Art | *Theory* | *Criticism* | *Politics*

OCTOBER

139

Hal Foster	*Post-Critical*
David Geers	*Neo-Modern*
Hassanaly Ladha	*Hegel's* Werkmeister*: Architecture, Architectonics, the Theory of History*
Evonne Levy	*The Political Project of Wölfflin's Early Formalism*
Eric Michaud	*Barbarian Invasions and the Racialization of Art History*
Spyros Papapetros	*Between the Academy and the Avant-Garde*
Masha Salazkina	*Moscow-Rome-Havana: A Film-Theory Road Map*
Trevor Stark	*Chris Marker, the Medvedkin Group, and the Potential of Militant Film*
Noam M. Elcott	*Stan Douglas's Archaeology of Cinematic Darkness*
George Baker	*Mike Kelley: Death and Transfiguration*

$14.00 / Winter 2012

Published by the MIT Press

OCTOBER

editors

Rosalind Krauss
(Founding Editor)
Annette Michelson
(Founding Editor)
George Baker
Yve-Alain Bois
Benjamin H. D. Buchloh
Leah Dickerman
Devin Fore
Hal Foster
Denis Hollier
David Joselit
Carrie Lambert-Beatty
Mignon Nixon
Malcolm Turvey

managing editor

Adam Lehner

editorial assistant

Jordan Troeller

advisory board

Emily Apter
Leo Bersani
Jonathan Crary
Manthia Diawara
Edward Dimendberg
Andreas Huyssen
Gertrud Koch
Silvia Kolbowski
Miwon Kwon
Stuart Liebman
Molly Nesbit
Allan Sekula
Kaja Silverman
Anthony Vidler

An electronic full text version of OCTOBER is available from the MIT Press.

OCTOBER (ISSN 0162-2870, E-ISSN 1536-013X) is published quarterly (winter, spring, summer, and fall) by the MIT Press, Cambridge, MA 02142-1046. Subscription and address changes should be addressed to MIT Press, Journals Customer Service, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142-1315; (617) 253-2889; U.S./Canada (800) 207-8354; fax: (617) 577-1545. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to OCTOBER, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142-1315. Periodicals postage paid at Boston, MA, and at additional mailing offices. Subscription rates: **Electronic only**—Individuals $50.00, Students/retired $24.00, Institutions $204.00. Canadians add 5% GST. **Print and Electronic**—Individuals $55.00, Students/retired $28.00, Institutions $234.00. Canadians add 5% GST. Outside the U.S. and Canada, add $23.00 for postage and handling. **Single Issues:** Individuals $14.00, Institutions $58.00. Canadians add 5% GST. Outside the U.S. and Canada, add $6.00 per issue for postage and handling. Claims for missing issues will be honored free of charge if made within three months after the publication date of the issue. Claims may be submitted to: journals-cs@mit.edu. Prices subject to change without notice. OCTOBER is distributed in the U.S. by Ubiquity, 607 Degraw St., Brooklyn, NY 11217; (718) 875-5491. Manuscripts should be emailed to october-magazine@gmail.com. Rights & Permissions: To request permission to photocopy or otherwise reproduce content from *October*, please complete the online request form found at www.mitpressjournals.org/page/copyright_permissions, or contact the Subsidiary Rights Manager directly at MIT Press Journals, 55 Hayward Street, Cambridge, MA 02142; fax: (617) 253-1709; email: journals-rights@mit.edu. Corporations and Academic Institutions with valid photocopying and/or digital licenses with the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) may reproduce content from October under the terms of their license. Please go to www.copyright.com. CCC, 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923; Phone: (978) 750-8400.
Abstracting and indexing: Alternative Press Index, American Humanities Index, ARTbibliographies Modern, Art Index, Arts & Humanities Citation Index, Avery Index to Architectural Periodicals, Bibliography of the History of Art, Current Contents/Arts & Humanities, Film Literature Index, MLA International Bibliography, Periodicals Contents Index, RILM Abstracts of Music Literature, Scopus. Send advertising and mailing list inquiries to the Marketing Dept., MIT Press Journals (address above); (617) 253-2866; fax: (617) 253-1709; e-mail: journals-info@mit.edu.
© 2012 by October Magazine, Ltd., and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Statements of fact and opinion appearing in OCTOBER are made on the responsibility of the authors alone and do not imply the endorsement of the editors or the publisher.
http://mitpressjournals.org/october

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012

139

Hal Foster	*Post-Critical*	3
David Geers	*Neo-Modern*	9
Hassanaly Ladha	*Hegel's* Werkmeister: *Architecture, Architectonics, the Theory of History*	15
Evonne Levy	*The Political Project of Wölfflin's Early Formalism*	39
Eric Michaud	*Barbarian Invasions and the Racialization of Art History*	59
Spyros Papapetros	*Between the Academy and the Avant-Garde: Carl Einstein and Fritz Saxl*	77
Masha Salazkina	*Moscow-Rome-Havana: A Film-Theory Road Map*	97
Trevor Stark	*"Cinema in the Hands of the People": Chris Marker, the Medvedkin Group, and the Potential of Militant Film*	117
Noam M. Elcott	*In Search of Lost Space: Stan Douglas's Archaeology of Cinematic Darkness*	151
George Baker	*Mike Kelley: Death and Transfiguration*	183

Back cover: Intertitle from Dziga Vertov Group. British Sounds/See You at Mao. *1969.*

NOAM ELCOTT is Assistant Professor of Art History and Archaeology at Columbia University. He is at work on an art and media history of artificial darkness in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Recent and forthcoming publications on contemporary art include essays on Christian Marclay, James Welling, and Anthony McCall.

DAVID GEERS is a freelance writer based in New York.

HASSANALY LADHA teaches comparative literature and philosophy as Assistant Professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of Connecticut. His current book project analyzes the constitution and reception of Hegel's "Africa" in relation to philosophical conceptions of the aesthetic and the political subject.

EVONNE LEVY is Associate Professor at the University of Toronto. She is author of *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (University of California Press, 2004) and co-editor of *Bernini's Biographies: Critical Essays* (Penn State Press, 2006). She is co-editing, together with Tristan Weddigen, a new English translation and critical edition of Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History.*

ERIC MICHAUD is Directeur d'études at the Ecole des hautes études en sciences sociales, Paris. His publications include *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany* (transl. Janet Lloyd, Stanford UP, 2004) and *Histoire de l'art: une discipline à ses frontières* (Hazan, 2005).

SPYROS PAPAPETROS teaches theory and historiography in the School of Architecture and the Program in Media and Modernity at Princeton University. He is the author of *On the Animation of the Inorganic: Art, Architecture, and the Extension of Life* (University of Chicago Press, 2012) and the editor of *Space as Membrane* by Siegfried Ebeling (AA Publications, 2010).

MASHA SALAZKINA is the author of *In Excess: Sergei Eisenstein's Mexico* (University of Chicago Press, 2009). She teaches Film Studies at Concordia University, Montréal.

TREVOR STARK is a Ph.D. candidate in the History of Art and Architecture department at Harvard University.

October is located at 350 Fifth Avenue, Suite 7401, New York, NY, 10118. All editorial correspondence should be sent to octobermagazine@gmail.com. We reserve the right to edit letters and responses selected for publication. We review manuscripts of no more than 8,500 words.

Post-Critical

HAL FOSTER

Critical theory took a serious beating during the culture wars of the 1980s and the 1990s, and the 2000s were only worse. Under George W. Bush, the demand for affirmation was all but total, and today there is little space for critique even in the universities and the museums. Bullied by conservative commentators, most academics no longer stress the importance of critical thinking for an engaged citizenry, and most curators, dependent on corporate sponsors, no longer promote the critical debate once deemed essential to the public reception of advanced art. Indeed, the sheer out-of-date-ness of criticism in an art world that couldn't care less seems evident enough. Yet what are the options on offer? Celebrating beauty? Affirming affect? Hoping for a "redistribution of the sensible"? Trusting in "the general intellect"? The post-critical condition is supposed to release us from our straitjackets (historical, theoretical, and political), yet for the most part it has abetted a relativism that has little to do with pluralism.[1]

How did we arrive at the point where critique is so broadly dismissed? Over the years, most of the charges have concerned the positioning of the critic. First, there was a rejection of *judgment*, of the moral right presumed in critical evaluation. Then, there was a refusal of *authority*, of the political privilege that allows the critic to speak abstractly on behalf of others. Finally, there was skepticism about *distance*, about the cultural separation from the very conditions that the critic purports to examine. "Criticism is a matter of correct distancing," Walter Benjamin wrote over eighty years ago. "It was at home in a world where perspectives and prospects counted and where it was still possible

1. Not much of this is new; see the roundtable published in these pages ten years ago, "The Present Conditions of Art Criticism," *October* 100 (Spring 2002). The fundamental problem remains one touched on there. Confident as a class, the bourgeoisie once sought out the test of criticism; it was seen as central to the give-and-take of its own ideal of a public sphere—but that was long ago. My account here begins with the big picture, hence the slippage between "critique," "criticism," "critical theory," and "critical art"; in what follows I focus on the latter two. Finally, "post-critical" has a different valence in architectural debate, where it is used to draw a line after the theoretical reflexivity of such architects as Peter Eisenman, and to announce a renewed pragmatism of "design intelligence." But its effects do not appear to be much different.

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 3–8. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

to adopt a standpoint. Now things press too urgently on human society."[2] How much more urgent is this pressing today?

Yet not all critique depends on correct distancing. Estrangement à la Brecht is not correct in this sense, and there are interventionist models in art (from Dada to the present) in which critique is produced immanently through techniques of mimetic exacerbation and symbolic *détournement*.[3] As for the other old charges (which come mostly from the left), they boil down to two: critique is driven by a will to power, and it is not reflexive about its own claims to truth. Often enough two fears drive these two accusations: on the one hand, a concern about the critic as "ideological patron" who displaces the very group or class that he represents (the famous caution given by Benjamin in "Author as Producer" [1934]); and, on the other, a concern about the scientific truth ascribed to critical theory in opposition to "spontaneous ideology" (the dubious position assumed by Althusser in his re-reading of Marx). Such fears are not misbegotten, but are they reason enough to throw the baby out with the bathwater?

More recent attacks, especially on the critique of representation and the critique of the subject, have operated through guilt by association. Rather than too confident of its truth, the critique of representation was said to sap truth-value as such, and so to promote moral indifference and political nihilism.[4] The critique of the subject was also charged with unintended consequences, as its demonstration of the constructed nature of identity was said to abet a consumerism of subject-positions (e.g., multiculturalism repackaged as "The United Colors of Benetton"). For many, these two outcomes count as postmodernism *tout court*, which is to be condemned outright as a result. Yet this is a caricature that reduces postmodernism to the rote expression of neoliberal capitalism (i.e., as neoliberalism deregulated the economy, so postmodernism derealized the culture).[5]

More pointed questions about critique have come from Bruno Latour, who focuses on his field of science studies, and Jacques Rancière, who focuses on his

2. Walter Benjamin, "One-Way Street" (1928), in *Selected Writings, Volume 1: 1913–1926*, ed. Michael W. Jennings, et al. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1996), p. 476. The other negative association, too complicated to take up here, is that between criticism and *ressentiment*.

3. Not to mention the different variants of deconstruction. On mimetic exacerbation, see my "Dada Mime," *October* 105 (Summer 2003).

4. In fact such nihilism is an attribute of the right more than the left. Recall the 2004 acknowledgement of a Bush official (said to be Karl Rove): "We're an empire now, and when we act, we create our own reality. And while you're studying that reality—judiciously, as you will—we'll act again, creating other new realities, which you can study too, and that's how things will sort out." See Ron Suskind, "Faith, Certainty, and the Presidency of George W. Bush," *New York Times Magazine* (October 27, 2004). Or consider how the notion of "the social construction" of science is used to dispute the fact of global warming. See Bruno Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (Winter 2004).

5. Sometimes that connection is said to be very direct. For example, Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello charge that "artistic critique" of the disciplinary workplace was key to "the new spirit of capitalism"—that what they mean by "artistic critique" has little to do with art. See Boltanski and Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2004).

hobbyhorse of contemporary art. For Latour the critic pretends to an enlightened knowledge that allows him to demystify the fetishistic belief of naive others—to demonstrate how this belief is "a projection of their wishes onto a material entity that does nothing at all by itself."[6] Here the fatal mistake of the critic is not to turn this antifetishistic gaze on his own belief, his own fetish of demystification, a mistake that renders him the most naive of all. Latour concludes:

> This is why you can be at once and without even sensing any contradiction (1) an antifetishist for everything you don't believe in—for the most part religion, popular culture, art, politics, and so on; (2) an unrepentant positivist for all the sciences you believe in—sociology, economics, conspiracy theory, genetics, evolutionary psychology, semiotics, just pick your preferred field of study; and (3) a perfectly healthy sturdy realist for what you really cherish—and of course it might be criticism itself, but also painting, bird-watching, Shakespeare, baboons, proteins, and so on.[7]

For Rancière, too, critique is compromised by its dependence on demystification. "In its most general expression," he writes, "critical art is a type of art that sets out to build awareness of the mechanisms of domination to turn the spectator into a conscious agent of world transformation."[8] Yet not only is awareness not transformative per se, Rancière continues, but "the exploited rarely require an explanation of the laws of exploitation." Moreover, critical art "asks viewers to discover the signs of capital behind everyday objects and behaviors," but in so doing only confirms the "transformation of things into signs" that capital performs. Like the critic for Latour, the critical artist for Rancière is trapped in a vicious circle.

Much the same can be said of these two meta-critics. Latour replays the Ur-critical move of Marx and Freud, who argued as follows: "You moderns think you are enlightened, but in fact you are as fetishistic as any primitives—fetishists not only of the commodity but of any object you desire inappropriately." To this reversal Latour now adds his own: "You antifetishistic critics are also fetishists—fetishists of your own cherished method or discipline." To this extent, then, he remains within the rhetorical coils of the very critique he wants to cut.

Rancière joins in this challenge to the hermeneutics of suspicion at work in critique à la the Frankfurt School. Yet not only is this challenge a familiar one within critical theory; it was also fundamental to its own shift from a search for hidden meanings to a consideration of "the conditions of possibility" of dis-

6. Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?," p. 237. Also see Latour, "What Is Iconoclash? Or Is There a World Beyond the Image Wars?," in *Iconoclash: Beyond the Image Wars in Science, Religion, and Art*, ed. Latour and Peter Weibel (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2002), and Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1993).

7. Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?," p. 241.

8. Jacques Rancière, *Aesthetics and Its Discontents*, trans. Steven Cochran (Cambridge: Polity, 2009), pp. 46–47.

course (as in Foucault), of the significance of textual surface (as in Barthes), and so on.[9] Moreover, Rancière condemns critique for its projection of a passive spectator in need of activation (this is his version of the naive believer in need of demystification), yet he, too, assumes this passivity when he calls for such activation beyond mere awareness.[10] Finally, his "redistribution of the sensible" is a panacea, and, when pitted against the capitalist "transformation of things into signs," little more than wishful thinking, the new opiate of the art-world left.[11]

*

All this said, one understands the fatigue that many feel with critique today, especially when, taken as an automatic value, it hardens into a self-regarding posture. Certainly its moral righteousness can be oppressive, and its iconoclastic negativity destructive.[12] Against this image of the critic Latour offers his own:

> The critic is not the one who debunks, but the one who assembles. The critic is not the one who lifts the rugs from under the feet of the naive believers, but the one who offers the participants arenas in which to gather. The critic is not the one who alternates haphazardly between antifetishism and positivism like the drunk iconoclast drawn by Goya, but the one for whom, if something is constructed, then it means it is fragile and thus in need of great care and caution.[13]

Who could not warm to this figure of the empathetic critic? Yet such an ethics of generosity introduces a problem of its own, which is in fact the old prob-

9. In the hands of others both positions have degenerated, the Foucault into discursive generalities without much purchase on actual practices (e.g., the "regimes" that Rancière goes on about), the Barthes into a celebration of effect and affect (more on which below).

10. See Jacques Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (London: Verso, 2009).

11. Defined as what can and cannot be sensed and said, "the distribution of the sensible" differs little from what Marx, in his best moments, understood as ideology—less the specific content of thought than its structural delimitation (i.e., how some thought is rendered unthinkable).

12. In this light a suspension of the critical reflex can be beneficial, as Jeff Dolven suggests in an e-mailed response to this text: "Here my basically pragmatist impulses are in play, for I want to know how far it is possible to understand and inhabit versions of aesthetic experience that are uncritical, without surrendering my party ID: epideictic? ludic? freely interpretive? imitative? . . . Can we give play to the kinds of conceptual suspension and ideological indeterminacy that Kant seems to find in aesthetic experience? Can we trust the capacity of properly aesthetic experience of a work of art to resist ideology? Are we prepared to credit works of art with soliciting such experience? And trust that, when we need to (which will be often), we can put our guard up again, have the resources of critique at our disposal, and train them on the very same objects? And allow, perhaps, critique to bound and restrain that aesthetic freedom, and allow, perhaps, aesthetic possibility to redeem objects that critique might urge us to banish? This is a *practical* question—of which, when."

13. Latour, "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam?," p. 246.

lem of fetishism, for here again the object is treated as a quasi-subject.[14]

Recent art history shows a marked tendency to do much the same thing: images are said to have "power" or agency, pictures to have "wants" or desires, and so on. This corresponds to a similar tendency in recent art and architecture to present work in terms of subjecthood.[15] Although many practitioners aim, in good Minimalist fashion, to promote phenomenological experience, often what they offer is the near-reverse: "experience" returned as "atmosphere" and/or "affect," in spaces that confuse the actual with the virtual and/or with sensations that are produced as effects yet seem intimate, indeed internal, nonetheless (examples range from James Turrell to Olafur Eliasson in art, and from Herzog and de Meuron to Philippe Rahm in architecture). In this way the phenomenological reflexivity of "seeing oneself see" approaches its opposite: an installation or a building that seems to do the perceiving for us. This, too, is a version of fetishization, for it takes thoughts and feelings, processes them as images and effects, and delivers them back to us for our appreciative amazement. As such it calls for antifetishistic critique.[16]

The same is true, more generally, of "cynical reason," the dismissive knowingness that drains so much energy from our cultural lives and our political lives alike.[17] The problem is not that truths are always hidden (Latour and Rancière are right here) but that many are all too apparent—yet with a transparency that somehow blocks response: "I know the mantra of 'no taxes' is a boon to the rich, and a bust for me, but nevertheless . . . " Or: "I know the big museums have more to do with finance capital than with public culture, but nevertheless . . . " As a fetishistic operation of recognition and disavowal (precisely, "I know, but nevertheless"), cynical reason is also subject to antifetishistic critique. Of course, such critique is never enough: one must intervene in what is given, somehow turn it, and take it elsewhere.[18] Yet that turning begins with critique.

14. My critique of fetishization is not a suspicion of desire, pleasure, and so on; it is simply a resistance, more Blakean than Marxist, to any operation whereby human creation (e.g., God, the Internet) is projected above us with an agency of its own, from which position it is as likely to subjugate us as it is to serve us.

15. See Isabelle Graw, ed., *Art and Subjecthood: The Return of the Human Figure in Semiocapitalism* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2011).

16. What was condemned in Minimalism as a concern with objecthood was really a concern with objectivity—the objectivity of structure, space, bodies in space, and so on. This concern drove the primary line of work out of Minimalism, but now a secondary line has become dominant. On this reversal, see "Painting Unbound," in my *The Art-Architecture Complex* (London: Verso, 2011).

17. Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, trans. Michael Eldred (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

18. As indeed Paolo Virno has urged us to do with cynical reason; see *A Grammar of the Multitudes*, trans. Isabella Bertoletti, et al. (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004). For a better example of this troping of a given condition, in this case our own as defined by neoliberalism, see Michel Feher, "Self-Appreciation, or the Aspirations of Human Capital," *Public Culture* 21, no. 1 (2008). There are many more instances in recent art.

*

Maybe I am dead wrong: what about the blossoming of "critical art" today? The rub here lies in how these two words do (or do not) come together. It is common to speak of "social practice art," but this rubric underscores how removed art is from everyday life even as it attempts to close that divide (it is with a similar magic that Rancière declares the political and the aesthetic always-already bound up with one another). In fact, rather than hold the two terms together, such rubrics tend to release a given practice from the criteria of either social effectivity or artistic invention; the one tends to become the alibi for the other, with any pressure from the one side dismissed as sociological and any from the other as aestheticist—and so the announced resolution breaks down again.

Let me end with an opposition that, though schematic, seems pertinent to this predicament. On the one side, there is the quasi-Gramscian position of activist art that, with aesthetic autonomy dispatched by an unholy alliance of critique and capital, sees a field wide open for social practice. On the other side, there is the quasi-Adornian position that insists on the category of art, but with the forlorn sense that its minimal autonomy now holds minimal negativity, and with little left to do but to go through the formalist motions. In a way this complementarity recalls that of Dada and Surrealism as seen by Debord, who (in his version of dialectics as mutually assured destruction) once wrote, "Dadaism sought to abolish art without realizing it, and Surrealism sought to realize art without abolishing it."[19] Our situation might evoke the 1920s in more alarming ways still: economically as an age of boom and bust; politically as a period in which a state of emergency becomes more normal than exceptional; and artistically as a time when, as some practitioners act out economic crisis and political emergency (e.g., Dada again) or build from this chaos (e.g., Constructivism), others flee it in a *retour à l'ordre* (the parallel to the return to degraded versions of the neoclassical tradition in the 1920s might be the return to old idioms of modernist painting and sculpture now).[20] If there is anything to this echo, then surely it is a bad time to go post-critical.

19. Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994), p. 136.
20. See David Geers, "Neo-Modern," in this issue, and my "Preservation Society," *Artforum* (January 2011).

Neo-Modern

DAVID GEERS

To any practitioner or critic informed by the critique of modernism, its recent revival in artistic practice offers a bewildering puzzle. Repealing established taboos and turning back the clock, the last few years have seen a renewed interest in abstraction, materiality, and process in ways that, on the surface, recall the formal strategies of modernist art and its Minimalist offshoots. In the United States alone, the New Museum's *Unmonumental* (2008), the Kitchen's *Besides, With, Against, and Yet: Abstraction and the Ready-Made Gesture* (2009–10), the Sculpture Center's *Knight's Move* (2010), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art's *Blinky Palermo: Retrospective 1964–1977* (2010), the Museum of Modern Art's *Abstract Expressionist New York* (2010–11), and a host of gallery shows have all registered this seachange, showcasing a resurgent concern with abstraction from a variety of perspectives.

While many of these artistic practices and curatorial projects demonstrate complex and critical relationships to modernism, abstraction, and autonomy, there is nevertheless a slow gravitational pull, in both production and reception, toward a less reflexive and more nostalgic attitude. Indeed, any visit to Chelsea, the Lower East Side or an MFA program will yield a peppering of objects that mimic the formal moves of some modernist art. Why now? My conjecture is that this revival is a return to foundations not unlike similar returns during periods of great anxiety and upheaval. But whereas the *rappel à l'ordre* of the 1920s, for instance, gazed toward an antique figurative tradition, the current turn to the classical grasps at more recent bedrock.

A perfect storm of timing and influence, this embrace of modernist styles is a convergence of several developments. It is, in equal parts, a generational fatigue with theory; a growing split between hand-made artistic production and social practice; and a legitimate and thrifty attempt to "keep it real" in the face of an ever-expansive image culture and the slick "commodity art" of Koons, Murakami, and others. But, it also represents a nostalgic retrenchment on the part of an art world threatened by technological transformation and economic uncertainty that now undermine its hierarchies and claims of cultural precedence. At the same time, today's appropriation of modernist abstraction is far too eclectic to be associated with the medium-specific, teleological formalism of Clement Greenberg. Neo-formalism can draw on a range of influences spanning Constructivism to Arte

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 9–14. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

Povera, but it most closely resembles Action Painting in its emphasis on performative production (read process) and abstract form. Inoculated with a dose of the everyday, however, neo-formalism traffics in hybridized materials that afford it a referential base and so insulate it against charges of pure abstraction. Its décor, too, often carries a payload of gritty materialism that deflects any accusation of strictly aesthetic claims. Thus a work by Josh Smith, Daniel Hesidence, Alex Hubbard, Thomas Haseago, Richard Aldrich, or Gedi Sibony, just to name a few, might juxtapose a modernist look with a material process, counterbalancing aesthetic delectation with ascetic denial.

