the tie of the fascination of the ancient Egyptian ruin (some of the oldest and certainly largest ruins) to the cinema, for both promise to condense the past in an instant. In this drive to assert mastery over space and time, the Victorian imagination mapped the content of Egyptology over the form and, ultimately, over the content of silent cinema, while at the same time Egyptian architecture sometimes came to encase the entire experience of film spectatorship in the building of new Egyptianate cinemas, of which the Grauman's Egyptian, Los Angeles, built in 1922, is only the most famous.[60]

The nineteenth century packaged the pharaonic past to represent timelessness and the conquest of death (Belzoni described Thebes as "a city whose antiquity reaches far beyond historical notice"), and these are capabilities that the new medium of cinema could also be understood to inherit.[61] Cinema controlled time and space, objectifying it, rearranging it at will. As Vitagraph boasted of *Dust of Egypt*: "In one tenth of a second you are transported from our present day world back to the Egypt of three thousand years ago."[62] The new language of cinema would be termed hieroglyphic by theorists of the medium, and Vachel Lindsay would write in 1915 that the cinema auditorium is "an Egyptian tomb" in which "we realize our unconscious memories when we see the new hieroglyphs."[63] Sergei Eisenstein used the metaphor of the hiero-

59. Kurt H. Wolff, ed., *Georg Simmel, 1858–1918: A Collection of Essays with Translations and a Bibliography* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1959), pp. 265 and 266.

60. See Stephen Kern, *The Culture of Time and Space, 1880–1918* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983). For a discussion of oriental style in cinema auditoriums, see David Naylor, *American Picture Palaces: The Architecture of Fantasy* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold Company, 1981), pp. 82–108. The Portland Oriental, decorated mainly with Far Eastern motifs—including dragons, elephants, and other elements borrowed from Angkor Wat—was crowned with a circle of Egyptian mummies arranged end-to-end in a ring around the ceiling dome.

61. Giovanni Battista Belzoni, *Description of the Egyptian Tomb Discovered by G. Belzoni* (London: Murray, 1821), p. 5.

62. Publicity material, *Dust of Egypt* clippings file, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.

63. Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* [1915] (New York: Liveright, 1970), p. 282.

glyph (as well as others, admittedly) to characterize film as visual writing, while Terry Ramsaye explained that cinema's genesis was derived from the pictorial alphabet in his 1926 book of film history, *A Million and One Nights*.[64] It became almost a commonplace for cinema's early historians to explain the newest art in terms of the oldest, to attribute to it a hieroglyphic structure and thus to describe it not only as a universal language, but as an originating language that had been derived from a dead language renewed by the Victorians.[65] By lashing the histories of cinema and Egypt together, dignity, legitimacy, and a heritage were bestowed both on the newest Victorian technology of narrative and spectacle and on its inventors.

However, meanings of ancient Egypt were not quite so singular and stable. Far from the conquest of death, as I have already discussed, the arrival of cinema seemed to invite an encounter with death. Its appeal lay precisely in the practice of death it offered its audience, and the association with Egypt enabled this deathliness of the preserved image to be conceived and expressed. The legacy of the ancient Egyptians also became tainted (from the point of view of European scholars) by its association with the mysterious and supernatural, the questionable and disreputable.[66] There was the persistent, dubious link of Egypt to magic, current throughout the nineteenth century; the official publication of the Society of American Magicians was named "The Sphinx," and to pick another example from many, Houdini staged a spectacle of escapology at the pyramids. A certain prurient pleasure accompanied the unwrapping of a mummy before the Prince of Wales in 1862, the first x-raying of a mummy in 1898, and Belzoni's description of excavating tombs with their "strong smell of mummies."[67] He writes in sensationalist, macabre style of falling into piles of them: "It is scarcely possible by description to convey an adequate idea of these subterranean abodes, or of the strange and horrible figures with which they are

64. Terry Ramsaye, *A Million and One Nights: A History of the Motion Picture* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1926), p. lx and elsewhere. Sergei Eistenstein, "The Cinematographic Principle and the Ideogram," *Film Form*, trans. and ed. Jay Leyda (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1949), pp. 28–44.

65. This topic is discussed by many writers, but most relevant for this essay is Miriam Hansen's "The Hieroglyph and the Whore: D. W. Griffith's *Intolerance*," *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (Spring 1989), pp. 361–92.