Negating pictorial depth with surface, and conventional representation with materiality, such practices attempt to circumvent a fundamentally unreliable and theoretically foreclosed image-world. But if this resurrected interest in material experimentation and anti-pictorial opacity is admirable as a resistance to a perfected illusionism, it also turns a blind eye to its own conservative tendencies. Incorporating the received values of materialism and context-sensitivity, today's neo-formalism nevertheless pursues an art of intuitive, aesthetic arrangement that satisfies the need for formal continuities and simple answers during a particularly complex time.

While it propounds a discourse of quotidian modesty—"an alchemy of the everyday"—neo-formalism in fact nullifies the specificity and discursive potential of its own materials and subsumes them in a familiar modernist idiom.[1] Unlike the critical appropriation art of the 1980s, it advances a reverential manual re-crafting of modernism that filters its sources through the individual sensibility of the artist. Less simulation than emulation, neo-formalism is in fact a restorative project that may "test the limits of your faith in art," but only in order to "renew it" more resolutely.[2] Acting like a modern-day Arcimboldo, the artist shapes the ordinary matter of today into the formal echoes of yesterday, thus validating the modern "visual tradition as an intrinsic and enduring value."[3] In so doing, neo-formalism retreats to a solipsism that, while guaranteeing improvisatory freedom, also shelters the artist and the collector alike in an echo chamber of art-historical reference and formal free-play. At once shielded and entombed, neo-formalism remains a pictorially but not operationally resistant gesture that is characterized by aesthetic withdrawal and ratified by an all-too-willing market.

Rhetorically supported as a shift to concreteness and aided by current the-

1. "An alchemist of the everyday, Sibony makes stripped-down sculptures that may test the limits of your faith in art, but they'll also renew it." "Gedi Sibony," *The New Yorker* (May 26, 2008), p. 16.
2. Ibid.
3. See Saatchi Gallery's artists profile for Gedi Sibony, n. p.: "In *That's Tall's Tale*, Sibony configures a 'painting' from plastic sheeting and packing tape, with the irregular shape of the 'canvas' drawing reference to artists such as Ellsworth Kelley and Frank Stella. By exposing exactly how the work was made, Sibony instigates a performative role for the artistic process, focusing attention on the subtle tensions within the composition and its very considered and sophisticated balance of form, materiality, and space. Through this intense scrutiny, Sibony affirms the authenticity of artistic integrity, positing a refined connoisseurship of, and heightened sensitivity to, visual tradition as an intrinsic and enduring value" (saatchi-gallery.co.uk/artists/gedi_sibony.htm? section_name= shape_of_things, accessed January 16, 2012).

ory's frayed relation to practice, neo-formalism also reanimates well-worn tropes of emotive expression and cathartic gesture. One sees this especially in the return of Expressionist painting, replete with a discourse of ineffable and unfettered "creation" and an equally transcendental subject who "does not rely on nostalgia [or] visual culture" but forms "an elusive space that takes the viewer beyond a definable language."[4] Here the artist once more assumes the mantle of an emancipated creator (and we that of emancipated spectators), allowing us to relive a myth of a "wild," unmediated subjectivity welded inextricably to the primal medium of paint—an image that is perhaps comforting but also nostalgic and mystified.

From a structural perspective, this shift in focus from discourse to subjectivity and from representation to thing counters more dematerialized practices such as conceptual and media-based work. Often evoking the modesty of everyday materials, neo-formalism appeals to the simplicities of artistic labor, a last bastion of humanity's endangered (yet "enduring") tactile engagement with matter. At the same time, neo-formalism constitutes a complement to the reinvigorated focus on performance; indeed, it is one part of a dyad in which the never-extinguished need for anthropomorphism and figuration finds its transitory place on the gallery and museum stage in performance art (witness the fanfare around Marina Abramović's recent retrospective *The Artist Is Present*). Such populist anthropomorphism thus offers up the body for voyeuristic scrutiny, while the commercial object is stripped down to a vague, formal vehicle, conventional enough to appeal to an equally broad audience.

To be fair, in this time of economic crisis and political uncertainty, modernism may offer the closest thing we have to a solid foundation—to a classical as well as a critical past. Yet, if today's run to the Rothkos imitates modernism's dialectical nature (its tactical call-and-response of one style to another) in order to contest the dominance of conceptual and image-based works, it also discards modernism's oppositional aspects. Instead, it plunders modernism's formal attributes for whatever charge they might still hold, trafficking equally in the shockingly outré and the canonically familiar.

A painting by Josh Smith, for instance, coyly plays with Expressionist tropes smuggled in under the rubric of reproducibility; each mark functions as both authentic gesture and copy, at once full of hyperbolic display and empty of sentiment. Yet, posed against no hegemonic realism and consumed for its aesthetic appeal, such work simply traffics in familiar clichés of artistic innocence. Such innocence, supported by Smith's own prosaic articulation of his practice, has long

4. Press release for Daniel Hesidence's *American Buffalo*, D'Amelio Terras Gallery, 2010, n. p.: "Hesidence's work does not rely on nostalgia, visual culture, nor pay ironic tribute to artists of admiration. Rather, Hesidence locates information through a concentrated process of creation, forming an elusive space that takes the viewer beyond a definable language. Like the highly improvisational and gestural European 'Art Informel,' his paintings are uncompromising, wild, and aggressive. Often evocative of moods both dark and elated in the same canvas, they are past description, unutterable in their fluidity and intricate logic. For both painter and viewer, these works embody a vitality that unabashedly consumes the senses."

been the stuff of modernism's embrace of the primitive, the infantile, and the savage. Small wonder, then, that his abstractions and paintings of fish, leaves, and his own endlessly and decorously rearranged name would find such a market in an era marked by anxious retrospection.

Such a project represents a cynical model for a contemporary practice that now searches for loopholes and blind spots in a constant hedging of bets. In effect, it allows the artist and the collector to have it both ways—the luxury of aesthetic pleasure and its simultaneous disavowal. Younger artists exploit this ambiguous terrain, too, acting as unwitting champions in today's version of "the return to the craft."[5] A process-based resin painting by Alex Hubbard, for instance, can echo de Kooning, Rothko, or Tapiès, all of whom are aggrandized in a youthful update. Meanwhile, a silver-dipped painting by Jacob Kassay reinvents the Constructivist and Minimalist monochrome as a product of the (now antiquated) photographic process, but also recasts it as a sumptuary wall hanging that vainly mirrors the likeness of its possessor.

In this way, neo-formalism exhumes and recombines formerly revolutionary models—Constructivism, Abstract Expressionism, Arte Povera, Minimalism, etc.—but in so doing fails to grasp new social and cultural configurations that call for different strategies altogether. In stark contrast, developments in technology, the Internet, and social media have helped to mobilize actual revolutions like the Arab Spring and now the Occupy Wall Street movement, while the art world is still trying to connect an emancipatory rhetoric to an economy of luxury goods. To obviate such impasses and vulgar concerns, neo-formalism retreats to the aura of the object and to its hallowed resting place in modernist abstraction.

However, unlike modernism's former champions, today's artists, critics, and salespeople often struggle for a language to discuss such practices. Instead they fall back on the old mantra of "process"—not because the work arrests language or transcends positivist conceptions, as is often claimed, but because, in the absence of the lofty (yet critical) discourse that fueled much of modernism, there is so little to discuss except process. This unmoored rhetoric finds itself reflected in art schools as well. A visit to an MFA program today will reveal a plethora of "slacker abstractions" that channel anyone and everyone from Richard Tuttle to Michael Krebber. When queried about the critical stakes or guiding principles of such a practice, the student repeats the language of the press releases: "Well, it's really intuitive, just thinking about materials and process." Such myopia, born of

5. In "The Return to the Craft" (1920), Giorgio de Chirico urges a return to classical tradition after a state of avant-garde "hysteria": "With the sunset of hysteria more than one painter will return to the craft, and those who have already done so can work with freer hands, and their work will be more adequately recognized and recompensed." See Charles Harrison and Paul Wood, eds., *Art in Theory 1900–1990* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), pp. 234–37. It is also interesting to note that de Chirico's emphasis on the reception by "freer hands" of commensurate compensation is echoed in today's emphasis on labor and process as an index of aesthetic (and perhaps monetary) value. Both returns mobilize the rhetoric of craft as essential to tradition. Today's coupling of process and abstraction is thus a literal "re-crafting" of the modernist past.

theoretical foreclosures and a general sense of defeatism (one student recently remarked, "How do you compete with *Avatar*?"), also signals a withdrawal, a back-to-basics mentality. In this retreat, modernism offers a proud, long-unclaimed history that can now be surfed, collaged, and artfully arranged into quasi-uncanny objects, critical in form yet complacent in spirit.

The danger here is less that this art promotes an illusory autonomy or cynically concedes to the market than that it reveals the discourse of art as now consisting of nothing but the market. Needless to say, the collecting class, largely unexposed to the critique of modernism and still driven by humanistic myths of creation, celebrates any return to the promise of an autonomous, self-possessed maker yielding highly aestheticized products through mostly intuitive means. For this generally older demographic, the return to modernism is perceived as combining the street cred of a younger generation with a vetted inoffensiveness that closely echoes the classics of the past century. So a Thomas Houseago sculpture may invoke the primitivist heroics of Picasso, while a "face painting" by Mark Grotjann can echo Klee or Poussette-Dart.

Lest one believe that a work's implicit criticality were sufficient to undo, convert, or contest this mentality, any visit to a collection will reveal the naiveté of such thinking. Still motivated by aesthetic appeal, market value, and the decorative place of a work in the home, most collectors in fact seem unmoved or impervious to a work's critical gestures, while artists are often torn between personal politics and commercial pressure. The two parties thus engage in an uneasy courtship around unspoken divisions and unacknowledged aspirations, where each seeks the perceived (and performed) freedoms of the other. Even when purchased for institutions, the work can still be vetted through a private home en route to a public forum. It is only logical that this circuit of exchange privileges a particular type of work, a particular type of practice, a particular type of discourse.

Understanding this implicitly, neo-formalism tacitly reveals an epistemic shift, a historical transformation, whereby, with the avant-garde now jettisoned as a naive fiction, the contemporary artwork is regarded as little more than an exclusive (exclusionary) *objet d'art*. If we consider the formal veneer of the works in question, the structure of today's art market, and the ornate passivity of its championed products, we see a return to a premodern condition, in which the artwork is limited largely to a propagandistic, affirmative, or decorative role, as was the case with eighteenth-century painting. Indeed, one only has to look at Nattier, Fragonard, and Boucher to see the operational horizon and destiny of much of today's production. Comparing these two epochs, defined by gross economic asymmetry and the alienation of its "enlightened" aristocratic class from an impoverished and flawed infrastructure, we see the logic of today's political and economic divisiveness, the "mobs" rioting in the streets, as well as the courtly properties of today's art.

Taken broadly, this shift is tied to the art world's becoming a peculiar form of niche industry, equal parts Hollywood and exotic market (Gagosian Gallery, for instance, now sells speedboats designed by Marc Newson). Witness, too, the ever-growing number of art fairs that scour the globe for new collectors, the

heightened fascination with celebrity (i.e., James Franco's newfound legitimacy as an artist), and the Oscar-inspired Art Awards that started as a gag by Rob Pruitt but have now been transformed into a legitimate award ceremony.

The neo-formalism crowding today's MFA programs, galleries, museums, and art fairs is both the ostensible antagonist of this development and its reaction formation. It may appear to deny a perfected spectacle, but it is tethered to it as by an umbilical cord.[6] Lest one mistake it for the autonomous art once championed by Adorno, this work seldom aspires to address the generalized alienation that would result in a gesture of refusal, nor is it refused by a literalist audience in search of simpler things. Rather, it greets a pre-primed spectator, already indoctrinated into the codes and mythologies of the modern, who happily welcomes it as a return to old certainties—an echo of a lost golden age.

6. As Clement Greenberg famously wrote, "No culture can develop without a social basis, without a source of stable income. And in the case of the avant-garde, this was provided by an elite among the ruling class of that society from which it assumed itself to be cut off, but to which it has always remained attached by an umbilical cord of gold." See "Avant-Garde and Kitsch" (1939), in *Art in Theory 1900–1990*, p. 533.

Hegel's *Werkmeister*: Architecture, Architectonics, and the Theory of History

HASSANALY LADHA

The persistence in Hegel studies of reductive and non-dialectical readings of a few sweeping claims made in his lectures on art and history—notably that "art . . . is and remains for us a thing of the past"; that illiterate peoples, "in spite of their achievements in the realm of linguistic development, do not possess a history"; and that "world-history progresses from East to West, for Europe is *absolutely* the end of history, Asia the beginning...[In the West] the sun of self-consciousness rises, spreading a superior luminosity"—have resulted in serious distortions in the interpretation of Hegel's corpus.[1] That such statements, studied in isolation and removed from the dialectical contexts of Hegel's written work—especially the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the *Science of Logic*, and the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*—have been misread can be attributed in part to the deceptive accessibility of the lecture courses, as prepared and published by Hegel's students, against the "extreme compression" and frequently elliptical and even figurative mode of Hegel's written work.[2] Also to blame is the critical tendency to neglect the copious portions of the lecture courses dedicated to Eastern or "Oriental" art, religion, philosophy, and history, where Hegel assiduously unfolds concepts crucial to his later dialectical arguments. As a result, critical judgments of Hegel have ignored his painstakingly developed positions, foundational for any reading of his work, on what he terms the "architectonic" fluidity of historical categories and on the

1. G.W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, vols. 13–15, *Werke*, 20 vol., ed. E. Moldenhauer and K. M. Michel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1969–1971), here vol. 13, p. 25; and *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, vol. 12, *Werke*, pp. 85–86 and 134. All further citations from Hegel will be from this edition, unless otherwise noted. All translations of Hegel are mine, unless otherwise noted.

2. Hegel's lectures on world history, religion, art, and the history of philosophy, as well as a number of supplementary and lecture remarks (*Zusätze*) on various paragraphs of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, were all published after his death, compiled from his own lecture notes and from those of his students. Ludwig Boumann, one such student and an editor of Hegel's complete works, remarks in the foreword to the 1845 edition of the *Zusätze* that Hegel, who "lectured with great freedom," indeed "more or less total improvisation," "thought that one should for the most part give a freer and, in part, a more profound rein in one's lectures than in the printed text," which Hegel was satisfied to write with "extreme compression" (cited in G.W.F. Hegel. *Philosophy of Mind:* being part three of the '*Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences' [1830]*, translated by William Wallace, together with the *Zusätze* in Boumann's text [1845]; translated by A. V. Miller; with foreword by J. N. Findlay (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. vi.).

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 15–38. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

resulting imbrication of aesthetics and history. These principles are entirely at odds with his legacy, which Paul de Man describes as follows:

> Whether we know it, or like it, or not, most of us are Hegelians and quite orthodox ones at that. We are Hegelian when we reflect on literary history in terms of an articulation between the Hellenic and the Christian Era or between the Hebraic and Hellenic world. We are Hegelian when we try to systematize the relationships between the various art forms or genres according to different modes of representations or when we try to conceive of historical periodization as a development, progressive or regressive, of a collective or individual consciousness. Not that such concerns belong exclusively to Hegel; far from it. But the name 'Hegel' stands here for an all-encompassing vessel in which so many currents have gathered and been preserved that one is likely to find there almost any idea one knows to have been gathered from elsewhere or hopes to have invented oneself. Few thinkers have so many disciples who never read a word of their master's writing.[3]

De Man goes on to attribute to a distorted Hegelianism such "historical fallacies" as "the ideologically loaded genealogy of the modern as derived from the classical, Hellenic past," "responsible for a good deal of poor historiography from the early nineteenth century to the present."[4] De Man's brief but seminal essays on Hegel go far in laying the groundwork for a rereading of the latter's conception of the "aesthetic," pointing in particular to the dangers of divorcing it from the context and formulations of Hegel's *Encyclopedia*, the armature for all of Hegel's courses including the lectures on art.[5] Nevertheless, against de Man's example, numerous studies of Hegel's aesthetics continue to treat the text of the *Aesthetics* in isolation.[6] Reading the

3. Paul de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, ed. Andrzej Warminski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 92–93.

4. De Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, p. 108.

5. See Paul de Man's "Sign and Symbol in Hegel's *Aesthetics*," "Hegel on the Sublime," and "Reply to Raymond Geuss," all in *Aesthetic Ideology*. I discuss my differences with de Man's readings of Hegel below.

6. The only scholar to take seriously Hegel's relation of architecture and poetry in the *Aesthetics* is Claudia Brodsky Lacour in her "Architecture in the Discourse of Modern Philosophy: Descartes to Nietzsche," in *Nietzsche and "An Architecture of our Minds,"* ed. Alexandre Kostka and Irving Wohlfarth (Los Angeles: Getty Research Institute, 1999), pp. 19–34, and "From the Pyramids to Romantic Poetry: Housing the Spirit in Hegel" in *Rereading Romanticism*; ed. Martha B. Helfer (Amsterdam: Rodolpi, 2000), pp. 327–342, two studies to which this essay must make continual reference. Informing my general approach to Hegel, especially with respect to his conception of language, are Alexander Kojève's *Introduction à la lecture de Hegel*, ed. R. Queneau (Paris: Gallimard, 1947); Jean Hippolyte's *Logique et existence* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1961); Derrida's "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism Without Reserve," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978); Derrida's "The Pit and the Pyramid: Introduction to Hegel's Semiology" and "White Mythology" in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982); and his *Glas*, trans. John Leavey, Jr. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1986).

lecture courses against the backdrop of his written texts, this essay traces Hegel's relation of architecture, the quintessence of seemingly static and enduring form, to the "architectonic" as the principle of dynamism that, traversing the physical and discursive realms, underwrites a mode of resistance to entrenched forms and categories of history. Furthermore, this essay restores historical concepts misappropriated from Hegel over the last two centuries to their dialectical contexts, aiming at a rehabilitation of his legacy. At stake in this critical rereading of Hegel are the very disciplines of aesthetics and history as they are currently conceived and practiced.

From Architecture to Architectonics

Hegel first approaches the relation of aesthetics and history at the beginning of his discussion of the individual arts in the *Aesthetics*. In considering how to differentiate artistic genres, Hegel points out that any genre as a concept would have to correspond to a historical form of artistic expression and, presumably, distinguish an artistic expression against whatever fell outside the conceptual boundaries of the genre—from its historical emergence and through its entire history. But as Hegel holds throughout his *oeuvre*, a beginning must always be preceded by something that led up to that beginning, and so an absolute beginning cannot be fixed. To the extent that a concept corresponds to finite phenomena, it cannot establish an originary antecedent to the exclusion of others.[7] While a historical narrative must begin somewhere, all such beginnings serve only a heuristic purpose relative to a particular reading or interpretation.[8] The beginning of a historical narrative remains therefore entirely "accidental"[9] or contingent:

> Where to make the beginning is indeterminate; a beginning is to be made, but it is only a relative one. We go beyond it, but not to infinity, only to another beginning which is, inevitably, also only a conditioned one; in short, it is only the nature of the relative which is expressed, since we are in the realm of the finite.[10]

For this reason thoughtful history, for Hegel, does not consist of chronology, which in fact "holds no interest at all for thought";[11] rather "what has happened [*Geschehene*]" must be taken to accord with "the *narration* [*Geschichtserzählung*] of what has happened."[12] Any historical narrative, to the extent that it must exclude

7. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse II: Die Naturphilosophie*, vol. 9, *Werke*, section 247, p. 27.
8. See Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse I: Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, vol. 8, *Werke*, section 17, p. 63.
9. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 9, section 14, p. 266.
10. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 9, section 247, p. 27.
11. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 9, section 249, p. 32.
12. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, p. 83. Emphasis mine.

materials from the surviving record—as well as events that were never registered—must conform to a narrative pattern necessarily discordant with the movement of events in their entirety.[13] The concept of history, Hegel argues, can only survive this entanglement with narrative through a tautological insistence on the agreement of relevant occurrences with the narrative of their relevance.[14] Insisting on this subservience of the category of history to that of narrative, Hegel goes so far as to claim that any element falling outside the scope of *his* historical narrative must fall outside the category of the historical. This claim, articulating in radical terms the necessary premise of any telling of "what happened," has been dismissed as a case of galling hubris and Eurocentrism rather than taken up for its relevance to Hegel's assiduously developed theory of history.

The primacy of narrative over actual events is especially clear in the case of art, where to identify its beginning "we must entirely exclude . . . empirical history."[15] Examining the concept of art for a "division" that would separate particular arts within a totality of art,[16] Hegel notes that "we have immediately a *division* [*Teilung*] in the case of this art of architecture," where the materialized limit serves as a means for an external end—an "enclosure," for instance, for "man, the subject, or the image of the god."[17] But this materialized division cannot in itself demarcate the limit of the concept of art because art requires a partial independence, but also a certain affinity of form and content: to enter the realm of the aesthetic, an architectural enclosure must in some respect indicate or essentially partake in the meaning of its content. The aesthetic only materializes when a wall, enclosure, or other manifest line refers to its own production of meaning, which is to say indicates its own meaning *symbolically*.[18] The "prototype" for properly symbolic art is the Egyptian pyramid:[19]

> The Pyramids put before our eyes the simple image or prototype [*ein-*

13. Thus "illiterate" people who have not produced an accessible, written archive—including through inscriptions on monuments (see Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, p. 85)—"do not possess a history." Since the "history" we have for literate peoples consists of a narrative [*Geschichtserzählung*] emerging from archival materials, for Hegel we no more have a pure, unmediated, and complete sense of the actual events of, say, Napoleonic Europe than of pre-Homeric Greece or the then-unknown interior of Africa. Hegel's conception of non-historicity is further nuanced by his insistence that all claims in particular cases only obtain *relatively*—that is, "for us" at the time of writing (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, p. 134). It bears mentioning that the contingency of history on writing, following from the latter's apparently enduring material form, does not belie the dialectical imbrication of vocal and written forms of language in Hegel, both of which inhere in the universally human faculty he calls "memory" (Hegel, *Enzyklopädie III: Die Philosophie des Geistes*, vol. 10, *Werke*, section 462, p. 278).

14. See Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, pp. 83–84.

15. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 266.

16. Ibid.

17. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 268.

18. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, pp. 268–70.

19. It is worth noting here that Hegel, in the course of distinguishing the sign from the symbol in the *Encyclopedia*, emblematizes the sign as a *pyramid*, the very prototype of the symbol itself: "The *sign* is some immediate intuition that introduces significance totally different from what the sign has for itself materially; it is the *pyramid* to which a foreign soul [*eine fremden Seele*] is translated [*versetz ist*] and preserved" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 10, section 457, pp. 269–70). It is this passage from the *Encyclopedia* that prompts de Man to state incorrectly that the pyramid "connotes, to a reader of Hegel, the emblem

> *fache Bild*] of symbolic art itself; they are enormous crystals which hold within themselves an inner meaning and, as external forms produced by art, they enclose that meaning such that it is apparent that they are there for this inner meaning which they have separated from pure nature and only in relation to this meaning. But this domain of death and the invisible, which here makes up the meaning, has only one side, a formal one, of the true content of art, which is to be carried away from immediate existence; and so this domain is first of all only Hades, not yet a life which, even if relieved of the sensuous as such, is still and at the same time self-existent and thereby in itself a free and living spirit. Thus the shape for such an inner meaning remains an utterly external form and covering for the definite content of that meaning. The Pyramids are such an external environment in which an inner meaning rests concealed.[20]

The "obvious" meaning of the pyramids lies in this purposeful "concealment" of their meaning: they "put before our eyes" their removal of the dead from the visible world of the living.[21] What these buildings as a material division enclose is not spirit but departed spirit—a body bereft of mind. The pyramids present themselves as a "shell" containing and preserving a corpse as its "kernel"; and by concentrating meaning on that embalmed corpse as the "enduring body and form" of a "departed spirit," they imply that the body is also a "shell," in this case for a lost "kernel."[22] Just as the pyramids preserve corpses removed from the world of life and light, so those bodies, by being preserved, refer to their former function as houses for souls removed from the world of nature.[23] Concealed and preserved, "the dead acquires the content of the living. Divested of immediate existence, the dead, in its separation from life, still

Illustration from *Description de l'Egypte,* 1809–1828.

---

of the sign as opposed to the symbol . . . the deliberate forgetting of substantial, aesthetic, and pictorial symbols" (de Man, *The Resistance to Theory*, pp. 69–70). To a reader of Hegel's *Aesthetics*, anyway, the pyramid is, as we will see, *the* quintessential emblem or symbol of the symbol. Hegel's dialectic of sign and symbol, and his semiology in general, lies beyond the scope of this article; here it suffices to suggest that the pyramid is in fact for Hegel the symbol of the sign or, for that matter, the sign of the symbol only retrospectively, in light of their discursive imbrication in later moments of the dialectic.

20. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, pp. 459–60.

21. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 291.

22. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 294.

23. An image of the pyramids as artificial forms demarcating an interior space removed from the illuminated, natural world appears above, one of many images of the sun-struck pyramids circulating in Europe in the wake of the Napoleonic invasion of Egypt and published in the multivolume *Description de l'Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1809–1828).

maintains its relation to the living, and in this concrete form it is made independent and preserved."[24] Indeed the "houses for the dead" not only enclose but also symbolize corpses as houses for departed spirit: each pyramid is a "corporeal shell" [*leibliche Hülle*] placed around the dead person as an "architectonic enclosure."[25] While the pyramids and the dead both become "independent" symbols, they remain architecturally and linguistically entangled: as an enclosure of the negative, each depends on its physical position "inside" or "outside" the other, just as the houses for corpses and the corpses as houses can each be articulated only in terms of the other.

Moreover, the two symbols negate each other's demarcation of the negative. The mutual entanglement of these symbols and the movable boundaries of the negative do not, however, belie the independence of either spirit or its symbols. For "independence" here arises not from rigorous division but from a simultaneous separation *and* relation of the sensuous and negative—in this case of the living and the dead, the visible and the invisible, body and soul, and nature and spirit. The barrier interposed between any of these two terms cannot be traversed, as the pyramids close in upon themselves, offering neither opening nor passage into their interior realm of death.[26] But the true content of the pyramids does not lie on the other side of their walls, since the souls being remembered are not sensual and cannot be physically contained. Indeed, the "independence" of the pyramid as a symbol arises from a double negation: the removal from sight of what has already departed. The pyramids symbolize this capacity for revealing the force what has been removed, for giving conceptual life to the dead, or for quickening what has ossified, and more broadly the conceptual attempt to negate the exclusionary force of any binary. They erect a barrier between inside and outside, but derive meaning by further shifting interiority, attributing it to the corpses they conceal from view. By materializing the binary, the pyramids reveal not only the negative but also the power of the negative to subvert its defining binary. The pyramids thus reveal the "freedom" of the negative from the sensual world without fixing that division in a manner that would again abolish the negative;[27] at the same time they reveal the negative as the very principle of fluidity that propels the dialectic.

Crucially, the pyramid manifests the straight line as a movement from the plane of its "base" to the "point" of its apex.[28] The point, straight line, and plane as "inorganic" forms, by definition, do not occur in nature; for the same reason they are also "external" to matter fashioned architecturally. Though they are exter-

24. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 458.
25. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, pp. 291–92.
26. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 293.
27. In fact, Hegel states that the Egyptians had "only reached the threshold or frontier [*Schwelle*] of the realm of freedom," since the pyramid's "liberation" of departed spirit "from sensuous nature" is not tantamount to life that is in itself "free and living spirit." Nonetheless, the Egyptian pyramids come "very close" to being a true conception and symbol of freedom because of their separation between nature and an immortal soul, which "lies very close to the freedom of the spirit" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 459).
28. See also Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 508–9, and Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 294.

nal to externality (that is, foreign to the sensual world), as dialectical forms of the limit [*Grenze*], they manifest and also provide an image of the differentiation of externality. Elsewhere Hegel glosses the limit as follows:

> [T]he limit, as the negation of something reflected into itself, contains *ideally* within it the moments of something and other . . . the limit is the non-being of the other, not of the something itself: at its limit, the something limits its other. But the other is itself a something in general; the limit which something has against the other is also the limit of the other as a something, its limit by which it holds the first something as its other away from it, or is a *non-existence of that something*; hence it is not only the non-existence of the other, but also of the one and of the other something, therefore of the something in general . . . the limit is simple negation or the *first* negation, while the other is, at the same time, the negation of the negation. . . . It is in conformity with this difference of something from its limit that the line appears as line only outside its limit, the point; the plane as plane outside the line; the [animate or inanimate] body as body only outside its limiting surface. This is the facet of limit that pictorial representation first grasps—the self-externality of the Concept—particularly with respect to spatial objects.[29]

Conceptually the limit demarcates a concept or thing as a negation of its other; but by also demarcating the other, the limit at the same time negates the initial concept or thing. The limit marks the dialectical progression from undifferentiated self-externality to concrete space through the movement between point, line, plane, and solid,[30] each term negating and negated by the preceding or succeeding term.[31] Now, the limit as difference, or the negation and double negation that constitute the demarcation of a spatial thing, cannot be reproduced as such in sensuous form, since difference itself has no exact sensual corollary. Similarly, point, line, and plane as images externalize but also negate their conceptual negativity as the thought of non-dimensionality or dimensionality. In this respect, point, line, and plane, inorganic and this unprecedented in nature, are strictly and fundamentally non-representational, imitating or reproducing nothing in the world: "*there is* no such thing as a point, line, or plane."[32] Regardless, Hegel implies a distinction between *conceptualizing* the point, line, or plane—as abstract, mathematical, and non-existent principles—and *drawing* a point, line, or plane.

29. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik*, *Werke*, vol. 5, p. 136.

30. For a discussion of point, line, and plane in terms of the differentiation and concretization of externality, see Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 9, section 256, pp. 44–47 and section 96, pp. 204–5.

31. See Hegel's *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1969), pp. 128–29.

32. Ibid., p. 129. Hegel's italicization of "*there is*" in this negative phrase asserts both the existence and nonexistence of these forms of the limit, in accordance with its own double inscription of being and negation. The term "non-representational" here and elsewhere in this essay refers to a modality of expression, in any medium, that is non-mimetic and non-referential—that is, that does not imitate, double, copy, or reproduce anything else.

Any such illustrative representation or image, as the positive or concrete corollary to a negative or abstract form, could only be said to be *symbolic* of the dialectical and differentiating movement of the limit. Likewise the pyramid, as an expression of all these forms and especially of the straight line "proper and essential to architecture," "seizes a representation" of the differentiating limit not as its mimetic reproduction but *as its symbol.* Erecting not just a wall or enclosure, the pyramid is the "simplest" manifestation of the symbol because it externalizes the limit as "simple negation," the first differentiation of pure space; likewise as the "simplest construction," it manifests architecture essentially and in its most essential, symbolic mode. Inner and outer, thought and sensuous externality, spirit and nature, and life and death are brought into symbolic affinities most fundamentally through the sensory manifestation of the pyramid because the pyramid is the sensory manifestation of the limit. Since it is also the "image" of the symbol "proper" (where "proper" signifies an impenetrability of the limits of the concept), the pyramid can be called the symbol of the symbol, the symbol of the limit, and indeed the limit of the symbol, to the extent that it marks, in Hegel's theoretical history of art, the "beginning" of the symbol "proper." And to the extent that only pyramids, as the quintessentially architectural form, materialize a limit and maintain a certain "independence" from utilitarian considerations of use or referentiality, that limit must mark the incipient, defining manifestation, and indeed delimitation of the concept of the aesthetic. In other words, because only architecture physically realizes the limit that separates out the particular in a non-utilitarian manner, imbricating form and content, a historical narrative of art must take architecture to be the art form first appearing in the history of art. More to the point, architecture, underwriting the conception of the limit demarcating artistic form as such, thus provides the *aesthetic structure* of the history of aesthetics.

By extension, the architectural doubling and displacement of the corporeal demarcations of interiority, evident in the pyramidal articulation of a "corporeal shell," mark the instability of the limit of any concept. As a dynamic "architectonic enclosure," architectural form emblematizes the fluid conceptual lines between historical periods, forms, peoples, and belief systems—symbolically, as it were, in the history of the symbol:

> On these more determinate forms of the still original symbol we can assume in advance that they arise from the religious worldview of entire peoples; on this account we must also summon up history. Even so, the lines of division [*Scheidung*] cannot be imposed too rigidly, since the particular modes of treatment and configuration are mixed—like the forms of art in general—so that we find again in earlier or later phases, however subordinated and isolated, a form that we consider as expressing essentially the world-view of a particular people.[33]

33. Hegel, *Werke,* vol. 13, pp. 414–15.

The "lines of division" emerging from the symbolic manifestation of form into the world must, like the symbol, relate to varied content. The imperfect imbrication of form and content in the symbol marks the essential structure of the aesthetic, common to its symbolic and romantic forms, which, unlike the classical form, can sustain themselves in time. (By way of his famous statement that "art in the form of its highest determination [*nach der Seite ihrer höchsten Bestimmung*] is and remains for us a thing of the past," Hegel insists that the congruity of form and content attempted by classical art cannot find any temporally sustainable exterior expression; classical art "finds" a "complete unity of inner meaning and outer form" in the "representation of substantial individuality" but then loses it by unveiling the fundamental incommensurability of sensuous externality and spiritual content.[34]) Because movable, self-canceling architectural form is fundamentally symbolic and thus makes possible the unstable affinities of the aesthetic, its architectonic limit, understood more broadly as an *aesthetic line*, marks the hybridity or heterogeneity internal to aesthetic history, history in general, and indeed any historically determined category of thought. Thus at the beginning of the *Encyclopedia* Hegel mentions the difficulty of representing the boundaries of a category:

> A determination in which the idea appears is at the same time a *fluid* moment; hence, the single science is just as much to recognize its content as an *existent* object, as to recognize immediately in that content its crossing into its higher circle. Thus the *representation* of *division* is misleading in that it puts the particular parts or sciences *side by side*, as if they were—like biological species—only dormant, fixed, and substantial in their distinction.[35]

Writing this passage several decades before the emergence of evolutionary theory, Hegel does not conceive of biological species as temporally continuous with each other. Even so, what distinguishes the "single science" of philosophy is precisely its

34. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 25. Rather than declaring art as such dead for all time, here Hegel refers specifically to art in its "highest" or ideal determination, which he defines as the congruity of form and content and identifies explicitly with classical Greek art. This art must be "past" not only in the historical sense but also in the more radical sense that the "ideal" unity of form and content cannot be seized in the present any more than, in Hegel's analysis of sense-perception, the referent of the "This" can be taken "now" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 82–92): the universal and particular, the idea and its sensory appearance, meaning and shape, form and content—are fundamentally incommensurate. Though it is easy to be misled by his seemingly nostalgic tone, Hegel makes clear that, in the first place, he is not devalorizing the present: "No Homer, Sophocles, etc., no Dante, Ariosto, or Shakespeare can emerge in our time. . . . Only the present is fresh, all else is paler and paler" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 238). Moreover, the pastness of classical or "proper" art, and of the art of the past, does not negate the future possibility of symbolic or romantic forms of art—or indeed of some higher synthesis of these. While classical art is no longer "of spiritual interest" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 141), Hegel lauds the present possibilities of art (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 239). On the pastness of art proper, see also de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, pp. 102–3, and Brodsky Lacour, "From the Pyramids to Romantic Poetry: Housing the Spirit in Hegel," pp. 346–47.

35. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, section 18, p. 64.

capacity to recognize, if not represent, the movability of the line demarcating other disciplines or objects. Though that architectonic line, to cancel itself, must be aesthetic, its representation remains "misleading" by virtue of its static appearance. Thus Hegel articulates the architectonic in mathematical terms evading representation. The line, extended into a circle, collapses its distinct but "fluid" dialectical moments, including its beginning and ending points, into a totality, but this totality does not contain itself, passing instead into a "higher" circle, implying an intersection of circles. But an intersection would mark an extrinsically determined point, a beginning or an ending that would thus compromise the independence of the circle as a purported totality or self-sufficient system. Thus the architectonic movement of thought, a progression through neither linked circles nor a spiral, cannot be *truthfully represented* aesthetically or mathematically. The architectonic thus exceeds its conceptual and historical provenance and representation in architecture.

The Limits of the Aesthetic

The architectonic requires, in fact, discursive articulation, but even this articulation must occur within the realm of the aesthetic, namely in poetry, for Hegel the art of figurative language.[36] Crucially, the romantic art of poetry posits "the body more or less as negative so as to lift inwardness out of externality."[37] Moving away from the corporeal interiority that produces it, poetry nonetheless never attains to the complete dissolution of the body:

> [Poetry] in its artistic embodiment is essentially to be grasped as a moving away from and suppression of real sensuousness, yet still as a production that does not dare leave off corporealization [*Verleiblichung*] and movement in the external altogether. To explain philosophically this movement toward freedom [from the sensuous], we must first specify this sensuousness from which art must free itself; by the same token we must also explain how poetry takes up the totality of the content and forms of all the arts. We have to look at this process as a laboring for totality, a process demonstrable philosophically only as the sublation [*Aufheben*] of any limitation to the particular characteristic of the previous treatment of the arts in their single-faceted and one-sided forms, whose unique value is negated in the totality [to which poetry aspires]. Only by considering poetry in this manner does poetry emerge as the special art in which . . . art itself begins to dissolve . . .[38]

In describing poetry here, Hegel rehearses the terms of symbolic architecture, but in precisely oppositional terms. Where poetry posits the dissolution of the living

36. "We can in general describe poetry's mode of representation as *figurative*" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 276).
37. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 14.
38. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 234.

body,[39] symbolic architecture posits the dead body as radically and physically preserved against natural dissolution. Poetry and architecture thus both attempt to negate the body, but in contrasting ways: poetry by marginalizing the body, architecture by preserving and concealing it as dead. This oppositional relation to the body extends to their larger relation to matter as such: where poetry grants "free play" and "movement" to its spiritual and sensory elements,[40] symbolic architecture presents an immovable, solid edifice for a "departed spirit" and senseless corpse. Thus Hegel posits a dialectical relation of the two art forms that mark the beginning and ending; hence the conceptual limits of the aesthetic:

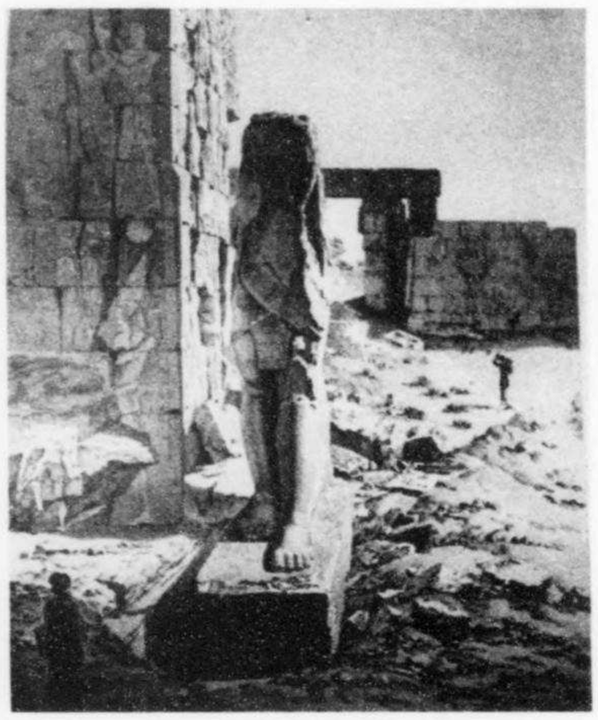
> In the system of the arts we can directly oppose the art of poetry to architecture. For architecture remains incapable of subordinating objective material to spiritual content in such a manner as to shape that material into a form adequate to spirit; poetry, in exact contrast, goes so far in the negative treatment of its sensuous element that it degrades the voice, which is the opposite of heavy spatial matter, to a meaningless sign, whereas architecture shapes its material into an indicating symbol. But poetry thereby dissolves the fusion of spiritual inwardness with external existence to a degree that begins to correspond no longer to the original conception of art, so that now poetry runs the risk of losing itself in its movement out of the region of the sensuous into that of the spiritual.[41]

Appearing just after Hegel's claim that poetry "does not dare leave off corporealization and movement in the external altogether," this passage, in context, makes clear that these two art forms oppose each other in their *aims* with respect to the body and not in their attainment of its ultimate preservation or rarefaction. On the contrary, architecture and poetry together, performing the provisional preservation and cancelation of the body, propel the dialectical circuit of the aesthetic. Architecture materializes a line that divides matter from an inner realm lacking spirit, intellect, and meaning; as a symbol, its external shape nonetheless points both to that loss of meaning and the negativity of its own act of indication. Such a building still attains to "articulation" in the verbal signs of living interpreters or viewing occupants; similarly, poetry, through the nonrepresentational elements of "tempo, rhythm, euphony, rhyme,"[42] and other manipulations of sound, isolates the meaningless dimension of the voice or the letter as pure materiality, either empty animal sound or indecipherable notation.

The poetically isolated voice as a "meaningless sign" could thus "just as well

39. Hegel repeatedly makes it clear that the romantic does not utterly dissolve the interrelation of body and spirit posited in classical art; rather their connection becomes distant and "loose" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 14).
40. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 14.
41. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 235.
42. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 275.

be a pure letter," a type of inscription with no phonetic counterpart.[43] Hegel meditates on the nonrepresentational materiality of the letter, over against its referentiality, in his discussion of the hieroglyph. The hieroglyph in Hegel marks the next step in the dialectical emergence of the human form concealed in the pyramid.[44] Evolving out of the inorganic geometry of symbolic architecture proper, the written hieroglyph moves from the representation of natural forms to the expression of human conceptions: the animal shape becomes "the



Illustrations from *Description de l'Egypte*, 1809–1828.

hieroglyph of a thought."[45] By implication, through this process the hieroglyph subverts the organic character of its form: as the animal hieroglyph no longer represents an animal, the straight and curved lines making up its image take on increasingly independent force as the external expression of thought. What is at stake in this dialectical progression is the status of writing as drawing and engraving: on the one hand, its lines serve to reproduce shapes in the world; on the other hand, these material shapes externalize the nonrepresentational dimension of thought itself.

Because the lines of the hieroglyph become superfluous to the represented animal, even its curves, as forms of the line, take on an architectonic quality. Hegel already characterizes the hieroglyph as a dwelling [*Wohnung*] in the *Phenomenology*;[46] in his later lectures, he explicitly identifies the hieroglyph as a form of symbolic architecture, and symbolic architecture as a kind of hieroglyph:

> The excellence of the Egyptian spirit lies in the fact that it stands before us as a prodigious work-master [*Werkmeister*]. It seeks neither

43. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 123.

44. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 462. For a similar discussion of the dialectical movement from geometric architecture to the hieroglyph, see also Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 510–11. The relation between architectural forms, architectonic sculpture, and hieroglyphic script is also evident in images from *Description de l'Egypte* (Paris: Imprimerie Impériale, 1809–1828).

45. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 510–11.

46. Ibid.

> splendor, diversion, nor pleasure, but is instead compelled to comprehend itself; and it has no other material or ground to work on, in order to teach itself what it is and realize itself for itself, than this working out its thoughts in stone. And what it engraves on the stone are its riddles—these hieroglyphs. They are of two types: hieroglyphs proper, which aim at expressing language and relate to subjective conception; the other hieroglyphs are those enormous masses of architecture and sculpture with which Egypt is covered.[47]

Conceived as a sheer engraving in stone, and no longer as a mere image "designed to express language," the hieroglyph can be identified with other essentially nonrepresentational work in stone—the massive symbolic architecture and architectonic sculpture that cover Egypt. Laid out in rows over the landscape, the symbolic buildings of Egypt appear as a text spaced carefully across a page.[48] Not only do these productions give the landscape the form of a book, but the architectural works, covered with hieroglyphs, are themselves "pages of a book" or even "*substitutes* for books."[49] More than just eluding representation, architectural and linguistic hieroglyphs as "engraving" actively subvert representation: as books within books, hieroglyphs within hieroglyphs—these works subvert the limits and unity of purported totalities of knowledge. The physical demarcations of script—the form of the book, the space around a hieroglyph—give only the impression of unity, as the content necessarily exceeds the strict limit implied by the form.

Furthermore, as both symbols and surfaces for symbols, buildings point to the negativity of material inscription or engraving: thoughts "worked out in stone" or upon any physical surface both leave a mark and clear a space—material effects that are not in themselves representational but that may, for instance, efface earlier marks or inflect other hieroglyphs "designed to express language." As parts "substitute" for the whole, so too hieroglyphs on architectural surfaces substitute for buildings, and the buildings again for the land they cover as a book. Architectural and linguistic hieroglyphs displace each other both in stone and in the language of Hegel's text, further blurring the line between "engraving" and "expressing": indeed, "engraving," as a form of *negative* expression, "expresses" as much as it merely accompanies a representation. Thus the hieroglyph, in its architectural dimension, makes visible the material or nonrepresentational dimension

47. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, p. 265.

48. For numerous images of such symbolic pieces spaced out over a landscape like hieroglyphs on a page, see *Description de l'Egypte*.

49. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, pp. 283–84 (emphasis mine). The Egyptian temple-precincts proliferate "en masse": "this prodigious architecture . . . enclosed by walls," is "without roofing, gates, or passages between divisions"; "whole forests of columns" form "labyrinths" that "substitute for books because they convey their meanings not by their mode of configuration but by the writings, images engraved on their surface . . . " The walls, with Memnons leaning on them, are "bedecked all over with hieroglyphs or huge pictures in stone . . . like the pages of a book" (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, pp. 283–84).

of language, revealing the cancelation, displacement, and subversion that attend and actively contaminate any representation.

The hieroglyph becomes, then, *the* symbol for the conflation of architecture and language: "In Egypt, overall, almost every shape is a symbol and hieroglyph not signifying itself but indicating something else with which it has kinship and therefore a relation."[50] Because of its symbolic materialization of meaning, *architecture is a language*:

> The relation between content and sensuous reality by which the content should come from [the producer's] conception into [a viewer's] can only be of a symbolical kind. At the same time, a building which is to reveal a universal idea to viewers stands for no other purpose than to express this high idea in itself, and is thus an independent symbol of an absolutely essential and universally valid thought, or a language [*Sprache*], present [*vorhandene*] for its own sake, even if it be soundless, for spiritual beings.[51]

Though it lacks spoken form, architecture is a language because it manifests *externally* a symbolic relation between sensuous reality and thought. Here *vorhandene* modifies *Sprache*, explicitly attributing material presence to language, but in this case not to language as merely vocalized sound. The passage implies that though speech does materialize language, the latter externalizes itself regardless of any audibility. If architecture is a "soundless" language, so too language, before its vocalization, materializes thought architecturally, that is, by externalizing a necessary but imperfect affinity of form and content.[52] In other words, it is not the material qualities of speech, writing, or gesture, but the necessity of their architectonic arrangement, both in space and time, that renders the material forms of language superfluous or incongruous to the meanings they bear.

This architectonic dimension of language reveals itself only in the art of poetry. Just as Egyptian architecture manifests the mechanical arrangement of material in "rows"—a sequencing of hieroglyphs according to no governing principle but the necessity of the architectonic—so in the same way poetry relies on the architectonic arrangement of "sounds" and "notes," voiced and written:

> [R]omantic poetry, because it strikes the soulful tone of feeling, plays upon the now independent sounds and notes of letters, syllables, and words, and it proceeds to please itself in their sounds which, with the

50. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 461.

51. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 273.

52. For Hegel the architectural element in language lies precisely in this exteriorizing dimension, leading him to call hieroglyphs "dwellings" in the *Phenomenology* and to entangle the essentially linguistic symbol with architecture in the *Aesthetics*—a dialectical imbrication reaching its crisis in the figure of the colossus of Memnon, an architectural form that, struck by the light of sun, produces the empty, still meaningless voice that will bear language. This figure marks the transition from symbolic architecture to the poetry of the sublime.

> emotional ardency [*Innigkeit*] and also the architectonic and intellectual perspicacity of music, it can sequence, intermingle, and relate to one another.[53]

Poetry isolates "the music of words," whose sounds "must be molded by the poet"; but these principles are not external laws governing the arrangement of poetic material: as with symbolic architecture, poetry does not "oppose law to appearance" but instead "grasps the one in and only through the other."[54] Poetry transposes the "architectonic molding" of sound from the art of music, which, like poetry, conceptually "opposes architecture, even as it retains a kinship with it": "in music . . . the classical identity between the inner life and its external existence is again dissolved in a similar, even if opposite way as architecture which, as a symbolic mode of representation, could not achieve that unity."[55] As a romantic art, music posits the corporeity and rarefaction of its audible but vanishing material;[56] this entanglement of subjectively charged notes traversing and eluding corporeal bounds and the necessary, external body corresponds to an interplay of inner subjectivity and the mind free of referentiality: "In music the deepest emotional ardency and soul, and the most severe principles of intellect, hold equal sway. . . . Freed from verbalizations of the mind, music obtains an especially architectonic character to the extent that it accomplishes for itself, with invention, a musically governed building of sound [*Tongebäude*]."[57] Here the musical government of sound depends upon the mind's freedom from referential uses of sound.

Similarly the poetic isolation of the musicality of words as "notes," through their self-referential arrangement, differentiates poetry from ordinary, prosaic speech: "[poetry] must not leave this linguistic matter as it appears in ordinary usage and consciousness, but must treat it poetically [to differentiate it from prosaic expressions] by the choice, positioning, and sound of words."[58] Stringing together and spacing apart sounds, words, and letters, poetry reveals the "architectonic" principle of spatial and temporal difference that renders language discontinuous with any pure, unmediated empirical world it would mimetically represent.

Instantiating the power of poetic language in historical narrative, Hegel's history of art conceptually evokes not only the architectonic lines demarcating historical art forms and thus informing the structure of aesthetic history, but also the liminal art of poetry for the dissipation of those lines. Only by bringing the conceptual weight of poetry to bear on its constructions can a history progress through the aes-

53. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 304.
54. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 240.
55. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 138.
56. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, pp. 134–35.
57. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 139.
58. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 236. For the ultimately dialectical relation between poetry and prose, see note 86 below.

thetic: for poetry marks the aesthetic as a "laboring for totality, a process demonstrable philosophically as the sublation of any limitation" to the conceptual bounds of the art forms, *hence the beginning of the dissolution of art as such.*[59] The arts prior to poetry gave form to their subject matter only in "towering heavy masses, bronze, marble, wood, colors, and notes"; this "earnestness" with sensuous externality causes these particular arts to be "closed in within certain limits."[60] Poetry breaches these limits, surfacing the principle of architectonic fluidity that organizes the "art forms" and the narrative of the *Aesthetics.* Thus poetry is "not bound exclusively to any particular form of art, but is the universal art which can shape into any form and give, finally, verbal expression to any content encountered by the imagination. . . ."[61] Just as architecture and poetry together propel the dialectical circuit of the aesthetic, so too they make possible its historical progression as a materialization and dissolution of limits, or the movement between the particular and universal over time. Thus in the context of his claim that poetry attempts to negate the body or dispel its corporeal bounds, Hegel relates the process of linear dissolution—intellectually, materially, and physically—to the historical loss of the aesthetic, or the endless "beginning" of that loss.[62] Poetry frames the aesthetic as the aspiration for an atemporal "totality"—a temporal confluence of form and content—that nonetheless can never be aesthetically achieved. At the same time, because poetry subverts the ordinary order of language, revealing the contingent or accidental nature of its architectonic arrangement in space and time, architecture and poetry together mark the inability to think the architectonic in ordinary prose. And yet given its symbolic and material provenance, as a historical phenomenon the architectonic must be a subject for aesthetics.

Hegel's Werkmeister *and the Limits of History*

Within aesthetics, poetry marks the attempted movement of the aesthetic beyond itself, hence of the architectonic outside its seemingly linear or circular historical progression:

> We looked for the conclusion [of the particular arts] in art's making itself independent from the representational mode particular to one of the forms of art and in its standing above the circle of this totality of particular forms. The possibility of such a development generally lies from the very beginning, of all the particular arts, solely in the essence of poetry; therefore such a possibility is active and realized in the course of poetic production in part by leveraging and manipulating every particular form, and in part by freeing art from limitation

59. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 234.
60. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 232.
61. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 233.
62. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 234.

> to any self-enclosed type and character of treatment and content, be it symbolic, classical, or romantic.[63]

As a romantic art that also marks the loss of the category of the romantic, poetry not only collapses the formal and historical categories of the aesthetic, but also explicitly subverts the narrative progression between them. In general, romantic art "reintroduces" the separation of form and content characteristic of the symbolic,[64] albeit imposing upon outward form a relation to spiritual interiority. Poetry goes furthest in this separating out and reduction of externality, threatening to dispense with material form and hence the aesthetic altogether. As the "luminous model" [*glänzenden Vorbild*] of this romantic art of poetry, Hegel cites the poetic tradition of the "Oriental" Persians and Arabs. Thus Hegel writes in the paragraph concluding the history of the romantic:

> For [the last flourishings of art in the lyric], the Persians and Arabs provide—in the oriental [*morgenländischen*] splendor of their images, in the free bliss of imagination which engages its objects quite theoretically or contemplatively—a luminous model, even for the present and the subjective inner spirituality of today.[65]

The luminosity of this oriental poetry again explicitly recalls its sublime, pantheistic engagement with illuminated externality in the history of symbolic art. At the culminating moment of aesthetic history, Hegel mentions this Oriental poetry in the same breath as Goethe's *West-östlicher Divan*, a work "essentially different"[66] from his other poetry, not least in its declared traversal of East and West—the very categories that apparently structure the historical narrative of the *Aesthetics*. Moreover, Goethe's *Divan*, first appearing in the *Aesthetics* in the section on sublime "Mohammedan" poetry, marks not simply a return to symbolism but rather a syncretism of symbolism and romanticism. This conclusion of art history in turn subverts the narrative scaffolding of Hegel's *Aesthetics*, including especially the divisions of romantic/classical/symbolic and Western/Eastern that have dominated art-historical narratives in the wake of Hegel.[67] Thus in his *Philosophy of History* Hegel claims:

> Science and knowledge, in particular of philosophy, came from the Arabs into the West; a noble poetry and free imagination were lit

63. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 233.

64. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 392. My analysis of the romantic return to Oriental symbolism in Hegel's *Aesthetics* follows Rodolphe Gasché's discussion in "Hegel's Orient, or the End of Romanticism," in *History and Mimesis* (Buffalo: State University of New York, 1983), pp. 17–29.

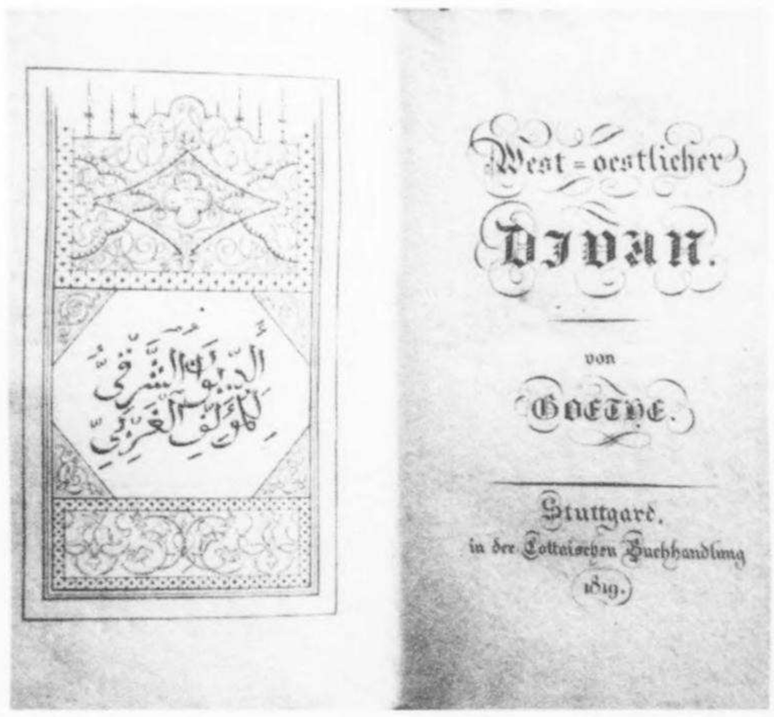
65. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 241.

66. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 14, p. 242.

67. Paul de Man links the distortion of Hegel's legacy in this respect "to a concept of language in which the all-important distinction between the symbolic and semiotic aspects of language is eroded" (de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, p. 108). De Man then recovers Hegel's entanglement of sign and symbol, but does not indicate the extent to which Hegel emphasizes the syncretic nature of the modern and the contribution of the Orient; the fluidity of art forms and genres; the contingency of historical periods; and the necessary provisionality of any historical narrative.

> amongst the Germans by the East: thus Goethe has turned to the Orient and in his *Divan* composed a string of pearls, which excels everything in inner spirituality and beatitude of imagination.[68]

Such statements countervailing the linear progression of history from east to West (at the end of aesthetic history, Goethe turns to the East, the beginning of history, and writes *Divan*) can be found throughout the text of the *Aesthetics*.[69] In another instance, Hegel, who touches on Arabic poetry from the pre-Islamic *Mu'allaqat* to the courtly poetry of the Abbasids, insists that the "spiritual ground" of this poetry is the same as that of the "romantic" poetry of the medieval West: "there lies in Arabic poetry from its beginnings an echo of the romantic principle, so that the knights of the Occident at the time of the Crusades found promptly in Arabic poetry a mood identical to their own"; "the spiritual ground from which poetry arose in the Mohammedan East was akin to that from which it arose in the Christian West."[70] As should be evident, Hegel never advocates abandoning the terms dividing peoples into national, ethnic, religious, cultural, or other such groups for the purpose of historical investigation; the key for Hegel is always to challenge and subvert those boundaries, not least since the history of aesthetics exposes the aesthetic basis of history, and hence the instability of its historical categories.



Cover of West-Eastern Divan *by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, 1819.*

It would be a mistake to say that Hegel valorizes symbolism over romanticism, or the "Mohammedan" poetry of Rumi, Hafiz, and Goethe over any other poetry. It would be equally mistaken, however, to claim the reverse. Indeed, the complicity of "Mohammedan" poetry in the syncretic culmination of art serves rather to annul the provisional valorizations or devalorizations of art throughout the text. For instance, while in the course of his lectures Hegel figures the progress of history as a movement from youth to age, or Oriental childishness to Occidental maturity, he specifically overturns this seemingly valorizing trope

68. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, pp. 433–34.

69. The juxtaposition of two languages and writing systems in the calligraphic frontispiece and title page in the 1819 publication of *Divan* conveys visually the work's attempted confluence of the Perso-Arabic or Islamic mystical and German literary traditions.

70. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 307.

as he describes the return to "Mohammedan" verse in the culminating moments of poetry:

> From the perspective of natural capacity we can in this respect give praise especially to the Mohammedan poets of the East. From the beginning they enter into this freedom which even in passion remains independent of passion, and before all variety of interests always holds on to the *one* substance alone as the proper kernel of a poem, against which everything else remains small and transient, so passion and desire mean nothing in the end. This is a theoretical and contemplative view of the world, a relation of the spirit to the things of this world which lies closer to the spirit of age than youth. For the interests of life still exist in age but not with the urgent force of passion, as in youth . . .[71]

At the end of aesthetic history, the spirit in its "age" finds its "last flourishing" and culminating expression in "Mohammedan" poetry: here again Hegel does not fail to mention Goethe, who achieves his most advanced work "only in old age," once freed of the trivializing constrictions of the particular.[72]

Hegel subverts even his most recurrent figure for the movement of history, that of a diurnal progression of the sun from East to West.[73] The most famous and explicit articulation of this figure occurs in the *Philosophy of History*:

> The sun, the light, rises in the Orient. Light is simple self-revelation [*die einfache Beziehung auf sich*]: though marked by this universality in itself, it has at the same time a distinct form in the sun. We have often imagined the scene of a blind person suddenly able to see, looking upon the breaking dawn, the growing light, the flaming sun. The endless loss of his individuality in this pure clarity—total wonder—is his first experience.[74]

This "Oriental" dawn of history corresponds with the opening phase of several disciplinary categories, including logic, where the idea "in itself" remains abstract and universal; the philosophy of spirit, where the sense of seeing inaugurates the history of mind beginning *in potentia* with anthropological man; the history of aesthetics, particularly the figure of the "architectonic" Memnon struck by the dawn; the history of religion, which begins with the worship of light; and the history of philosophy, where wonder before illuminated externality reveals the latent capacity for speculative thought. In the *Philosophy of History*, the "wonder" Hegel

71. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, pp. 273–74.
72. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 274.
73. Readers of Hegel, especially historians, have been quick to interpret the diurnal and other figures of the *Philosophy of History* without accounting for the unmistakably aesthetic nature, in Hegel's system, of the figure (or discursive symbol) and without thoroughly reading Hegel's own figures across his corpus or their inflection on his various historical narratives.
74. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, pp. 133–34.

describes in the above passage advances into the inactive "contemplation of his inner being," the "perception of the relation between the two," and in its final phase to the "activity" of self-reflexive and concrete thinking,[75] an intellectual activity Hegel calls "building":

> [B]y evening man has erected a building built [*bildet*] from his internal sun; and when at day's end he contemplates this, he regards it more highly than the earlier external sun. For now he stands in relation to his spirit, and therefore in a free relation. If we hold onto this image [*Bild*], we find it figures the path of world-history, the great day's work of spirit. World-history progresses from East to West, for Europe is *absolutely* the end of history, Asia the beginning. For world-history has an East *kat' exochen* [or *par excellence*]; the east in actuality [*für sich*] is entirely *relative*, for although the earth forms a sphere, history nevertheless traces no circle around it, but rather has a determinate East, and that is Asia. Here the external physical sun rises, and in the West it sets—where instead the sun of self-consciousness rises, spreading a superior luminosity.[76]

This passage has lent itself to misreading, not least because of its difficult distinction between the Greek term *kat' exochen*, referring to the extrinsic determination of the quintessence of an object, and the logical term *für sich*, referring to an object that has realized its content "for itself" rather than merely "for another."[77] In Hegel's usage here *kat' exochen* means an object that has its content *in itself but for another*: thus "for us" a baby is human because it has "in itself" the latent capacity to reason, which we have determined as the human characteristic *kat' exochen* or *par excellence*.[78] In this sense Hegel distinguishes between two "Orients": the conceptual East "in itself," whose *content* has nothing whatever to do with an "actual" east (I have used capitalization to distinguish the two forms); and this "actual" east, a geographical area entirely relative to the position of the person naming it. Hence the concept "Asia" *in itself* and *for us in the West* receives its meaning only from its determination by the narrative progression of world history. While Asia, even as the "determinate" East, is actually and geographically east of Europe, any and all of the content of actual Asia that does not already coincide with the narrative patterns of world history remains exterior both to Asia as a historically determined concept and to history itself. For Hegel, of course, the Orient or "Morning-land" is determined as the beginning of history, art, religion, philosophy, and thought; "beginning" is thus the content of the Orient *kat' exochen*. By implication the content of the concept of the "Occident" or "Evening-land" is determined only in relation to this discursively constructed "Orient": thus the historical concept of Europe refers to the "ending" of history, art, religion, philosophy, and

75. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, pp. 133–34.
76. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, p. 134.
77. For the distinction between *an sich* (*potentia*) and *für sich* (*actu*), see Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 5, pp. 125–31 and 174, and especially Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. T. M. Knox and A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), pp. 71–73 and 76–86.
78. Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Malden: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), p. 134.

thought. As Hegel states throughout his work, "Philosophy reveals itself as a circle returning into itself; it does not have a beginning in the sense of the other sciences, so that the beginning is only relative" to a specific interpreter but not to philosophy itself.[79] While philosophy recognizes the provisional and relative nature of a beginning,[80] such structural considerations remain nonetheless necessary, particularly with other sciences: thus any historical narrative, as a spatial and temporal object, must have a beginning and end distinct from each other. It is in this sense that Hegel at once embraces and rejects the circle as a figure for the progression of history. The truth of world history, history as such, must be a totality or self-enclosed circle, or else the science would have no object; but such a self-sufficient totality cannot yield to discursive, spatio-temporal forms of knowledge. Hegel's figure of the diurnal movement of the sun conveys this ambivalent circularity and linearity of history: moving around the sphere of the earth, the light of the sun ends where it begins, but *by its own light* appears to trace only a linear arc from east to west. Whatever its goals or necessary pretenses, a historical narrative cannot escape drawing provisional lines, proceeding nearly within the laws governing its own determination in space and time.

Hegel thus sets forth the philosophical basis for his narrative's destabilization of its own architectonics, and cunningly subverts its lines by framing the Western internalization of light as a process of "building," the quintessentially Eastern art that depends fundamentally on the light of the external sun. The figure of man erecting a building at the close of day, an edifice "built from his inner sun," blurs the boundaries between the beginning and ending of history, morning and evening, *Morgenland* and *Abendland*. This culminating act of building further marks the imbrication of the historical and aesthetic, the dependence of history on the aesthetic determinations of spirit in time, and the subversiveness of those aesthetic determinations within the narrative progression of world-history.

The interplay of physical and discursive modalities of the architectonic and indeed of the aesthetic finds its most sweeping articulation in Hegel's figure of the *Werkmeister*. Thus at the end of his introductory overview of the *Aesthetics* Hegel characterizes aesthetic history as the work of this spiritual architect associated with the East:[81] "The wide Pantheon of art rises as the external realization [of the Idea]; but its builder [*Bauherr*] and work-master [*Werkmeister*] is the self-grasping spirit of beauty that will complete the history of the world only in its development over millennia."[82] Likewise in the section on poetry Hegel refers to "the eternal and absolute Idea, which realizes itself in humanity" as the "inner work-master of history."[83] Now,

79. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, section 17, p. 63.

80. For Hegel on the concept of beginning [*Anfang*], see Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 27–29 *passim*; Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, section 1, p. 41 and section 17, p. 63; and Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 9, section 247, p. 27.

81. Hegel identifies the spirit as *Werkmeister* with the birth of architectural production in the section on identifiably Oriental religious buildings entitled *Der Werkmeister* in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (*Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 506–12) and with specifically Egyptian architecture in his lectures (see Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, p. 265).

82. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 13, p. 124.

83. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 356.

Hegel's *Werkmeister* finds its quintessential and proper determination in the Oriental, especially Egyptian, spirit; and the Egyptians, according to Hegel's narrative in the *Aesthetics*, arrive at the "threshold" or limit of freedom precisely by materializing the limit and—regardless of its apparently enduring form or stasis—by nonetheless recognizing the extent of the mind's power to imbricate or substitute limits one over the other.[84] Indeed, it is the timeless *Meisterwerke* of the Egyptian spirit as *Werkmeister*, or of the abstract idea as *Werkmeister* free of cultural determinations, that constructs a "wide" pantheon of art open to a medley of culturally disparate gods and masterpieces. Furthermore, the *Werkmeister*, Hegel's term for the "laboring hand" and the spirit as builder in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, marks the blurring of the boundary between doing and saying, building and signifying, hence material force and semiosis.[85] The modality of the resulting concept of linguistic action or performativity must be fundamentally "architectonic," a resignifying power over history exerted by the intellect as *Werkmeister*.

The history of aesthetics locates this intellectual power in the relation of architecture and poetry, or of pre-verbal gestures at meaning and the figurative disassembly and reconstruction of discursive, given structures of meaning.[86] What is true of aesthetic history must be true of all philosophically formulated disciplines, since these must progress historically and thus cannot evade aesthetic determinations. Every articulation confronts inherited discursive structures. This is true even of philosophy itself, to the extent that any philosophy evolves historically out of preceding philosophies. As Hegel writes at the beginning of the *Encyclopedia*:

> In the peculiar shape of *external history*, the origin and development of philosophy is represented as the *history of this science*. This shape gives to

84. Hegel's difficult relation of *Werkmeister*, meaning overseer, to the dialectic of master and slave and, in turn, to the concept of freedom requires separate discussion.

85. See Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 235–57, and *Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 506–12. In these difficult sections of the *Phenomenology*, the mouth and hand together produce and then traverse the division of inner and outer that is the basis for the distinction between action and speech, doing and saying. Here both the "laboring hand" that *does* and the "speaking mouth" that *says* engender the subject as an actor, but then exceed and transform the subject in order to actualize him, however fleetingly, in the world. In Hegel's rhetorically self-conscious text, just as the "spoken word" [*gesprochene Wort*] becomes an "action" [*Handlung*] in the transformation from inner to outer (*Werke*, vol. 3, pp. 235–56), so *Handlung* connects figurative language and physical action through the pun on *Hand*. By not just likening the mouth and hand but actually blurring the line between the figurative and physical hand and, accordingly, rhetorical play and physical work, Hegel opens the space even as he challenges the grounds for a theory of language as action, or action as language. Hegel's nuanced critique of performativity needs more extensive treatment: for our purposes it suffices that, if we are prepared to accept this blurred line or intersection in Hegel as the site where language *becomes* action—where words "actualize," "realize," or "manifest," to use common Hegelian terms—we can without anachronism refer to a dialectical theory of linguistic action or, in contemporary terms, "performativity" in Hegel's text.

86. Thus Hegel refers to modern poetry as a "reconstruction" of prose (Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 15, p. 276). The point is not that only poetry performs the discursive re-signification of meaning; rather it is that the poetic conception of language as a form of architectonic destruction and "reconstruction" haunts and must be harnessed by all linguistic productions, whether prosaic or poetic. In any event— and not surprisingly—the "boundary line [*Grenzlinie*] where poetry ends and prose begins" cannot be drawn (*Werke*, vol. 15, p. 284).

> the phases of the Idea's development the form of an *accidental* succession, and also a pure *plurality* to the principles and the manner in which they are carried out in diverse philosophies over time. But the work-master [*Werkmeister*] of this labor of millennia is the one living spirit whose thinking nature it is to bring to consciousness *what it is*; and when this has become an object in this manner, it is at the same time already lifted above this, reaching in itself a higher stage. . . . The philosophy that is the latest in time is the result of all the preceding philosophies; and it must therefore contain the principles of all of them; it is thus the most unfolded, the richest, and the most concrete one.[87]

Hegel's conception of discursive investigation as a totalization of history should not be too quickly dismissed, for is not the architectonic acceptance, rejection, exclusion, or subsuming of all previous conceptions the necessary false pretense of any endeavor in philosophy or other historically determined discipline? In the case of philosophy proper, the promise of a stable or final totality remains always unfulfilled, yielding necessarily to the "philosophy that is latest in time" and that acknowledges and engages its own historicity.[88] Looking forward in time, the *Werkmeister* in its simultaneously foreign (or Oriental) and universal determinations likewise opens the space for all future interpretive, dialectical histories; the power of these new discursive structures, if they are to inscribe themselves within the historical trajectory of their discipline, must in turn derive from *inclusiveness*, that is, an active engagement of the abstract and ossified lines that impede access to the heterogeneity internal to received ideas, histories, and disciplines. By actively constructing these lines anew, a history—in any historically determined discipline—*contributes to the architectonic and aesthetic materialization of history itself.*

The continuing preference in art and other historiographical disciplines for narratives bound by periodicity and chronology and governed by or consistent with categories reflecting "Western" progress stems from aesthetic principles that, though attributable in no small part to the misreading of Hegel from the nineteenth century, are in fact for him utterly extrinsic to the "thoughtful" or *critical* "consideration" of history.[89] In the case of art history, the common foisting of extrinsic historical categories—whether epochal, geographic, cultural, ethnic, or religious—on aesthetic forms not only ignores the dependence of those categories on aesthetic determinations but also their ideological weight and bearing on the continuing evolution of the aesthetic. Hegel's own dynamic, nonlinear,

87. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 8, section 13, p. 58.