66. In his massive study, *Black Athena*, Martin Bernal has argued that the value of Egypt as a founding culture for Europe was eroded during the nineteenth century (and displaced by the civilization of Ancient Greece) because the geographical placement of Egypt within Africa was perceived as an indelible blemish in the context of mounting Aryanism and what Bernal terms "the explosion of Northern European racism"; questions of ancient Egyptian racial identity are strangely literalized in *The Haunted Curiosity Shop*. See Martin Bernal, *Black Athena: The Afroasiatic Roots of Classical Civilization*, vol. 1 (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1987), p. xv.

67. Belzoni, *Description of the Egyptian Tomb*, p. 6. On x-raying mummies see Rosalie David and Eddie Tapp, ed., *Evidence Embalmed: Modern Medicine and the Mummies of Ancient Egypt* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

filled." "What a place of rest! [Being] surrounded by bodies, by heaps of mummies on every side . . . filled me with horror."[68]

In addition, the dynastic dramas of ancient Egypt, elaborated after the decoding of the Rosetta stone, provided a rich seam of possibilities for narratives incorporating non-normative notions of sexuality. These stories were quite outside the bourgeois worldview, and yet they were undeniably recognizable because of the welter of domestic detail that accompanied them on the tomb walls, as well as through the objects that survived. Florence Nightingale drew light projection together with Egypt again when she wrote that "the curious part of these painted grottoes [the tombs] is the literal matter-of-fact delineation of all the details of everyday life—their dressing, eating, working, walking, writing, doctoring, talking, dancing, their sickness and their health, their indoors and their outdoors, their business and their play . . . a magic lantern glimpse into the domestic economy of 4,000 years ago."[69] The consuming Victorian preoccupation with sexuality, particularly female sexuality, could be thematized through this newly available imagery of powerful queens, androgynous kings, and bewildering sphinxes, all made vivid through their combination with the everyday. Thus Egypt, as processed during the nineteenth century, offered the cinema both legitimation and the allure of the exotic. The configuring of Egypt with the cinema expressed cinema's twin realist and fantastic character. By mining the pharaonic archive, the disturbing potential of the cinema to produce pornography through extremely realistic representations of the human body could be diffused, safely channeled, into a distant yet compelling culture, claimed through the imperialism of Egyptology. Roman Egypt, contemporary Arabian Egypt, and ideas about the harem, the sheik, Arabian nights, and the vamp could then ride into the cinema on the back of pharaonic Egypt, as it were.

It is another, related topic, and one beyond the scope of this essay, to document the complex intersection between definitions of the vamp—the modern woman of the teens and twenties who drained men of their wills and ultimately their blood—and Orientalist discourse including that about ancient Egypt. The vamp's quintessential lair was, after all, her rug-draped couch, while her pose was that of the odalisque.[70] Theda Bara, initiator of the vamp role, was wreathed in Orientalist publicity. Her name was purportedly an anagram of "arab death" (more or less), and she wore "many odd ornaments" including an emerald ring given to her by a blind sheik in whose family it had been passed down for "more than 2,000 years." The gift was made on condition that any

68. Ibid.
69. Nightingale, *Letters from Egypt*, p. 55.
70. Zeynep Çelik and Leila Kinney discuss the "epistemological status" that the Ingresque odalisque had attained by the end of the nineteenth century in "Ethnography and Exhibitionism at the Expositions Universelles," *Assemblage* 13 (December 1990), especially p. 41.

male children of Bara's would inherit it and be taught Arabic.[71] Two years before the release of *Cleopatra*, a *Photoplay* article described Bara as "daughter of the Sphinx . . . born under the shadow of the Sphinx and in physical texture . . . as bizarre a woof of bloods as she is cosmopolitan in mentality. . . . Theda . . . opened her destructive eyes on an oasis in the Sahara."[72] The Fox publicity bureau then published a hieroglyphic text to coincide with the release of *Cleopatra*, apparently sent as a homage by a fan who was convinced that "Miss Bara was the reincarnation of the most famous vampire of history."[73] Bara's modern face was superimposed on the Egyptian sphinx to clinch the connection.