88. Related to this argument is Hegel's claim that "every philosophy, precisely because it is the exposition of one particular stage of development, belongs to its own time and is caught in that time's restriction"; by the same token "it cannot be satisfied by an *earlier* philosophy" (Hegel, *Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, pp. 49–50).

89. Hegel, *Werke*, vol. 12, pp. 21–22. Notwithstanding their professed anti-Hegelianism, Deleuze and Guattari notably buck the preference for linearity and chronology in the all but Hegelian narrative mode of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia.*

and critically self-conscious narratives remain in many respects exemplary: opposing the impetus in intrinsically "past" or "dead" classical art for an impossible mimetic congruity of intellectual or spiritual content and material form, his texts identify the syncretic possibilities of future art in the movement of the architectonic line not only across but also between the physical and conceptual realms, collapsing such categories as "East" and "West." To ignore the challenge of the inherited line is not only to be blind to the prismatic unfolding of ideas; it is actively, even if unknowingly, to entrench oppressive structures of history and, against the avowed motivations of any form of speculative investigation, to fetter the human mind.

The Political Project of Wölfflin's Early Formalism*

EVONNE LEVY

What would it mean to art history if its foundational formalist, Heinrich Wölfflin, also turned out to be a political thinker? In the literature on Wölfflin's early publications, only sporadic attempts have been made to reverse the overwhelming critique of Wölfflin's formalism as narrowly visual and apolitical.[1] Only one text has addressed Wölfflin's politics directly: in an essay from 1989, Martin Warnke demonstrated how Wölfflin's distress over World War I and the slavish service by the professoriat to its nationalistic themes elicited the icy ahistorical formalism of the *Principles of Art History* published in 1915.[2] In Warnke's reading, Wölfflin's apoliticism was, para-

* Earlier versions of this essay were presented at various conferences, and my thanks go to my many hosts and interlocutors: Maurizio Ghelardi, Sabine Frommel, Maarten Delbeke, Caroline van Eck, Ursula Frohne, Stefan Grohé, Norbert Nussbaum, Christian Fuhrmeister, and Tristan Weddigen. Special thanks also go to those who took the time to offer comments on the manuscript: James Ackerman, Paul Jaskot, Albert Narath, Peter Parshall, Robert Levit, and Hal Foster. Anna Stainton checked my translations but all errors and infelicities are my responsibility. Research for this article, which is part of a book nearing completion entitled *Barock: Art History and Politics from Burckhardt to Sedlmayr (1844–1945)*, was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

1. Joseph Gantner (Wölfflin's pupil and preeminent biographer), Joan Hart, Meinhold Lurz, Daniel Adler, and Harry Francis Mallgrave, among others, have discussed Wölfflin's philosophical Neo-Kantianism in terms of organicism and aesthetic theory, as well as his interest in empathy theory and psychology, and his relations to Gottfried Semper's theory of style, to archaeologist Heinrich Brunn's incipient formalism, and to Jacob Burckhardt's art and cultural histories. The intellectual biographies of Lurz and Hart in particular were written with full knowledge of Wölfflin's papers; and they have been correct to read his work through these and other intertexts and influences. Hart, for one, has argued forcibly against reading Wölfflin as a Hegelian, but rather for a reading in the context of Neo-Kantianism, an important argument that Daniel Adler has elaborated. Joan Goldhammer Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin: Neo-Kantianism and Hermeneutics," *Art Journal* 42 (1982), pp. 292–300, and Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1981); Daniel Adler, "Leaps of Faith: Formalist Notions of the Painterly" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 2002); Adler, "Painterly Politics: Wölfflin, Formalism and German Academic Culture, 1885–1915," *Art History* 27 (2004), pp. 431–56, 476–77; Meinhold Lurz, *Heinrich Wölfflin: Biographie einer Kunsttheorie* (Worms: Werner, 1981); Harry Francis Mallgrave and Eleftherios Ikonomou, trans. and ed., *Empathy, Form, Space: Problems in German Aesthetics 1873–1893* (Los Angeles: Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities, 1994), pp. 39–54.

2. Martin Warnke, "On Heinrich Wölfflin," *Representations* 27 (1989), pp. 172–87. Wölfflin's *Classic Art* (1898) has been read as a politically inflected text in Margaret Iversen, "Politics and the Historiography of Art: Wölfflin's *Classic Art*," *Oxford Art Journal* 4, no. 1 (1981), pp. 31–34. Wölfflin's formalism in *Classic Art* and *Principles* is reconsidered as morphological rather than taxonomic, as "tools for interpreting the meaning of the artistic act and never a merely formal or analytic apparatus," in Marshall Brown, "The Classic Is the Baroque: On the Principle of Wölfflin's Art History," *Critical Inquiry* 9 (December 1982), pp. 379–404.

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 39–58. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

doxically, a political act of resistance. But as Wölfflin wrote in his diary in 1924, after his departure from the University of Munich and return to his native Switzerland: "I am taken as a formalist. As cool. I am not that."[3]

Is Wölfflin's resistance the only discernible form of political thought in his work? Besides Warnke's exceptional article on this topic, discussions of the historian's politics have been mainly relegated to ill-founded conclusions about Wölfflin's purported sympathy towards National Socialism.[4] For art historians, Wölfflin is thus either apolitical or involved in the most heinous politics. While a full response needs to be carefully constructed on the basis of thorough archival research, it is true that Wölfflin's work was readily taken up by National Socialists, and his comparative formalism seems to have possessed a potentially racist kernel that made it open to appropriation by fascism.[5] But neither Wölfflin's largely uninvestigated biography nor his texts—which include thousands of unpublished letters and dozens of notebooks in his *Nachlass* in Basel—have been scrutinized for their political implications.[6] Wölfflin's role as the straw

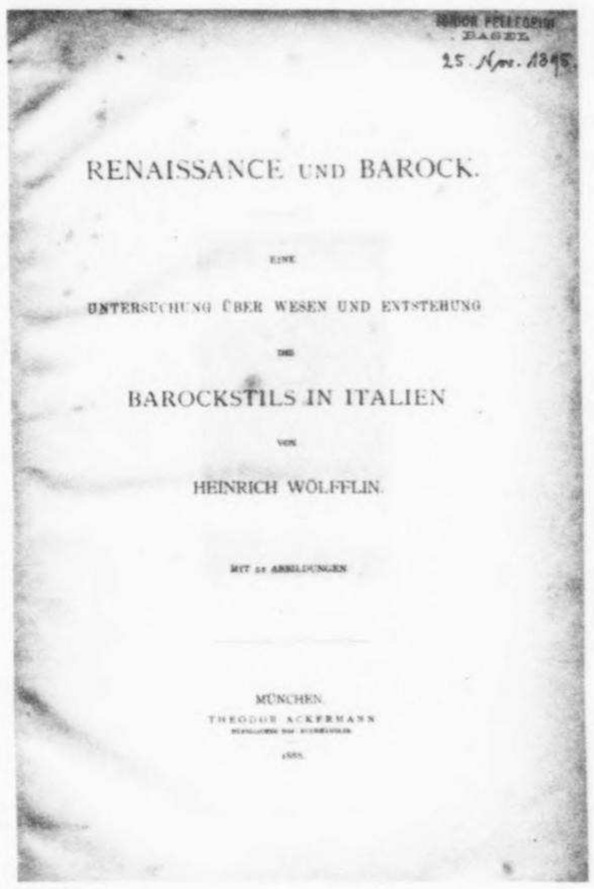
Heinrich Wölfflin. Courtesy of the Universitätsbibliothek, Basel.

3. Joseph Gantner, ed., *Heinrich Wölfflin 1864–1945: Autobiographie, Tagebücher und Briefe*, 2nd ed. (Basel: Schwabe, 1984), p. 368.

4. At first sight the most damning evidence was the appearance in the Nazi newspaper *Völkische Beobachter* (January 11, 1929) of Wölfflin's name on a list of founding members of the Reichskammer für Kultur, a group of cultural figures supportive of National Socialism organized by Elsa Bruckmann. Wölfflin's friend since the 1890s, Bruckmann, together with her husband Hugo, were early supporters of Hitler, and the F. Bruckmann Verlag was the publisher of most of Wölfflin's work and of *Mein Kampf*. The article has been used as evidence of Wölfflin's political sympathies in Jonathan Petropoulos, *Faustian Bargain: The Art World in Nazi Germany* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 18, and suggested as such in Eric Michaud, *The Cult of Art in Nazi Germany*, trans. Janet Lloyd (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), p. 114. However, in a recently discovered letter from Wölfflin to Elsa Bruckmann dating to 1929, Wölfflin expresses anger that Bruckmann published his name in the aforementioned list without his permission. Wölfflin's anger over this abuse of their friendship is the strongest signal to date that he was not in sympathy with National Socialism. See Anne Bechstedt, Anja Deutsch, and Daniela Stöppel, "Der Verlag F. Bruckmann im Nationalsozialismus," *Kunstgeschichte im "Dritten Reich": Theorien, Methoden, Praktiken*, ed. Ruth Heftrig, Olaf Peters, Barbara Schellewald (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2008), pp. 289–90.

5. Art historians relied overwhelmingly on racial (and sometimes racist) categories during Wölfflin's lifetime. For the category of race in Wölfflin and *Principles of Art History* as mapping conflict between North and South in the context of World War I, see Eric Michaud, "Nord-Sud," in *Histoire de l'art: Une Discipline à ses frontiers* (Paris: Hazan, 2005), pp. 76–84. The usefulness of Wölfflin's comparative method in support of National Socialist ideology is to be discussed in the introduction to Paul Jaskot, *The Nazi Perpetrator and Postwar German Art* (forthcoming), which the author allowed me to read in manuscript.

6. Fragments have been published in Gantner, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, and the *Nachlass* is used extensively in Hart, "Heinrich Wölfflin: An Intellectual Biography." I rely on the typed transcriptions of a broad selection of the notebooks deposited with Wölfflin's papers (Heinrich Wölfflin Nachlass 95, Nachtrag, Ib, no. 1–22). Unless otherwise noted, all references to Wölfflin's notebooks are from the Heinrich Wölfflin Nachlass, Universitätsbibliothek, Basel.


RENAISSANCE UND BAROCK.

EINE

UNTERSUCHUNG ÜBER WESEN UND ENTSTEHUNG

DES

BAROCKSTILS IN ITALIEN

VON

HEINRICH WÖLFFLIN.

MIT 22 ABBILDUNGEN

MÜNCHEN.
THEODOR ACKERMANN

Title page of Renaissance und Barock, *1888.*

man for the Anglo-American "new art history" has seemingly prevented scholars from looking at Wölfflin from a political perspective—although formalism itself can hardly be regarded as outside of politics.[7]

Admittedly, Wölfflin himself made the political a less than obvious focal point. Judging from his notebooks, which only rarely divulge a life outside that of the mind, World War I (during which he lived in Munich) barely distracted him from his intellectual preoccupations, and World War II passed virtually without mention by the retired professor in Zurich. Although his letters show he was not oblivious to his times, he was less likely to describe an actual event than to make oblique, suggestive, and slippery references.[8] It may thus come as a surprise to discover the extent to which Wölfflin's *Renaissance and Baroque* (1888), his first art-historical work and the first work of formalism, is a highly politicized text.[9] In what follows I map out the imbrication of politics and formalism in that work and begin to assess whether Wölfflin may have been both a political thinker and an apolitical man. I base my argument on a close reading of the language of *Renaissance and Baroque* and on heretofore unconsidered aspects of Wölfflin's university education in political history and political philosophy and his preoccupation with the contemporary emergence of the German state. These studies and circumstances contributed to his own worldview as a Swiss national who studied and later taught in

7. That Wölfflin was a sacrificial victim, whose work was subject to certain reductive readings against which new positions were laid out, is viewed by Warnke as an inevitable and productive kind of distortion in the history of the discipline, necessary to move the field in new directions. Warnke, "On Heinrich Wölfflin," p. 172. For a contentious debate from within art history over formalism and its politics, see Johanna Drucker, "Formalism's Other History," *Art Bulletin* 78 (1996), pp. 750–51 and Yve-Alain Bois, "Whose Formalism?," *Art Bulletin* 78 (1996), pp. 9–12.

8. There are several published collections of Wölfflin's letters to individuals in addition to the broad range of letters quoted in Gantner, *Heinrich Wölfflin.* See especially Joseph Gantner, *Burckhardt-Wölfflin: Briefwechsel und andere Dokumente ihrer Begegnung 1882–97,* 2nd ed. (Basel: Schwabe, 1989); Heidy Margrit Müller, ed., *"Etwas für die Phantasie": Heinrich Wölfflins Briefwechsel mit "Züs Colonna" mit Erinnerungen und Erzählprosa von Lotte Warburg,* with an essay by Peter G. Meyer-Viol (Munich: Iudicium, 1997); Golo Maurer, *August Grisebach (1881–1950): Kunsthistoriker in Deutschland; mit einer Edition der Briefe Heinrich Wölfflins an Grisebach* (Ruhpolding: Verlag Franz Philipp Rutzen, 2007); and Ricarda Huch, ed., *Mosaikbild einer Freundschaft: Ricarda Huchs Briefwechsel mit Elisabeth und Heinrich Wölfflin* (Munich: Iudicium, 1994).

9. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock: Eine Untersuchung über Wesen und Entstehung des Barockstils in Italien* (Munich: Theodor Ackermann, 1888). All translations are mine, though reference will be made to the English translation by Kathrin Simon, published as Wölfflin, *Renaissance and Baroque* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966). In-text citations are first for the German text, followed by the Simon translation.

Germany as well as in Basel and Zurich. The question is whether young Wölfflin practiced a "political formalism"—in which the point of formalism was to understand the political—or whether the text under examination speaks to a political unconscious of formalism.

Of course there is a certain irony in the effort to recapture the political character of Wölfflin's text now, for to a late-nineteenth-century reader architectural history—and specifically the question of style—was self-evidently a political issue. From the highly politicized, Prussian-supported rebuilding of Cologne's cathedral in the Catholic Rhineland in the Gothic style in the 1840s to the discussions in Berlin in the 1880s about the appropriate style for the imperial capital, style was de facto political.[10] By the 1880s, the Gothic and Renaissance revivals were burning out in Germany, and the Hellenistic Baroque, exemplified by the spectacular Pergamon reliefs, had become the ancient imperial architectural model for the new unified German empire.[11] The newly excavated Hellenistic works, until then considered the decadent works of a decadent empire, were celebrated by the Akademie der Künste in Berlin in June 1886 with a reconstruction of the Pergamon altar and a massive costumed parade in which 1,500 artists and actors participated. Wölfflin, who was studying in Berlin during this period, was in Italy at the time but surely knew about the event. Even before Berliners danced around the altar, the wildly expressive Pergamon reliefs had caught the attention of two of Wölfflin's most important teachers. Jacob Burckhardt was bowled over by the sculptures when he saw them in Berlin in 1882; they reminded him of Rubens, whose work he increasingly admired as he came around to the Baroque, and he took some mischievous pleasure in watching the archaeologists dismiss them as decadent.[12] Heinrich Brunn, the Munich archaeologist to whom Wölfflin dedicated *Renaissance and Baroque*, published an important article on Pergamon reliefs in 1884 in which he retained a traditionalist's reserve about them, comparing the Hellenistic works to the proto-Baroque creations of Giulio Romano (they reminded him of the artist's Mantuan fresco cycle in the Sala dei Giganti).[13] The fact that Wölfflin originally planned to include a parallel analysis of the changes in style in antiquity suggests that Pergamon and its attendant political

10. The bibliography on this subject is vast. For two paths, see Michael J. Lewis, *The Politics of the German Gothic Revival: August Reichensperger* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993); Hans Belting, *The Germans and Their Art: A Troublesome Relationship*, trans. Scott Kleager (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

11. The parallel architectural and political modeling was made explicit with the issuing in 1888 of a medal with then-emperor Friedrich III on one side and Eumenes II, who commissioned the Pergamon frieze to commemorate his victory over the Gauls, on the verso. On the discovery of the Pergamon sculptures and their political significance for unified Germany, see the rich article by Lionel Gossman "Imperial Icon: The Pergamon Altar in Wilhelmine Germany," *Journal of Modern History* 78 (2006), esp. pp. 568–79; and Suzanne L. Marchand, *Down from Olympus: Archaeology and Philhellenism in Germany, 1750–1970* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996). Marchand's book was brought to my attention by Alina Payne, who makes a compelling argument for the significance of the Pergamon reliefs for Wölfflin's *Renaissance and Baroque* in "Portable Ruins: The Pergamon Altar, Heinrich Wölfflin, and German Art History at the *fin de siècle*," *Res* 53/54 (2008), pp. 168–89.

12. Gossman, "Imperial Icon," pp. 551–53.

13. Heinrich Brunn, "Über die kunstgeschichtliche Stellung der pergamenischen Gigantomachie," *Jahrbuch der Preußischen Kunstsammlungen* 5 (1884), pp. 231–92. See Gossman, "Imperial Icon," pp. 558, 564–65. Wölfflin's notes on Brunn's article are preserved in Notebook 9 (1885), pp. 80–81.

parallel to the German Empire had indeed been important in the genesis of his inaugural work on the Baroque.[14]

Wölfflin's Renaissance und Barock*: Individual and State*

Renaissance and Baroque was Wölfflin's habilitation, and it followed closely after his dissertation, *Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture.*[15] A trip to Rome in the intervening years led Wölfflin in this book to stage an encounter between the empathy-theory-based relations described in the dissertation and a then-controversial historical period of art (the Baroque), which forced him to face cultural history as well. The book is organized in three parts, the first of which most closely related to *Principles of Art History*, defines the chief formal characteristics of Baroque style: the painterly, grand style, massiveness, and movement. Part two is concerned with the undergirding of the Baroque in cultural history, posing the question Why does style change? The final part, which draws on the organization of Burckhardt's largely typological history of Italian Renaissance architecture, analyzes the change in style in churches, palaces, villas, and garden design.[16]

Political themes emerge within Wölfflin's formal categories, most significantly the relation of part to whole, of individual to totality. Wölfflin translates one of the central concerns of political philosophy (the project of securing the relation of the individual to the power structure or state) into a formal category. Freedom, a central preoccupation of Kant's political philosophy and of German political philosophy of the nineteenth century in general, is omnipresent in Wölfflin's conception of the individual architectural form.[17] Related to both of these themes is his conception of unity, which in the nineteenth century is a generalizable political category, linked closely to nationalism and to liberalism.

Two of Wölfflin's categories, "grand style" (*grosse Stil*) and "massiveness" (*Massigkeit*), return again and again to ways in which the individual form (the components of a classically based architecture like columns, pedestals, cornices, and so on) is overwhelmed by the totality in Baroque architecture. Renaissance architecture, by contrast, offers a secure place for the individual form: "More and more what was admired [by the sixteenth century] in antiquity was the colossal scale of its undertakings, not the pleasure in individual forms" (p. 12/p. 24). The increase

14. Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. vi. In a letter to Paul Wolters dated May 29, 1888, Wölfflin explained the dedication to Brunn as referring especially to what he learned from him about the painterly. But the dedication did not signal anything more, since he did not deal with the ancient Baroque, much of which is "pure hideousness" and the various ancient Baroques must be differentiated. Gantner, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, p. 52.

15. Heinrich Wölfflin, "Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture" (1886), in *Empathy, Form, Space*, pp. 149–87.

16. Jacob Burckhardt, *The Architecture of the Italian Renaissance*, trans. James Palmes, ed. Peter Murray (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985). Originally published in 1868 as *Die Geschichte der Renaissance in Italien.*

17. I rely here on the classic work by Leonard Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972).

in scale to monumentality is, he says, a common symptom of decline, when there is a loss of sympathy for the individual: "There is no longer an understanding of the individual (*das Einzelne*), and a refined sense of form is lost; one strives only for the imposing and overpowering" (p. 26/p. 40).

One way in which the individual is absorbed into the form-mass is through the painterly effect of Baroque architecture. In Baroque architecture, he says, one sees: "Not individual forms, individual figures, individual motifs, but rather an effect of the mass, not something finite, but rather infinite!" (p. 21/p. 34). Not content to employ

TAF. 7 S. PETER, RÜCKSEITE

St. Peter's Dome, from Renaissance und Barock, *3rd ed. 1908.*

the rhetorical device of repetition to underscore his point about the loss of the singular, he escalates his language: "As its final consequence the painterly style must completely destroy the plastic form" (p. 21/p. 34). Drawing on contemporary writings on mass psychology, Wölfflin imagines individual forms and figures not just absorbed but destroyed by their absorption in a "*Masseneffect.*" Indeed, historians and political theorists of the late nineteenth century trying to explain the French Revolution reasoned that the formation of the mass deprived man of reason and individuality.[18]

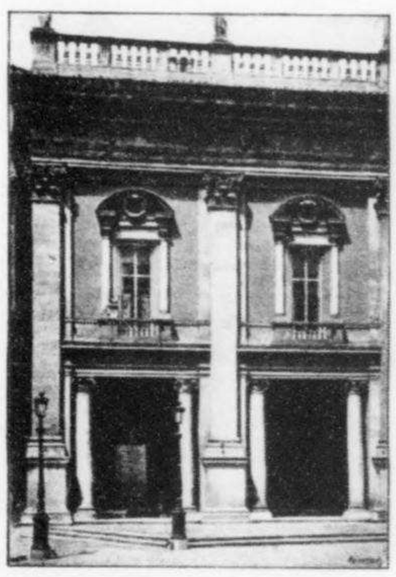
Wölfflin also uses the word "subordination" to describe the Baroque relation of parts to whole. The best example is his analysis of the dome of St. Peter's as an instance of the passage from Renaissance to Baroque style:

> Bramante's St. Peter's is not Baroque. One may find here a cupola of the largest dimensions, but around it Bramante arranged four neighboring domes which do not cramp it but provide a counterbalance. They maintain their own independence against the large cupola and curb the impression of the overpowering. Michelangelo by contrast

18. For the significance for Wölfflin's terms, see Evonne Levy, *Propaganda and the Jesuit Baroque* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), pp. 53–55.

> counted precisely on this impression; he pushed the neighboring spaces so far down in size that they can no longer maintain themselves against the principal volume and in this way produced an absolutely dominating center, which makes everything else appear unfree and lacking in a will of its own (p. 93/p. 111).

In this passage we see an anthropomorphic characterization of Renaissance forms as "independent" and not "subordinate" to the larger form.[19] The Renaissance relation of parts engenders "calm" (*Beruhigung*), and gives to the minor form "security" (*Sicherheit*); it allows it to "be sovereign" (*beherrschen*) and to have its "feeling for life" (*Lebensgefühl*) fulfilled. In contrast, Michelangelo's colossal cupola is so dominated by the "center" that the parts are "unfree" and "without will of their own"; they are "convoluted" and "swallowed up," "repressed" and "inhibited" by the dominating form. The violent effects of powerful Baroque forms that engulf the individual parts by force are dramatized in another anthropomorphic image when Wölfflin says that a form under the "force" of this "load" actually "*suffers*" (p. 31/p. 45).[20]



Capitoline Palace, from Renaissance und Barock. *1888.*

The pressure on forms and the "suffering" that results is developed in a detailed analysis of the arch: "the cheerful round arch becomes a pressed elliptical form," as on the second floor of the Farnese Palace (p. 32/p. 45). There "the pedestals, which before were slender and high, helping to give the impression of lightness," are now pressed down by Michelangelo "into such a low and uncomfortable form that one must feel the heaving force of their load" (p. 32/p. 45). Individual forms are pressed, or oppressed, and lose their freedom and self-determination at the scale of the column. Here his example is the arcade of Michelangelo's Conservator's Palace:

> The upper story presses down so heavily on the (underscaled) subordinate (*untergestellten*) columns that they seem to be pushed against the giant piers. We feel convinced that the columns are only maintained

19. According to Hart, influenced by his studies in aesthetics with Johannes Volkelt; see Hart, "Reinterpreting Wölfflin," p. 293.

20. See Brown, "The Classic Is Baroque" and Adler, "Painterly Politics," for Wölfflin's reversal on this in later works, where Baroque would become synonymous with all life, and the classic with death.

> there by force. This impression results in part from the most highly irrational and infelicitously close spacing of the column intervals, from which no self-contented and no self-determining form can result (p. 32/p. 45).

The subordination of individual to the whole encompasses the entire building facade. Whereas on a Renaissance church façade Wölfflin sees a "coordination" of elements between bays (such as at S. Spirito), on a Baroque façade there is an "an emphatic subordination":

> S. Spirito has a façade of five bays, symmetrically disposed, with the only exception that the middle bay is somewhat wider. This coordination is replaced in the Baroque by an energetic subordination. And this was understood in a different way than the way subordination was understood in the Renaissance. The latter also had its façades structured into independent and dependent parts—usually a dominating middle bay flanked by narrower corner bays which were bound to the main body by receding sections. The subordinate parts, however, and this is the most decisive point, always possess the character of an independent individuality (*selbständiger Individualität*); they are subordinate (*untergeordnet*), but enjoy a fully free development, without any feeling in any line that their nature must be denied on account of another more powerful will. The Baroque, by contrast, recognizes no free individual existence. Everything remains closed in a general mass. Its horizontal courses operate in such a fashion that a middle bay projects while the side bays recede in steps and remain in a formless and unarticulated state (pp. 82–83/pp. 98–100).

S. Spirito, from Renaissance und Barock. *1888.*

Wölfflin demonstrates this loss of independence not only in elevations but also in plan, as for example in the palace courtyard, which is not allowed to convey the effect of an independent closed area: "The court is not an independent entity (*Ganzes*) that has *rights of its own* (*Recht für sich*)" (emphasis mine; p. 114/p. 138). Here again Wölfflin anthropomorphizes the courtyard, which loses its independence, its "Recht für sich"—as if a courtyard had "rights" that could be taken away.

Wölfflin sees the loss of independence, individuality, rights, and selfhood at

all levels of Baroque architectural form. Walls become undifferentiated, unified masses with individual bricks hidden under a layer of unifying stucco (p. 34/p. 46), and the independent Renaissance column becomes an entrapped pier:

> The solemnity of the pier lies in its material diffidence. While columns are free and round and clearly set out from a mass, are quite self-assured (*ganz selbst bestimmt*) in their form, full of will and of life, the pier always remains, so to speak, with a foot stuck in the wall. It lacks the independent form (the roundness), the impression of massive heaviness overwhelms (p. 38/p. 50).

As an example Wölfflin describes the columns in the arcades of Michelangelo's Conservator's Palace, which strive for freedom:

> The columns cannot be freed from the wall. These are not half-columns, but free and whole ones, but they have not yet gained their freedom. Half has become detached but the rest is embedded. The impression on one's imagination is that of an endless, restless striving for freedom (pp. 40–41/p. 52).

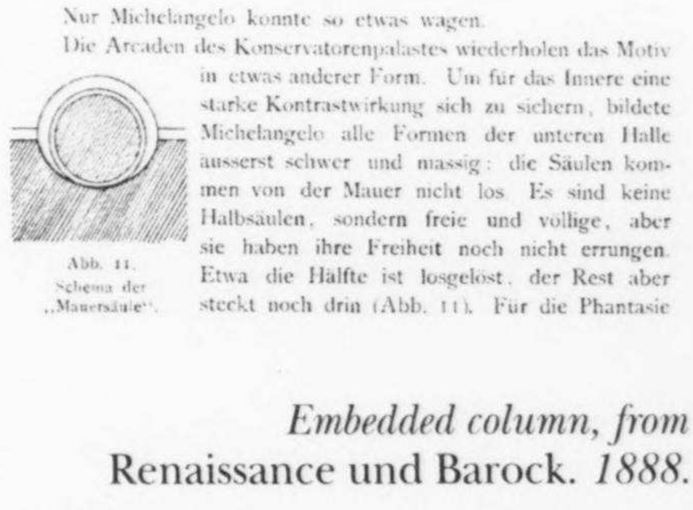

Nur Michelangelo konnte so etwas wagen.
Die Arcaden des Konservatorenpalastes wiederholen das Motiv in etwas anderer Form. Um für das Innere eine starke Kontrastwirkung sich zu sichern, bildete Michelangelo alle Formen der unteren Halle äusserst schwer und massig: die Säulen kommen von der Mauer nicht los. Es sind keine Halbsäulen, sondern freie und völlige, aber sie haben ihre Freiheit noch nicht errungen. Etwa die Hälfte ist losgelöst, der Rest aber steckt noch drin (Abb. 11). Für die Phantasie

Abb. 11.
Schema der „Mauersäule".

Embedded column, from Renaissance und Barock. *1888.*

Wölfflin sees the columns in politicized terms: the Renaissance column is "free" and "self-determining," all "will and life"; the Baroque column is "imprisoned," and the striving of the suppressed individual that has lost its independence for freedom becomes the drama of the Baroque, which has

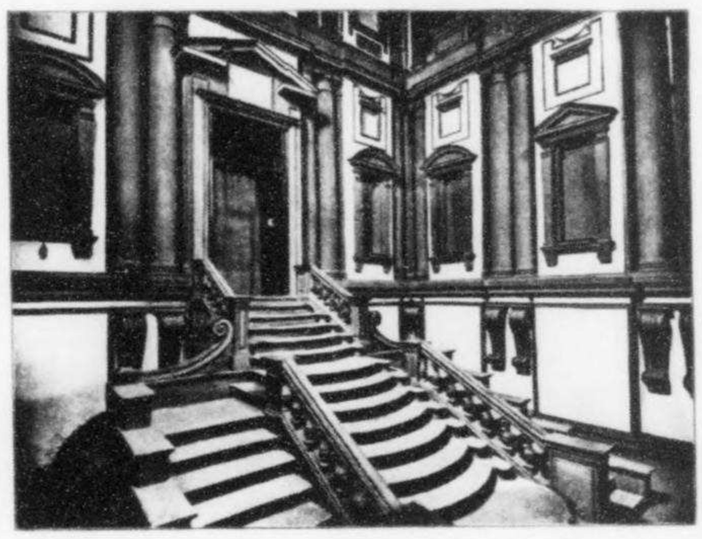
> no sense of the value and individual meaning of individual forms, only for the more muted effect of the whole. The individual (*Einzelne*) and finite (*Begrentzte*), the plastic form, cease to be important; one composes for the effects of masses (*Masseneffecten*). The most indefinite of all elements, light and shadow, have become the real means of expression (p. 71/p. 85).

Because of the loss of the sense of the value of the individual, Wölfflin's own method of empathy for architectural forms experienced through the body, which he laid out in his *Prolegomena*, breaks down: there can be no empathy for a person who has disappeared.[21]

21. "In fact an important characteristic of the Baroque style is that it cannot be seen in terms of the human body." Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 71; *Renaissance and Baroque*, p. 85.

Symptomatic Reactions to Renaissance and Baroque

Although Wölfflin voiced his skepticism of cultural explanations in his text, he does offer explicit historical and ultimately political motivations for these changes in form. In his second chapter, on the causes of the changes in style, he points to the Jesuits as having a "system that forced the individual"; he notes that it was the Renaissance papacy that compelled the push towards monumentality; and that it was the imitation of a manner of somber exteriority by the Spanish ruling classes that compelled the unification of the Roman palace exterior with the suppression of various divisions and parts (*Glieder*). The Baroque was, in sum, a product of the Counter-Reformation, a conclusion that was so understated that two of Wölfflin's students



TAF. 1 TREPPE DER LAURENZIANA IN FLORENZ

Vestibule of the Laurentian Library, from Renaissance und Barock, *3rd ed. 1908.*

were moved to make it explicit in their publications on the Baroque in the 1920s. In the new edition of *Renaissance and Baroque* published by his student and assistant Hans Rose in 1926, with several chapters of his own added to the text, Rose wrote that the foundation for the Baroque in the history of ideas or spirit of the times was now the "heart of the Baroque problem."[22]

In spite of any misgivings about the lack of cultural explanations, Wölfflin's anthropomorphic analyses of these forms, politically inflected and dramatic as they were as an art-historical poetics of force and submission, were often influential for several generations of architectural historians, and are still admired by architectural historians today. One of the reasons that the political has been overlooked is that Wölfflin's formal analyses make good sense on their own. Nonetheless, subsequent scholars reimagined the relation between part and

22. Heinrich Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, 4th ed.; expanded and with a commentary by Hans Rose (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1926), pp. 327 and 181. One wonders if Rose felt compelled to insert this after several reviewers of Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* lamented the absence of a cultural historical perspective in that work. Warnke, "On Heinrich Wölfflin," pp. 172–73. Werner Weisbach is even more explicit about the need for sociological analysis in *Barock als Kunst der Gegenreformation* (1921), a book written in the wee hours of the morning during his military service and the first to explicitly link the Baroque with propaganda. Werner Weisbach, *Geist und Gewalt* (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1956), p. 194.

whole, individual and state in the same terms but based on their own politics, which suggests their grasp, conscious or not, of the political inflection of Wölfflin's terms to begin with.

For example, in Nikolaus Pevsner's *An Outline of European Architecture*, first published in 1943, we find the following response to Wölfflin's view of Michelangelo in a passage on the vestibule of the Laurentian Library: "It has often been said that the motifs of the walls show Michelangelo as the father of the Baroque, because they express the superhuman struggle of active forces against overpowering matter." But Pevsner, detecting the subjectivity of this view, goes on to say: "I do not think that anybody who examines without prejudice his sensations in the room itself would subscribe to this statement. There seems to me no expression of struggle anywhere." Yet Pevsner only slightly shifts Wölfflin's emphasis on struggle when he acknowledges the "conscious discordance all the way through," and his alternative to Wölfflin resides more in a new periodization that expands the concept of mannerism than in a change of terms to describe the works:

> What Michelangelo's Laurenziana reveals is indeed Mannerism in its most sublime architectural form and not Baroque—a world of frustration much more tragic than the Baroque world of struggles between mind and matter. In Michelangelo's architecture every force seems paralysed. The load does not weigh, the support does not carry, natural reactions play no part—a highly artificial system upheld by the severest discipline.[23]

Pevsner's language has been connected to the psychological nervousness that characterized the spiritual crisis of Weimar intellectuals. But this text, written during World War II, might also reflect the particular situation of an emigrated German scholar in England with a very complex relation to his own Jewishness (which he denied) and to National Socialism (which he supported even after his dismissal from the university, although to what extent is not clear).[24] That such an interpretation should focus on the scholar's haunt, a library, makes its overdeterminations poignant.

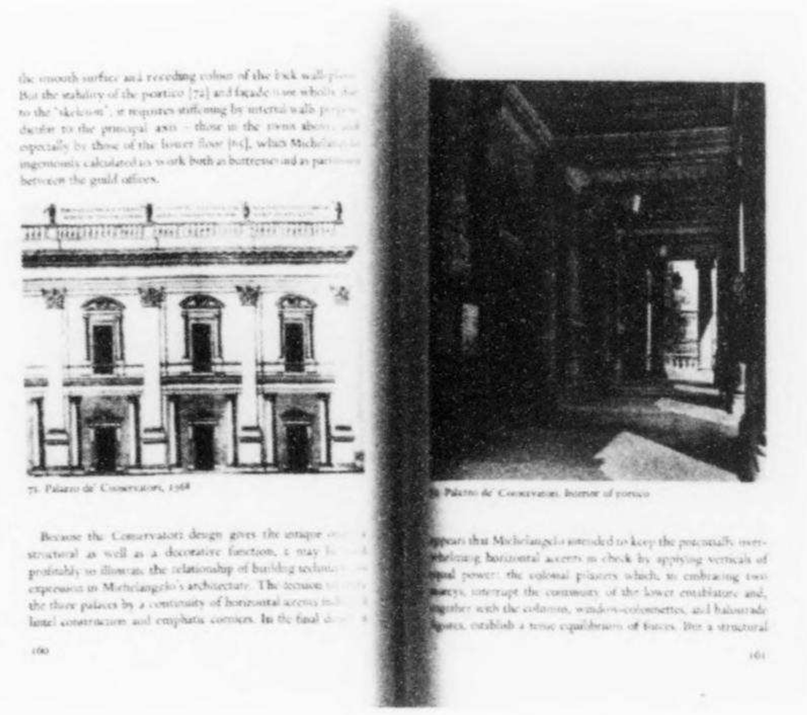
A second revealing example is James Ackerman's analysis of the façade of the Conservator's Palace on Rome's Campidoglio in his 1961 monograph on Michelangelo's architecture, a work deeply indebted to *Renaissance and Baroque* but at the same time a profound revision of it.[25] Where Wölfflin saw subordination in

23. Nikolaus Pevsner, *An Outline of European Architecture*, 2nd ed. (Middlesex: Penguin, 1945), p. 120.
24. Pevsner was frustrated that, notwithstanding his conversion to Protestantism as a young man, his promising university career in Germany had been halted by the regime that he very much supported (also in print). See Stephen Games, *Pevsner: The Early Life: Germany and Art* (London: Continuum, 2010), esp. pp. 174–98.
25. It is striking the extent to which this book applies to Michelangelo's architecture *alone* (and identifies Michelangelo as the leader in the character of the Baroque) the characteristics that Wölfflin attributed to the Baroque as *exemplified* by Michelangelo. This is especially evident in the chapter on Michelangelo's theory, where Ackerman finds a justification for Wölfflin's general method of seeking empathy for architectural forms in the body. Ackerman says this is historical and evidenced by Michelangelo's sculptural sensibility, which is especially evident in his drawings. In this way, Ackerman's book seems like a larger exemplification of my point: by identifying the impersonal historical style in the work of the individual artist,

the bottom story and the imprisonment of the columns, Ackerman sees something else entirely:

> Michelangelo intended to keep the potentially overwhelming horizontal accents in check by applying verticals of equal power: the colossal pilasters which, in embracing two stories, interrupt the continuity of the lower entablature and, together with the columns, window colonnettes, and balustrade figures, establish a tense equilibrium of forces. But a structural analysis reverses the process, proving that ingenious devices were necessary to prevent *verticals* from dominating the façade.[26]

Through a "structural analysis" Ackerman can show that Michelangelo (and Bramante) did not affirm monumentality, but actively worked against it. Distancing himself from a view that emphasizes the overwhelming of individual parts by the whole, Ackerman sees "ingenuity" as solving the problem of unchecked power by providing "checks"—verticals are kept in check by horizontals and by smaller forms to create a "tense equilibrium of forces." This formal analysis of the seat of Rome's civic government (as opposed to the autocratic Vatican across the Tiber), by an American scholar in the postwar era, expresses an ethos of individual participation in its accounting for the participation of the columns and colonnettes. With the whole façade embodying a political system that "structurally" ensures a balance of powers, Ackerman's description of the Conservator's Palace could stand in as a textbook visualization of the system of "checks and balances" of the United States government. All of these formal analyses appear to be shaped, even driven, consciously or unconsciously, by beliefs about the relation of the individual to the state.



Illustrations from The Architecture of Michelangelo *by James Ackerman. 1961.*

Wölfflin Against the "Great State"

How to characterize the politics that emerge from Wölfflin's pages? His stylistic antinomies are matched by political ones: the Renaissance is a moment

---

Ackerman accomplishes en masse what he attempts to do on a case by case basis with his analysis of the components of various buildings, restoring to the individual powers and intentions what Wölfflin had described as belonging to an epoch.

26. James Ackerman, *The Architecture of Michelangelo* (London: Zwemmer, 1961), pp. 64–65.

of equilibrium, where individuals are relatively free and autonomous relative to the whole; the Baroque, by contrast, is almost entirely negative in its oppressive treatment of the individual. Wölfflin echoes an even more entrenched view than the one found in the classics of Ranke and Burckhardt, that the Baroque was the product of an oppressive Counter-Reformation led by popes and Jesuits, with particularly bad results for the individual. Here Wölfflin is reliant on Burckhardt's view of the emergence of the individual in the Renaissance as a product of a relaxation in the Church's authority. But whereas Burckhardt's political views (known to us through his political journalism, his extensive correspondence, and his politically oriented historical writing) have been brought to bear on a political reading of his works in history, Wölfflin's have yet to be.[27] We have by contrast only hints from the published biographical material on Wölfflin of the late 1880s that he may have shared Burckhardt's anti-nationalism, anti-clericalism, Swiss particularism, and conservative critique of modernity. The political view that emerges from *Renaissance and Baroque* points at the very least to a robust anti-clericalism; if one reads between the lines of Wölfflin's work, it becomes clear that he shared Burckhardt's lifelong distrust of power as "an opponent of human individuality and creativity."[28]

One of the inheritances of Burckhardt's Renaissance was the notion—which Burckhardt did not invent but did shape distinctively—of the state as a "work of art." As numerous scholars have pointed out, what Burckhardt means is that the state was man's fabrication, an idea that can be traced to the Enlightenment.[29] But Burckhardt's use of the word "art" lends the idea a specific nuance, even though in his writing, this work of art does not find its way into specific forms. Wölfflin took up the idea of the state as an artwork more literally, and his own scholarly trajectory—from a Burckhardtian cultural history to a more autonomous history of art—suggests a path by which the political philosopher's preoccupation with the form of the ideal state entered art history.

Given Wölfflin's imagery of a powerful and oppressive superstructure, we must wonder about his attitude toward the emergent German Reich. In my reading of various passages from *Renaissance and Baroque* the architectural organism that absorbs and represses the individual is, at the very least, a figure of power, a state-like figure (although Wölfflin does not use the word "state"). One hint that the younger man shared Burckhardt's suspicion of the monolithic state appears in Wölfflin's diary after a meeting with his teacher in September 1888, just after *Renaissance and Baroque* appeared. His notes refer to two subjects of their discussion: his book and politics, specifically about Italy before and after unification.

27. See esp. Richard Sigurdson, *Jacob Burckhardt's Social and Political Thought* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004); and John R. Hinde, *Jacob Burckhardt and the Crisis of Modernity* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queens University Press, 2000).
28. Sigurdson, p. 10.
29. See in particular Eric Slauter, *The State as a Work of Art: The Cultural Origins of the Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009). My thanks to Tom Mitchell for this reference.

"Size does not make greatness in politics," he wrote in parentheses.[30] To pass from a discussion of Wölfflin's book to pre-unification Italy, apparently to praise the small city-state, suggests a link between the two. In any case, Wölfflin's note is not inconsistent with the negative view of monolithic power in *Renaissance and Baroque.*

Passages from Wölfflin's unpublished notebooks also show that he was preoccupied with the question of the state in the mid-1880s and through the completion of his habilitation. Such a preoccupation would have been stimulated by hearing the lectures of the charismatic political theorist and historian Heinrich von Treitschke, the so-called "Herald of the Reich." Wölfflin enrolled in Treitschke's extremely popular lecture course on politics (widely diffused in print as *Die Politik*) given at Berlin's Frederick William University.[31] In a notebook entry dated November, 1885, Wölfflin wrote: "Berlin is a metropolis. . . . In the catedra one hears Treitschke daily, before an audience of 700. . . . The idea of the state, of the great state (*grossen Staates*) is finally a living one for me, thank God!"[32] Treitschke viewed political institutions as the exterior form of the inner life of its people, and his lectures were infused with the language of part and whole, individual and state. Wölfflin did not take many notes during the lectures,[33] but he commented on them enthusiastically in letters to his family:

> One has the feeling of sitting before an important man. He rouses his listeners to enthusiasm.[34]

> The other day Treitschke held the attention of his public on the European state system. The pride in the capital of the first people of the world [Berlin] before the blossoming of its youth, to praise the beauty of the German nation—that is the basic tone of the lecture. About the unity of the Reich one speaks in an entirely different way here [in Berlin] than in Bavaria.[35]

We know that at this time he visited the Reichstag and saw it through Treitschke's eyes: "It made a big impression on me, as prepared by Treitschke."[36] Wölfflin quoted Treitschke at least twice in his notebooks from 1885 to 1888, and

30. Entry dated September 20, 1888, in Notebook 15, pp. 138–39, cited in Gantner, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, p. 55.
31. Heinrich von Treitschke, *Politics*, trans. Arthur James Balfour, 2 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1916); originally published as *Politik: Vorlesungen*, 2 vols. (Berlin/Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1897–1900).
32. "Berlin ist doch eine Weltstadt. Muss noch tiefer hinabkommen und schauen! Vom Katheder hört man tägl. Treitschke, Publikum vor 700 Leuten. Wo sind die Nationen, die unsere festgegründeten Staaten erschüttern könnten. —Die Idee des Staates, des grossen Staates wird lebendig in mir Gottlob, endlich!" Notebook 12 (1886), p. 3.
33. Wölfflin's notebook for Treitschke's course is preserved in the Heinrich Wölfflin Nachlass, II. A 13: Winter 1885–86 Treitschke, H.v. Politik. Universitätsbibliothek, Basel.
34. Heinrich Wölfflin, letter to his parents, May 2, 1885, quoted in Gantner, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, p. 26.
35. Heinrich Wölfflin, letter to his parents, November 6, 1885, quoted in ibid., p. 31.
36. Heinrich Wölfflin, letter to his parents, February 1886, quoted in ibid., p. 33.

there are some resonances between Wölfflin's language and Treitschke's. But these comments seem like the observations of an outsider. Overall, Wölfflin seems to be writing, like Burckhardt, against a Hegelian conception of the state as a kind of Leviathan that "could swallow up everything."[37]

A more important result of Treitschke's course was that it encouraged Wölfflin to make a place for political history and for the question of the form of the state in his thinking. In the years 1886–88 he was constantly mapping the various humanistic disciplines, including political history, in his notebooks as he tried to figure out what kind of historian he should be. In several entries he is specifically preoccupied with the form of the state. In one, appearing under the heading "political history," he writes: "The idea of the state, how it is established and realized by those who have power."[38] About a year later, in an unspecified reference to Wilhelm von Humboldt, founder of the German education system and theorist of the state, Wölfflin writes: "Truth and Goodness. Humboldt. The life of man, history, takes certain forms, the idea of the state is a form which tries to work its way into material."[39] There are notations of "Staatsform" (form of the state) in his working plan for his habilitation, and "Staatengeschichte" (history of the state) is noted as an area to be investigated.[40]

In 1887, however, Wölfflin differentiates political history from the type of psychological history to which he is attracted:

> Politics lies in acts; writing about political history must convey the feeling of participation, of having lived through something (Treitschke). This history, which is bound to people and chance happenings, is the opposite of a history as psychic development, which functions according to laws, not only in the area of the state, but also in that of art, of philosophy and so on. This is history in the highest sense, it is philosophy.[41]

Although this passage seems to point away from political history, Wölfflin continued to pursue the question of the state. For instance, in October 1888, several months after he completed the habilitation, he met in Munich with a Professor Mayer (who must have been a legal theorist or political philosopher) and discussed national characteristics in law with him. Wölfflin quoted Mayer as saying, "legal thinking must cleanse itself of weak and ill-defined imagery of the state as an organism, as a person. The state is something thoroughly indeterminate: relational."[42]