We find another piece of evidence in Alexander ("Sasha") Kolowrat's biblical genre production, *Sodom and Gomorrha: The Legend of Sin and Punishment*, directed by Michael Kertesz (later Curtiz) in 1922 as Austria-Hungary's answer to *Intolerance* (1916). The central female character, Miss Mary Conway (played by Lucy Doraine, who also at times plays Lot's Wife and The Queen of Syria), is introduced as "'the modern girl' equipped with all the refinement of a decadent epoch, a sphinx with mystical eyes, a girl who evokes one's wildest desires and craves sacrifice, so that an honest man, robbed of his wits, is driven to commit deeds beyond his better judgment."[74] The sphinxness of modern women is surely a defense, a way of figuring her desires as a series of riddles, illegible for modern culture, that reiterate Freud's question. This conjunction also consolidates the notion of an eternal feminine, again through the link to a most ancient civilization and its women: women have always been the same, this iconography insists, or at least vamps have.

*

Through the sets of relations I have described we can say that Bazin's notion of the mummy complex emerges not out of the blue in 1945, but from a specific constellation of geographical, political, and ideological factors that shaped the aesthetic experience of early cinema through its relation to the history of Egyptology: the two passions shared 150 years of conjugality, though at different stages in their evolution. While at one level Egypt and the cinema had entirely separate histories, at the turn of the century they could both be understood to offer an irresistible darkened and silent world in which mystery, exoticism, and melodrama combined through the means of a new language—hieroglyphics and cinematography—theretofore unknown. Nineteenth-century

71. *Toledo News*, April 7, 1916.
72. Wallace Franklin, *Photoplay*, September 1915, p. 69.
73. Theda Bara clipping file, Lincoln Center Library for the Performing Arts.
74. Quoted from an intertitle of the restored film, as translated into English in the *Sodom and Gomorrha* brochure of the Austrian Film Archive, Vienna. I thank Helmut Pflügl of the Archive for drawing the film to my attention.



Reginald Marsh. Paramount Pictures. *1934*.

histories of the Egyptian past had a central importance in the crystallization of Western cinema: they were part of its material formation, of how it could be explained.

But Bazin's formulation can also be seen as the last flowering of this relation, for the symbiotic association of cinema and Egyptiana was ending. With the coming of synchronized sound, the power of the silent Egyptian past over the cinema disintegrated (or at least went underground)—as Reginald Marsh recorded in *Paramount Pictures*, his painting of 1934 showing a melancholy, Depression-era filmgoer leaning obliviously against a gigantic, glamorized portrait of Claudette Colbert in DeMille's *Cleopatra*. This was also the moment when Egypt began to make cinema for itself and for distribution in the West. To adapt Said's terminology, the Orient began to speak, and through cinema.[75] This modernization and encounter changed the range of Egyptianate meanings available to Western cinema, and its theories, and although the fascination with Egypt continued, and still does, the Egyptianizing discourse gradually weakened as theorists began to ask new questions of the cinema and as its status as a medium of entertainment became more evident and fixed. The realist cinema came to the fore, while the cinema of mystery was channeled into the mummy genre and into the avant-garde.[76] To put it hyperbolically, it was a coup in which cinemas called Alhambra and Oriental were replaced by Greek-sounding Odeons, and we eventually began to talk about a classical cinema and a classical style.

75. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978).

76. Egypt and the Orient have been significant in such avant-garde films as Jean Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet's *Too Early/Too Late* (1980–81), Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen's *Riddles of the Sphinx* (1976), Leslie Thornton's *There Was an Unseen Cloud Moving* (1988), and Harry Smith's *The Magic Feature* (or *Heaven and Earth Magic*, ca. 1958).