The Form of the State: Baroque Is Modern

Does Wölfflin's preoccupation with the form of the state, as evoked in *Renaissance and Baroque*, refer to a historical state, a state in the present? Here

37. Treitschke, *Politics*, p. 53 (citing the Hegelians).
38. Notebook 12 (1886), p. 57.
39. Notebook 14 (1886–87), p. 39.
40. Ibid., p. 153.
41. Notebook 15 (1887–88), p. 19.
42. Notebook 15 (1887–88), p. 125.

the notebooks again show that Wölfflin was also preoccupied with understanding the present as a precondition for understanding the past. In the first half of 1887 he wrote:

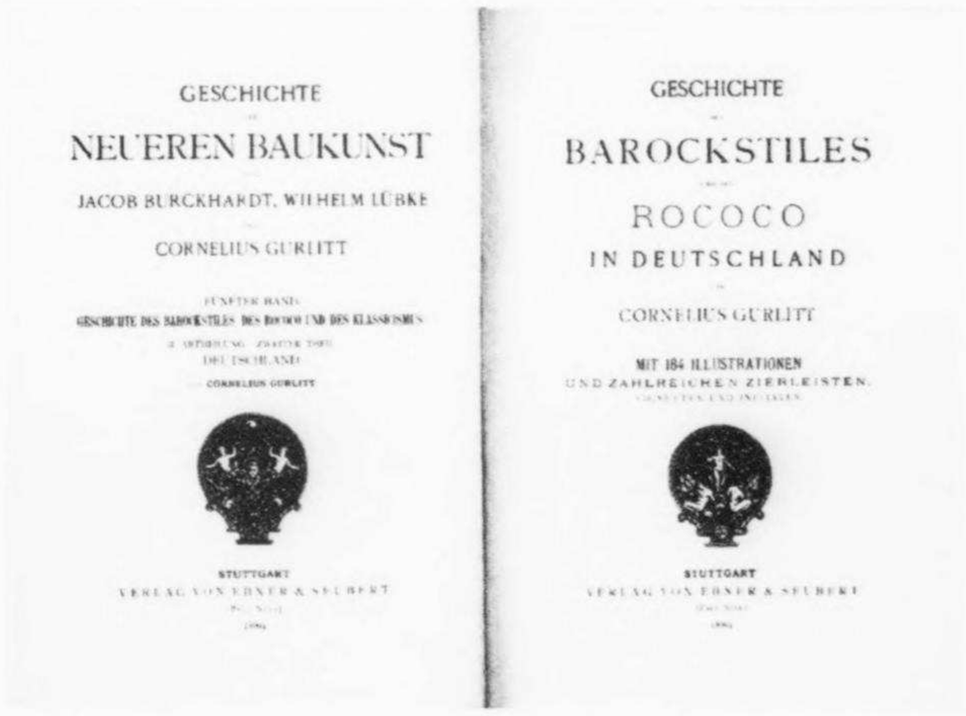
> It seems laughable to me how someone can take as the object of their studies knowledge of the Renaissance or Descartes or Aristotle and have no concept of the natural sciences of our day. Overall, historical training only makes sense if one has examined it in relation to the present. One will be ungrounded and without guiding principles to jump into any historical period and to look around; to close ones' eyes to today's sun makes no sense.[43]

On January 23, 1888, he noted: "Put in the foreground the concept of the present as historian."[44] And in the same month he wrote: "Occupation: To be able to apprehend the present. Living connections must be sought in earnest. The historian of men must be a psychologist. He shows the forms of humanity, the life of the soul. Astonishing richness: modern man can model his feelings on the antique, on mysticism, classicism, and Romanticism."[45] Clearly, although not made explicit in *Renaissance and Baroque*, Wölfflin believed it the historian's task to view the past through the eyes of the present, and vice versa. In *Renaissance and Baroque* Wölfflin was, it seems, drawing a line between the form of the German state in his day and the emerging Grosser Staat in the Baroque: the Baroque revealed to him the form of present-day Germany, and the new imperial Germany made clear the origins of its form in the dominating, centralizing, and repressively monumental forms of the Baroque.

In the late 1880s Wölfflin was not alone in projecting a contemporary political order onto the formal description of Baroque architecture. Although Wölfflin was dismissive of the three-volume survey of European Baroque architecture by his contemporary Cornelius Gurlitt, their texts did travel on parallel tracks.[46] Compared to Wölfflin's, however, Gurlitt's politics—he was an ardent nationalist—are manifest.[47] His volume on the German Baroque reads as a post-unification and post-*Kulturkampf* saga that, for the first time, places positive value on the Baroque period not as a moment of weakness and susceptibility to international Catholicism but as an era of

43. Notebook 14 (1886–87), p. 74.
44. Notebook 15 (1887–88), p. 29.
45. Ibid.
46. Cornelius Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien* (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1887); Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles des Rococo und des Klassicismus in Belgien, Holland, Frankreich, England* (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1888); and Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Ebner & Seubert, 1889).
47. See Juergen Paul, *Cornelius Gurlitt: Ein Leben für Architektur, Kunstgeschichte, Denkmalpflege und Städtebau* (Dresden: Hellerau Verlag, 2003). Paul's monograph draws upon a collection of 1,600 letters from Gurlitt's family circle, which was recently published online as the "Nachlass Gurlitt," gurlitt.tu-dresden.de. A selection of these letters accompanied by scholarly essays is in Matthias Lienert, ed. *Cornelius Gurlitt–Sechs Jahrzehnte Zeit- und Familiengeschichte in Briefen* (Dresden, Institut für Sächsische Geschichte und Volkskunde, 2008). In English, see Fritz Stern, *The Politics of Cultural Despair: A Study in the Rise of the Germanic Ideology* (Berkeley: University of California, 1961), pp. 103–104, 110. There is a chapter on Gurlitt in Levy, *Barock: Art History and Politics.*

rich cosmopolitanism out of which an authentic German architecture emerged. Gurlitt's books could almost be read as the architectural companion to the famous history of nineteenth-century Germany by Heinrich von Treitschke. What was crucial for Gurlitt in Treitschke's *History of Germany* was his location of the foundation of modern Germany not in the Reformation and the break from Rome, but in 1648 when Germany lay in ruins.[48] Because in this revisionist history modern Germany saw its birth in the confessionally heterogeneous period of the Counter-Reformation, the world of the German Baroque held a pressing interest. Wölfflin's concepts of the individual, superstructure, freedom, and unity in Baroque architecture were used simultaneously by Gurlitt in his distinctive version of what in his case can aptly be termed "political formalism."



Title pages of Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Deutschland *by Cornelius Gurlitt. 1889.*

Gurlitt published his historical survey of European Baroque architecture—the first systematic treatment of the subject—at the end of the 1880s. The Italian, French, Dutch, and Flemish histories were written in order to explicate and ultimately to exalt the cosmopolitan German Baroque. Gurlitt's first volume, on Italy, appeared in 1887, and Wölfflin read it at least twice before finishing *Renaissance and Baroque.* He was harshly critical of it.[49] Wölfflin was likely to have been especially dismayed by Gurlitt's radical recuperation of the German Baroque. For young Wölfflin, a passage to the Baroque in the north could not have occurred, since a pure and rule-bound Renaissance had never taken root there. The development to the Baroque was an Italian, and specifically a Roman, phenomenon, although he would later come to view the German feeling for form as essentially a Baroque one.[50]

48. Heinrich von Treitschke, *History of Germany in the Nineteenth Century*, trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York: McBride, Nast, 1915), originally published as *Deutsche Geschichte im Neunzehnten Jahrhundert*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1879).

49. For example, he emphatically rejects Gurlitt's view of Vignola as the bearer of the Palladian rule book. Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 6; *Renaissance and Baroque*, p. 20. On Wölfflin's critique of Gurlitt's book, see Lurz, *Heinrich Wölfflin*, pp. 120–21.

50. On the Roman focus of his study, see Wölfflin, *Renaissance und Barock*, p. 1; *Renaissance and Baroque*, p. 15. In Wölfflin's last monograph, *Die Kunst der Renaissance: Italien und das Deutsche Formgefühl* (Munich: F. Bruckmann, 1931), which focuses on northern and southern Renaissance art, his terms for a German sense of form (movement, unclearness) recall those of the Baroque. For the shift in his thinking; see Levy, *Barock: Art History and Politics.*

Gurlitt's grand explanation of the Baroque can be outlined briefly as follows.[51] Michelangelo and Palladio were the late-Renaissance architects whose works set the stage for the Baroque. Palladio's architecture was interpreted by Vignola in the spirit of the Counter-Reformation as a "dry" (*nüchtern*) rule-bound architecture that suppressed architectural detail (understood by Gurlitt as the unity of the individual). This is Gurlitt's "bad" Baroque. Michelangelo's individualistic, "unique" (*eigenartige*) architecture of "interiority" (*innerliche*)—read Protestant—resolved itself into the "good" Baroque, not in Italy (as Wölfflin saw it), but in Germany in general and in the architecture of Protestant Germany above all. Unlike Wölfflin, Gurlitt explicitly links proclivities in architectural form to political form, as in the following passage:

> Where in the life of the state and society there is a proclivity for logical clarification and for fixed forms, where the lawful regulation [*gesetzlicher Regelung*] of relationships prevails, where reason predominates, there will one find Palladio's disposition to be dominant. . . . But where emotional life was conducted prevalently as a religious relationship, where a fervent piety reigned, where the bold "I" displaced and overcame the social order, and broke through men's rules and laws . . . there would Michelangelo's spirit be powerful.[52]

For Gurlitt, German architecture came to maturity when it broke free from the cabinetmaker's *Kleinkunst* mentality—the focus on details that dominated the German Renaissance—to the *real* project of architecture, which was the consideration of the whole: "the feeling for the unity of the work of art, for the orderly arrangement of the parts by the whole, into a unified mass."[53]

The similarities between Wölfflin's and Gurlitt's thinking are particularly apparent in their analyses of princely palaces. Gurlitt differs from Wölfflin in seeing unity as a key to the expression of princely power, but like Wölfflin he argues that in Italian palaces unity is achieved at the expense of the individual forms, which are all suppressed.[54] For both men, Italian Baroque palaces embody autocracy achieved by force. But Gurlitt sees a solution to this Italian formulation take shape in the Baroque palaces of Prague, when the German spirit revived and where unity was redefined "in the German way" as the "harmony of many parts put together, the whole as the product of many individual forms."[55] That such a

51. Evonne Levy, "The Jesuit Style and Bohemian Architecture in Cornelius Gurlitt's 'Geschichte der des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Deutschland' (1889)," in *Bohemia Jesuitica 1556–2006*, ed. Petronilla Cemus with Richard Cemus (Prague: Univerzita Karlova v Praze, 2010), vol. 2, pp. 1139–50; and Levy, "Cornelius Gurlitt als 'Barockmann,'" in Lienert, *Cornelius Gurlitt*, pp. 45–53.

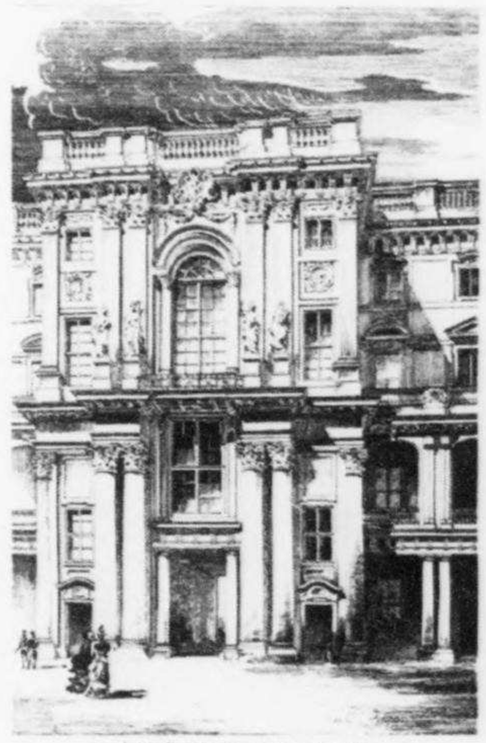
52. Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien*, p. 6.

53. "Die Empfindung für die Einheit des Kunstwerkes, für die geregelte Unterordnung der Theile unter das Ganze, für geschlossenes Massen." Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Deutschland*, p. 38.

54. Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles in Italien*, esp. p. 222.

55. "Zusammenklang vieler Theile aufgefasst, das Ganze als das Erzeugnis vieler Formen-Individualitaten." Gurlitt, *Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Deutschland*, p. 206.

development in German art should take place in Bohemia was no accident, he says, for it was here that the national question was the most animated. It is in his assessment of the Berlin Schloss (to which he erroneously believed both Borromini and Andreas Schlüter contributed) that Gurlitt most directly expressed his understanding of how a building can convey an ideal relation of individual to state. There the German architect, he says, moderated the harsh severity of the Italian parts of this uniquely monumental building, and "into the building he carried that spirit of the Prussian kingship, which does not see its greatness in being cut off from the people but in its inner ties to them. From a defiant *palazzo* he made a Prussian royal palace."[56] In Gurlitt's view Schlüter modified Italian monumentality—the precondition for the Baroque in Germany—with an assertion of individual parts that was about power binding itself *to* the people rather than absorbing them and thereby cutting itself off from them.



Berlin Schloss, from Geschichte des Barockstiles und des Rococo in Deutschland. *1889.*

The deeper explanation of Gurlitt's formal language for German Baroque architecture is to be found in the *longue durée* of German political theory. Leonhard Krieger argues for a distinctive German notion of freedom, which differed fundamentally from that of other European nations because of the historical relationship of regional princes to the Holy Roman Empire. Because the German princes, who were sovereign over their territories, asserted their own freedom from the Holy Roman Emperor, princely authority was always linked to freedom rather than the opponent of it.[57] Thus Treitschke is in keeping with the German idea of freedom as Meinecke outlines it when he argues that "freedom should be sought within the state not from it," for the "power of the state and the liberty of the people are inseparably connected."[58] Treitschke's vision of the relation of part to whole is subsumed by Gurlitt's political formalism: this *is* Gurlitt's ideal Baroque palace.

The views of Gurlitt and Wölfflin of the Baroque are no doubt similar, yet while for Gurlitt the Italian Baroque is subordinate to the ideal organization of parts to whole that could only be born in Germany, for Wölfflin the golden age of rational coordination in the Renaissance degenerated into the subordina-

56. Ibid., p. 380.
57. Krieger, *The German Idea of Freedom*, p. 5.
58. Treitschke, *Politics*, vol. 1, p. 152.

tion of parts to whole in the Baroque, marking the complete annihilation of the individual.

The comparison of Wölfflin's and Gurlitt's texts suggests that we should take more seriously the centrality of the figure of the state in both books as a preoccupation of the times. For if the state was, as Lionel Gossman has shown,[59] at the center of the German historical project in the nineteenth century, we should consider art history as moving on a parallel track to its closely linked discipline. Wölfflin's text can be seen as Hegelian in its validation of the spirit of the age. Everyone was a Hegelian to some extent at this time.[60] On the other hand, how he defines that spirit seems closer to contemporary German historiography's view that the "form" of political organization is equally an expression of that spirit, and that the form of the state is the proper subject of history. If Wölfflin, as he would later put it in *Principles of Art History*, believed in writing the history of civilization from the point of view of a lost sensibility, reconstructing it on the basis of the material traces of (mere) art, we must rethink Wölfflin's *Renaissance and Baroque*, as the history not of the traces in architecture of early modern culture or society, but of the form of the state.

The most important question, though, is this: should we think of the political in Wölfflin's work as political formalism? That is, is the description of the form of the state one of the purposes of formalism? Or is the political system the *unconscious* of formalism—always already present, but in a repressed form? The evidence of Wölfflin's notebooks suggests strongly that the former is the case.

59. Lionel Gossman, *Basel in the Age of Burckhardt* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), esp. chapter 15.

60. See Frederic J. Schwartz, *Blind Spots: Critical Theory and the History of Art in Twentieth-Century Germany* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 7–8.

Barbarian Invasions and the Racialization of Art History*

ERIC MICHAUD

If the German peoples had not been able to shake off the Roman yoke . . . instead of this rich and free Europe, we would only have Rome, in which everything was mixed and confused. Instead of the history of European kingdoms, we would have nothing but the annals of Roman history, offering the sad uniformity of Chinese chronicles.

—Friedrich Schlegel, 1809

Yes, we are Oriental—by race—We are doubly Oriental, both because of our Celtic origins and because of our Germanic incursions of the fourth to the tenth centuries. We are only Latin *and* Graeco-Roman *through our literary education.*

—Louis Courajod, 1891

A historical and cultural model of remarkable strength and longevity has, through its mythical dimensions, structured art-historical writing in Europe since the beginning of the nineteenth century. Surprisingly, given how profound a stamp it has left on the field—right down to the formal categories with which the discipline sought to order its objects scientifically—the historiography of art has not paid it much attention. Even before Edward Gibbon published his monumental *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–1788), eighteenth-century Europe, especially France, extensively debated the role "barbarians" played in the formation of modern nations. But nobody had yet assigned "the barbarian invasions" a pivotal role in European history, and nobody had seen them as the matrix and origin of contemporary conflicts. It was not until barbarian times returned to the heart of European

* This text is the result of research conducted at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, Spring 2010 (funding provided by the Florence Gould Foundation Fund). The author wishes to thank those who made this possible. He also wishes to thank Catherine Fraixe for her invaluable editorial counsel.

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 59–76. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

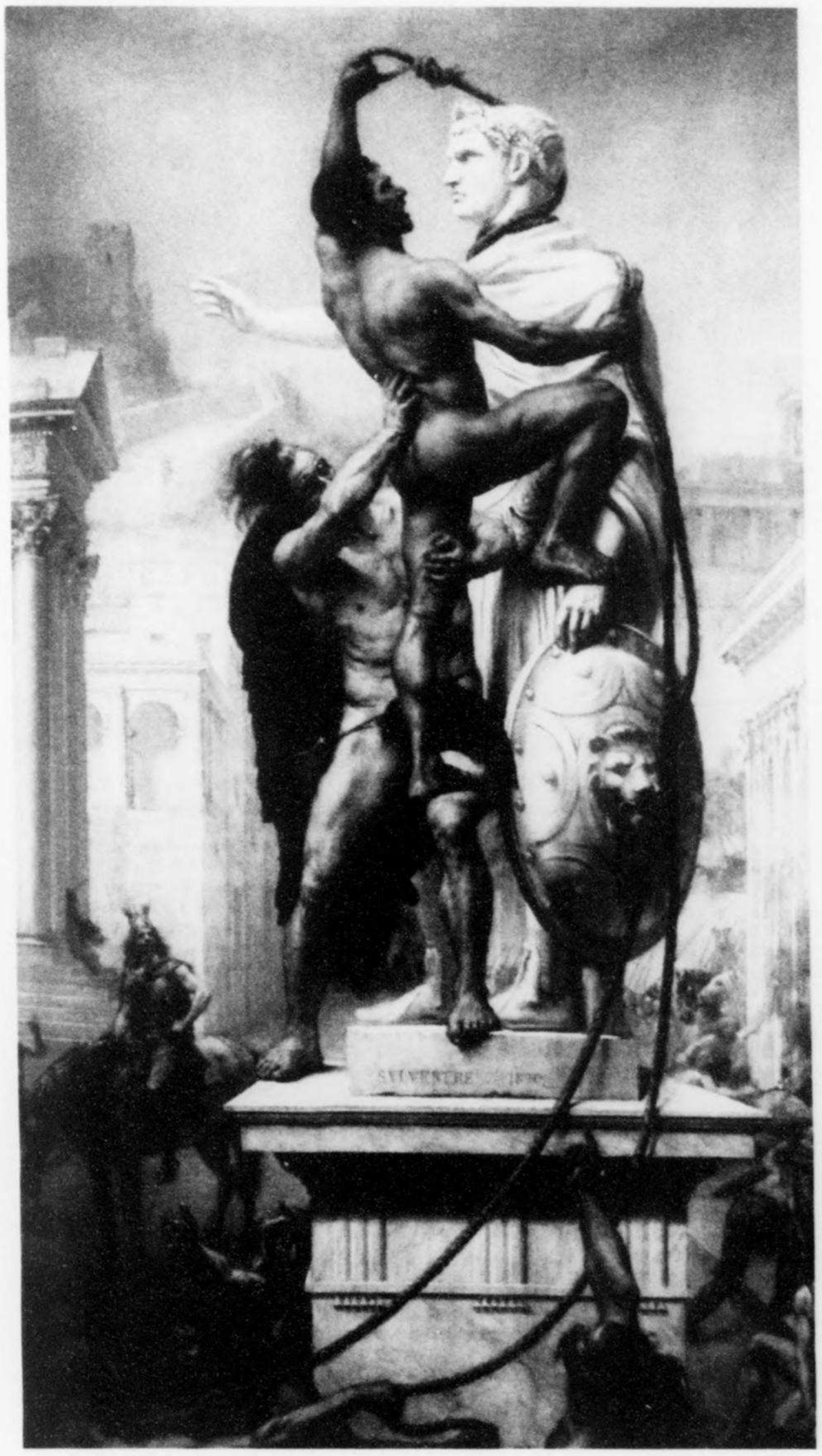
Romanticism—as a reaction against the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, and the Napoleonic empire—that the opposition between the Germanic and the Latin races became the most common interpretative model of cultural production.[1] This model was so commonplace it became almost invisible in the discourses of art, where even now it is actively disseminated. In what follows, I will merely confine myself to sketching out the emergence of the model and its influence on the ideas of some of the art historians who contributed to the foundation of the discipline.

On the basis of a geographical and climatic antithesis between North and South inherited from the eighteenth century, the nineteenth century developed, with surprising consistency, a whole arsenal of oppositions that the twentieth century then refined further.[2] To put it succinctly: thanks to their male energies, young Northern peoples—the barbarians—regenerated feminine and decadent old Roman Europe, propelling it into modernity. It was the Northerners who shifted the history of Europe northward, spreading a Christian religion that they soon embodied in an art that opposed itself in every aspect to classical antiquity, and was referred to almost interchangeably as "Romantic," "Gothic," or "Germanic." It was thanks to them that Europe was able to surpass the paganism of antiquity, escaping the gloom of Latin classicism and the crushing norms of Rome, which stifled the spirit of the peoples she had conquered. At last, the North, as Montesquieu said, "forged the tools that broke the chains framed in the South."[3]

Rome and the barbarians: this model was easily transposed to Napoleonic Europe, especially after 1806, by which time the Germanic Holy Roman Empire had disappeared and Napoleon had conquered part of Prussia. Herder's conviction of the necessity of *another history*, one written not by the victors, made its way into occupied Germany. In 1774, he described the fall of Rome "as a break in the thread of universal events":

> Nothing less than a whole new world was needed to heal the tear. This world was the North. When at last everything crashed, what an inundation of the South by the North! And after all the upheaval, all the horrors, what a new world, Nordic and Southern! . . . Everything was exhausted, enervated, dislocated. . . . And then a *new man* was born in the North. . . . Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, Angles, Huns, Herules, Franks and Bulgarians, Slavs and Lombards arrived, settled down, and the whole new world, from the Mediterranean to the Black Sea, from the Atlantic to the North Sea, was their creation! Their race! Their constitution![4]

1. See Käthe Panick, *La Race Latine: Politischer Romanismus im Frankreich des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Bonn: Ludwig Röhrscheid Verlag, 1978); and Pierre Michel, *Un mythe romantique: Les barbares, 1789–1848* (Lyon: P.U.L., 1981).
2. See James F. Hamilton, "Structural Polarity in Mme de Staël's *De la littérature*," *The French Review* 50, no. 5 (April 1977), pp. 706–12.
3. Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois*, bk. 17, chap. 5 (Geneva: Barillot, 1748).
4. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Auch eine Philosophie der Geschichte zur Bildung der Menschheit* (1774), in vol. 1 of *Sturm und Drang: Weltanschauliche und ästhetische Schriften*, ed. Peter Müller (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1978), p. 323.