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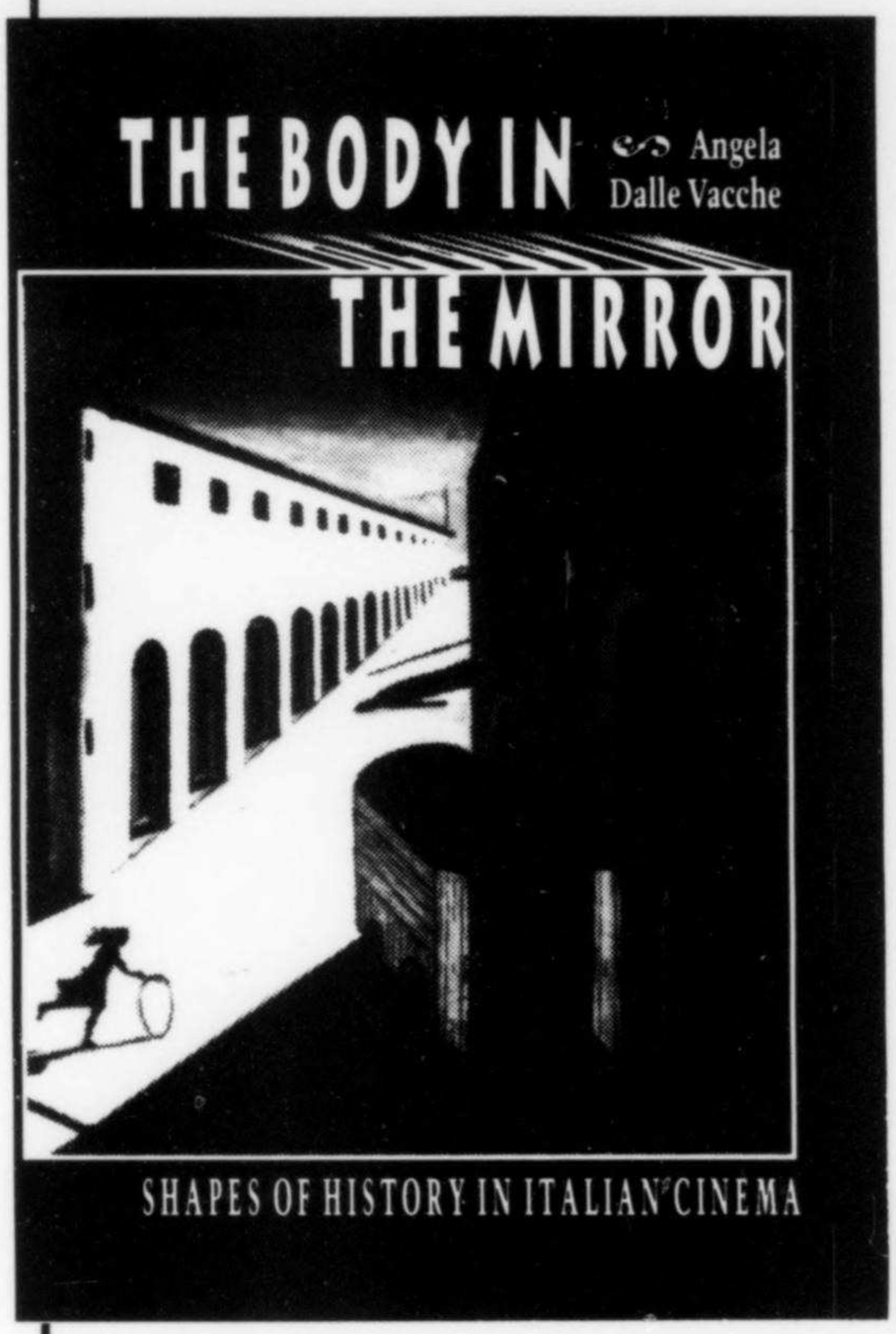
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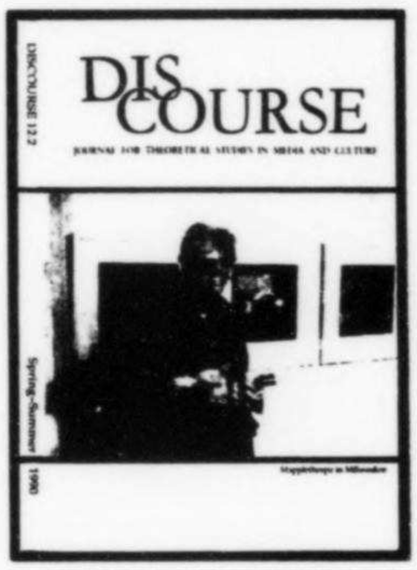
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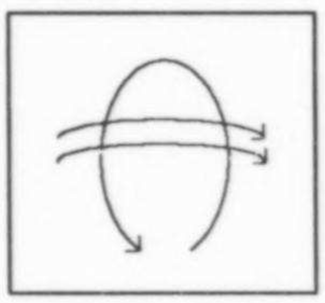
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