Joseph Noël Sylvestre.
The Sack of Rome by the
Barbarians in 410. *1890.*

After 1806, this *other history* no longer encompassed North and South but pitted them against each other, often accentuating what it saw as irreconcilable differences. Friedrich Schlegel was one of the most active artisans of this extreme opposition. At first an uncompromising admirer of Hellenism, Schlegel soon became convinced that the time had come to found a new religion, with Novalis as Christ and himself as "his valiant St Paul." Starting in May 1799, he gave this "biblical project" a purifying and eschatological dimension: just as primitive Christianity had, against all expectations, engulfed the Roman Empire, "similarly, this new big catastrophe, in its continuous expansion, will absorb the French Revolution, whose main achievement will have been precisely to provoke this reaction."[5] Visiting the ruins of the Basilica of Saint-Denis in 1806, he nostalgically recalled the "ancient days when France was conquered and governed by Germans"[6] and thought the term "German architecture" should be assigned to the Gothic style common to all Germanic peoples.

Four years later, having put himself at the service of Metternich, Schlegel began teaching contemporary history in Vienna. Like Fichte, who in his "Address to the German Nation," delivered in Berlin in 1807 and 1808, had compared the French conquest of Prussia with the Roman invasions of the first century C.E. and urged Germans to resist as their ancestors had before them, Schlegel posited that the era of invasions held the key to understanding the present correctly, and vice versa. If the past alone, he said, allowed us to evaluate the present, the present served to illuminate the obscurity of the past: "how many pages of history not understood until now have, because of the events of the last few years, clarified themselves to us!"[7] The migrations, usually seen as a kind of overflow of barbarian hordes, were in fact a struggle between the Germanic tribes and Rome; the arrival of the Huns in limited numbers had not, in fact, changed anything. The truth could only be reestablished after the barbarians had been de-barbarized and the unjust but widely spread opinion that the ancient Germans were "completely barbaric peoples," comparable to American savages, demolished. Only then could the phenomenon that the French and Italians obstinately referred to as "the barbarian invasions" finally be seen in all its brilliance and decisive importance—as a migration that, as Schlegel declared, constituted the "wall of separation that divides the ancient and the modern world."[8]

From this extraordinary event, with its incalculable consequences, modern European history flowed: if this migration had not occurred, and if the "Germanic

5. Novalis, quoted by Edouard Spenlé in *Novalis: Essai sur l'idéalisme romantique en Allemagne* (Paris: Hachette, 1904), pp. 244–45. The letter from May 7, 1799, can be found in *Friedrich Schlegels Briefe an seinen Bruder August Wilhelm*, ed. Oskar Walzel (Berlin: Speyer and Peters, 1890), p. 421.

6. Friedrich von Schlegel, "Briefe auf einer Reise durch die Niederlande, Rheingegenden, die Schweiz, und einen Theil von Frankreich," in *Poetisches Taschenbuch für das Jahr 1806* (Berlin: Unger, 1806), pp. 267, 278.

7. Friedrich von Schlegel, *Über die neuere Geschichte: Vorlesungen gehalten zu Wien im Jahre 1810* (Vienna: Karl Schaumburg and Comp., 1811), p. 10. For the English translation, see Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures on Modern History*, trans. Lyndsey Purcell and R. H. Whitelock (London: H. G. Bohn, 1849), p. 4.

8. Schlegel, *A Course of Lectures*, p. 4.

peoples" had not thrown off "the Roman yoke," "the rest of Europe would certainly have been incorporated into Rome, the freedom and individuality proper to its nations would have been destroyed . . . and the same uniformity would have invaded all those provinces."[9] Instead of the free, rich, and diverse Europe of today, everything would be mixed and confused within a uniformly sad Rome. This migration, according to Schlegel, was nothing other than the "history of the wars between the free Germanic races and the Roman masters of the world: wars which terminated in the dissolution of the Roman empire, and in the foundation and first formation of the modern states and nations."[10] In these theses and statements emerging from Vienna, everyone could hear or read a clear warning directed toward Napoleon, the new master of the world.

The same spirit animated Germaine de Staël's book *On Germany*, published in 1813 and translated into English in 1814 (its considerable success helped spread some of these ideas across Europe). But it was not just from Friedrich Schlegel that de Staël borrowed these ideas; she was equally indebted to his brother, August Wilhelm, and his "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," which she heard delivered in Vienna before an enthusiastic audience.[11] For the first time, no doubt, the space of European art and literature was marked by racial distinctions.[12] De Staël's *On Germany* opened by unambiguously dividing Europe into "three major distinct races: the Latin, the Germanic, and the Slavish." Judging the Slavic race as simply imitative and setting it aside, de Staël considered that "throughout literary Europe" there were "but two great divisions strongly marked": "the literature which is imitated from the ancients, and that which owes its birth to the spirit of the middle ages; that which in its origin received from the genius of Paganism its color and its charm, and that which owes its impulse and development to a religion intrinsically spiritual."[13] She then outlined a very elemental psychology of race, expanding on the idea of "national character," which had been developed in the preceding century. Evidently, the wars between the free German peoples and the Roman masters of the world were being reenacted before her very eyes, splitting Europe in two. The Italians, the French, the Spanish, and the Portuguese had inherited their civilization, their languages, and their taste for earthly pleasures and goods from pagan Rome: "like their instructors, the Romans, they alone know how to practice the art

9. Ibid., p. 5.
10. Ibid., p. 6.
11. See esp. the first and thirteenth lessons of August Wilhelm Schlegel's *Vorlesungen über dramatische Kunst und Litteratur* (Heidelberg: Mohr and Zimmer, 1809–1811).
12. In 1800, Madame de Staël had constructed a literary geography separated into "two hemispheres": "It seems to me that there exist two completely distinct literatures, one which comes from the south and the other from the north, one whose primary source is Homer while the other originates in Ossian." But at that time she did not introduce race as a consideration. See de Staël, *De la littérature considérée dans ses rapports avec les institutions sociales* (1800), ed. Paul van Thieghem (Geneva: Droz, 1959).
13. Madame de Staël, "Observations générales," in *De l'Allemagne*, vol. 1 (London: John Murray, 1813), pp. 1 and 4. (The first edition of 1810 had been destroyed by Napoleon's censors, the second was published in London in 1813, and the third in Paris in 1814, this last being the first to be accessible in France.)

of domination." In the North, the Germans, the Swiss, the English, the Swedes, the Danes, and the Dutch belonged to those "Germanic nations" who "almost always resisted the Roman yoke." Civilized later by the advent of Christianity, these nations were "instantly transformed from a kind of barbarism into a Christian society." In the end, one always found the same character traits among the diverse peoples of Germanic origin: they were independent, loyal, faithful, and good.[14] From the time the peoples of the North conquered those of the South, fundamentally nothing or almost nothing had changed in their respective characters, except maybe—but this is an essential point—that the conquerors of yesterday now complained of being oppressed themselves.

In defining the term "Romanticism"—"recently introduced to Germany"—de Staël also lists the opposing forces that, she assures us, split the literary empire between them: "paganism and Christianity, North and South, antiquity and the Middle Ages, chivalry and Greco-Roman institutions." Whoever rejected this partition was not only prevented from judging the "antique and the modern tastes" but also from understanding that this division pertained "also to two distinct eras of the world: that which preceded the establishment of Christianity and that which followed it."[15] The propaganda in her book finally made it clear to the French that the wars between the Romantics and the Classicists repeated and continued those that had pitted the Germans against Romans and Christians against pagans.[16] Even before the Prussian "wars of liberation" (1813–1815) against the Napoleonic Empire, Romanticism had begun to fight the Classical order. It saw itself as a formal transgression, an aesthetic assault launched by an oppressed but young and vigorous popular spirit against the constraining norms of a sad and uniform Rome, assuredly provoking its fall. The future was on its side, as it had been, in earlier times, on the side of the Germans against Rome.

The two different accounts of "barbarian invasions" that had provided France and Germany with their respective myths of origin now enjoyed a second flowering: "barbarian invasions" and the "Frankish conquest" on the one hand, and "migration of peoples" (*Völkerwanderung*)—that is, the migration of ancient Germans, as idealized in Tacitus's *Germania*—on the other.[17] The languages themselves transmitted two very different versions of history. If incursions, aggressions, and occupations were recorded in French, in German we see a preference for the more neutral concept of a displacement of peoples. And while in France the term "barbarian invasions" essentially referred to the "German invasions" of the fifth century that had given birth to the *Regnum Francorum*, German historians had for a long time been careful to distin-

14. Ibid., p. 3. These character traits are exactly those attributed to Germans by Tacitus, so as to oppose them to the general depravity he attributed to imperial Romans.
15. Ibid., pp. 284–85.
16. See John Claiborne Isbell, *The Birth of European Romanticism: Truth and Propaganda in Staël's* De l'Allemagne (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
17. On the essential role the Roman Tacitus's *Germania*, written at the end of the first century A.D., played in the construction of German identity, see Michael Werner's "Die 'Germania,'" in *Deutsche Erinnerungsorte*, vol. 3, ed. E. François und H. Schulze (Munich: Beck, 2001), pp. 569–86.

guish "ancient Germans" from "barbarians." As a matter of fact, a peculiar role reversal had taken place between the Germans and the French. Throughout the eighteenth century, the court and the elites in German states were almost completely dominated by French culture, while France saw the development of the theory of "two races," which, by attributing Frankish origin to the French aristocracy, made the "Germans" the real rulers of an essentially "Gallic" French populace. So while Latin classicism imposed its aesthetic and ideological law on the German lands, "Germanic blood" imposed its civic and political laws onto a "Latin" and "Gallo-Roman" population. On both sides, a conflict between races doubled as a conflict between classes: the German side denounced the French and classical culture of the cultivated elites, which alienated them from the German people, while in France, the aristocracy was denounced for its German origins. In each case, racial hierarchies seemed to merge with social hierarchies.

In the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Count of Boulainvilliers sought to turn the "barbarian invasions" into a mythical origin for the French nobility. In his view, the French aristocracy—having descended from the Franks, a coalition of different Germanic tribes—had a totally different origin from that of the people, deriving its rights from the conquest of Roman Gaul in the fifth century. As a political move designed to maintain and reinforce the rights of the aristocracy in the face of an alliance between the monarchy and the bourgeoisie (the Third Estate), this origin myth posited the nobility as free "companions" and "equals" of the king. The "Gauls," on the other hand, were the subjects of this Germanic nobility, "as much by right of conquest as by the necessary obedience due to those with power."[18] In 1789, in a famous pamphlet that threatened the barbarians with expulsion, the Abbé Sieyès ironically turned this argument on its head, asking why the Third Estate hadn't sent back to the Frankish forests "all the families who clung to the foolish pretension of being descendants of a conquering race and inheriting its rights?" But by this he only meant to better demonstrate that freedom was not a privilege of birth but the basic right of all peoples, regardless of whether they were descended from the Gauls or the Romans or the Sycambrians or "any other savages who had emerged from the forests and lakes of ancient Germany."[19]

With the fall of Napoleon, the restoration of the monarchy, and the return to France of aristocratic émigrés who, like Montesquieu, firmly believed in their Germanic origins, the time of the barbarians seemed to merge with Romantic

18. Comte de Boulainvilliers, *Histoire de l'ancien gouvernement de la France*, vol. 1 (The Hague and Amsterdam: Aux dépends de la compagnie, 1727), pp. 29–33. See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951; New York: HBJ, 1979), pp. 164–65; Marc Bloch, "Sur les grandes invasions," *Revue de synthèse* 19 (1940), pp. 55–82; André Devyver, *Le sang épuré: Les préjugés de race chez les gentilshommes français de l'Ancien régime (1560–1720)* (Brussels: Editions de l'Université libre de Bruxelles, 1973); Michel Foucault, *"Il faut défendre la société": Cours au Collège de France, 1976* (Paris: Gallimard et Seuil, 1997); Claude Nicolet, *La fabrique d'une nation: La France entre Rome et les Germains* (Paris: Perrin, 2003); Ian Wood, "Barbarians, Historians, and the Construction of National Identities," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008), pp. 61–81.

19. Joseph Emmanuel Sieyès, *Qu'est-ce que le Tiers-Etat?* (1789; Paris: Société d'histoire de la Révolution Française, 1888), pp. 32–33.

modernity. Now not only the French Revolution, which had identified with Rome and the classical antiquity that had been its model, but also the "Latin races" that had incarnated them could be thrown onto the trash heap of history. Their decadence recalled that of Rome, and their time was on the wane, said the rumor, while that of the "Germanic races" was about to start or start again, in tandem with the rebirth of Christianity in Europe. After the Congress of Vienna, which had dismantled the short-lived Napoleonic Empire, a set of closely linked religious, political, cultural, and artistic reactions began to take place. In 1842, Sulpiz Boisserée, who had recently reaffirmed the exclusively German origin of the Gothic style, took pleasure in the fact that the French had been defeated "not only on military but also on moral, literary, and artistic grounds" and were even forced to "accept religious subjects" in painting.[20] Thirty years later, Philarète Chasles, a professor of German studies at the Collège de France, took a more extended view of things: "The Germanic element has been advancing for the past two centuries while the Roman has been dying on all sides." Napoleon, a man of the South, had been its last and most sublime representative, organizing and arming himself against a Germanic world "whose rise he foresaw."[21] Nevertheless, if the Latin races were visibly in decline, it was clear that the Germanic had not yet accomplished the task assigned to it by history. The Cologne cathedral was the most striking symbol of this sense of incompleteness. This monument, for Sulpiz Boisserée, simultaneously excited both admiration and regret: if it was the "most grandiose, most imposing, the most perfect of any epoch" in its conception, the crane that for three centuries had stood by to finish the tower's summit brought to mind irresistibly the misfortunes that had prevented the achievement of national completion in reality.[22] Roman classicism was perpetually dying while Germanic Romanticism never finished being born.

Hannah Arendt had underlined it: the French, having inherited the racial myth of a nobility founded on the "Frankish invasions," were the first in Europe to be obsessed with Germanic superiority and subsequently built French racial theories on its premise.[23] In 1820, the same year that François Guizot wrote that the Revolution had been the decisive battle in a thirteen-centuries-long war between "the conquering and the conquered races,"[24] Augustin Thierry pointed to the "racial antipathy" that still divided the French nation: "The Genius of the conquest has made a jest of nature and time; he still hovers over this unfortunate land."[25] In fact, he would soon add, almost all the European peoples bear the stamp of medieval conquests: the

20. Boisserée, quoted by Pierre Moisy in *Les Séjours en France de Sulpice Boisserée (1820–1825)* (Paris: IAC, 1956), p. 129.
21. Philarète Chasles, *Études sur l'Allemagne ancienne et moderne* (Paris: Librairie d'Amyot, 1854), p. 6.
22. Sulpiz Boisserée, *Histoire et description de la cathédrale de Cologne* (1823; Munich: Institut de Littérature et des Arts, 1843), p. vii.
23. Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 164–65.
24. François Guizot, *Du gouvernement de la France depuis la restauration, et du ministère actuel* (Paris: Ladvocat, 1820), pp. 1–2.
25. Augustin Thierry, "Sur l'antipathie de race qui divise la nation française" (1820) in *Œuvres complètes: Dix ans d'études historiques*, vol. 6 (Paris: Furne et Cie, 1851), pp. 236–43.

superior and inferior classes of his day were nothing other than the conquerors and conquered of a previous age: "The race of the invaders, when it ceased to be a separate nation, remained a privileged class."[26]

From the eighteenth century onward, European dominion over the peoples of other continents had been seen as a natural consequence of their superiority and of the "unequal perfectibility of human races." Now the works of Augustin Thierry and his brother Amédée (whose *History of Gaul* was published in 1829) propagated the idea that, in the final analysis, the history of Europe itself was intelligible only to those who understood that here too races were the real collective forces that had determined and continued to determine the course of history. Anthropologists, philosophers, economists, and historians became fascinated with the European aspect of the "problem of race," a move that was accompanied by a vast movement to de-barbarize the ancient barbarians. With the proliferation of scientific theories seeking to prove the natural inferiority of savages or peoples colonized by Europeans, it became necessary to rehabilitate the "barbarian races," who, after all, as Chateaubriand wrote, had formed "the point of contact where the history of the ancients and the moderns was united" in Europe.[27]

This rehabilitation of the barbarians—which was contemporaneous with the rediscovery of the Gothic style in Europe and its long ensuing popularity—had remarkable consequences in the field of art and its history. Since the end of the sixteenth century, the traditional perspective, as propagated by Giorgio Vasari, had been that the Goths had "ravaged antique buildings and killed their architects in war."[28] Émeric-David was one of the first in France to rebel against this prejudicial view. Far from having destroyed ancient monuments, the Goths had in fact preserved them with great care: Theodoric the Great, Athalaric, and the queen Amalasuntha were all involved in maintaining ancient monuments and building new ones. The Burgundians, the Franks, and the Lombards had encouraged artistic and literary production in all the lands they conquered.[29] Indeed, by the time the Gothic armies poured into Italy and Greece, they had "entered a land of ruins": the edifices of paganism had already been overthrown and "their idols destroyed."[30] Hitherto, the barbarians were considered to be by definition without arts, belonging

26. Augustin Thierry, *Histoire de la conquête de l'Angleterre par les Normands* (1825), in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 1 (Paris: Furne et Cie, 1846), p. 8. We know that it is in not just Thierry, but also in Guizot, that Marx found the first formulations of class war.

27. François-René de Chateaubriand, *Essais sur les révolutions* (1797), in *Œuvres complètes*, vol. 2 (Paris: Pourrat Frères, 1836), p. 11, n. 1.

28. Giorgio Vasari, "De l'architecture," chap. 3 in *Les Vies des meilleurs peintres, sculpteurs et architectes*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. Andre Chastel (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1981), p. 101: "*Questa maniera fu trovata da Goti, che per avere ruinate le fabbriche antiche, e morti gli architetti per le guerre, fecero dopo coloro che rimasero le fabbriche di questa maniera.*"

29. Toussaint Bernard Émeric-David, *Recherches sur l'art statuaire, considéré chez les Anciens et chez les Modernes* (Paris: Nyon Aîné, 1805), pp. 399–402.

30. Toussaint Bernard Émeric-David, *Histoire de la peinture au moyen âge*, ed. Paul Lacroix Jacob (1812; Paris: Gosselin, 1842), p. 43.

as they did to a space beyond civilization. By the 1800s, while still not quite transformed into artists, they had stopped being seen as the enemies of art. Commenting on Vasari in 1839, Jeanron wrote that the "Barbarian invasions, an event of immense consequences for the question of art, remained perhaps the least understood," though they had given birth to modern art.[31] In fact, the meaning of barbarism had been completely reversed since Vasari. Not only had art not perished with the arrival of the barbarians, but its real destroyers had ruined it much more directly and at a much later date than previously imagined: "In a word, we have been too convinced that the sixteenth century witnessed a rebirth of painting, and quite improperly assigned the word *renaissance* to a period when art, on the contrary, began to bear the marks of its degradation."[32] Soon this became a leitmotif of the anti-classicism that spread throughout Europe: after the splendor lent to art by Christianity, the Renaissance, with its revival of pagan and Roman models, could be nothing other than regression, decline, and decadence. This notion was popularized by Victor Hugo in his *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), in which he wrote that since the sixteenth century, architecture "no longer expresses the essence of society, but miserably makes itself Classical; from being Gallic, European, and indigenous it becomes Greek and Roman; from being true and modern it turns pseudo-antique. And we call this decadence the Renaissance."[33]

At once aesthetic, political, racial, and religious, this formidable Romantic inversion was, of course, closely linked to a propaganda that exalted not only Gothic art but also, soon after, the Baroque and, later, Expressionism. It forms the real matrix for the history of art as a discipline, which was born precisely from attacks on the universalism of the classical ideal and its pretense of standing outside of history. The history of art began with the Romantic fragmentation of Classical eternity—and this fall of art into the historical consciousness occurred under the aegis of the barbarians. Until the middle of the eighteenth century, an antiquarian like the Count de Caylus could still be amazed to discover "the tastes and manners" of many nations, "mixed confusedly in one work."[34] But it was not long before the same Winckelmann who had celebrated Classicism's atemporality would become the first to formulate the idea that the life of a style is indistinguishable from the life of a people. In 1938, Dagobert Frey outlined what we would today call his *ethno-differentialism*: "It is with Winckelmann that, for the first time, 'national character' was seen to lie at the origin of differences in art."[35] Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art* (1764) not

31. Philippe Auguste Jeanron, commenting on the life of Don Giulio Clovio, in Giorgio Vasari, *Vies des plus célèbres peintres, sculpteurs et architectes*, vol. 5, trans. Léopold Leclanché (Paris: Tessier, 1839), pp. 180, 200–02.
32. Paillot de Montabert, *Traité complet de la peinture*, vol. 3 (Paris: J.-F. Delion, 1829), pp. 1–2.
33. Victor Hugo, *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831; Paris: Eugène Hugues, 1832), p. 241.
34. Comte de Caylus, *Recueil d'antiquités égyptiennes, étrusques, grecques et romaines*, vol. 2 (Paris: Duchesnes, 1756), pp. 23–24.
35. Dagobert Frey, "Die Entwicklung nationaler Stile in der mittelalterlische Kunst des Abendlandes," *Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte* 16 (1938), p. 3.

only produced a psychology of peoples that could be deduced by examining works of art, it also laid the foundation for a biological concept of style that Romanticism would later deploy in its obsessive quest for the national and racial origins of artworks. The practice of what we might call *racial attributionism* would soon develop in the field of art, modeling itself on the discipline of philology.[36] In this sense, most art-historical writing, at least up until the middle of the twentieth century—from Schnaase to Wölfflin, from Taine to Courajod, and from Riegl to Focillon—can be properly considered "Romantic." For all of them, including Focillon, individual objects were determined by "styles," styles were determined by peoples or nations, and nations by their racial components.[37]

Viollet-le-Duc revealed the *political* reason for this *racial* classification when he opposed "political civilizations" to "sympathetic civilizations," the respective models of which were the Romans and the Greeks—the latter being related, according to the mythology of Aryan migration, to the "Indo-Germanic" races.[38] The civilizations he called "sympathetic" developed in agglomerations of "men of the same race or races having certain mutual affinities," and only they could be said to possess an art of their own. Political civilizations, on the other hand, were characterized by the domination, through the means of force and of commerce, of one people over "vast territories occupied by races with no relationship to one another or to those dominating them." Such was the Roman civilization. For the Romans formed "a body politic and administration rather than a nation." And just as a Roman people could not be said to exist, but only a Roman organization or government, authentic art could not exist in Rome, but only "an organization of arts belonging to foreign peoples, quite perfect . . . but one which is not and cannot be the true expression of a national genius." He concluded that "throughout the centuries, we see those questions of races and nationalities reborn again and again with an undimmed intensity and vitality."[39] In 1919, the great German art historian Georg Dehio seemed to agree with him, trac-

36. On the role of politics in nineteenth-century philology, see Patrick Geary, "A Poisoned Landscape: Ethnicity and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century," in his *The Myth of Nations: The Medieval Origins of Europe* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2002), pp. 15–40.

37. We should not forget that the categories of nation and race are highly permeable and therefore—in all European languages and for a long time—communicate constantly with those of the people, the tribe, and ethnicity. Let us remember that even in 1920 Marcel Mauss, believing he was writing a salutary text, could state that race was not the origin of nations, but on the contrary, nations created new races. Nonetheless, in both cases it was blood—biology—that was the determining factor. See Marcel Mauss, "La nation," *Œuvres*, vol. 3 (Paris: Minuit, 1983), pp. 571–639.

38. See Léon Poliakov, *The Aryan Myth: A History of Racist and Nationalistic Ideas in Europe*, trans. E. Howard (New York: Basic Books, 1974). On the certainty of Viollet-le-Duc about the relations between art and the Aryan migrations, see the article "Sculpture" in *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française du XIe au XVIe siècle*, vol. 8 (Paris: Morel, 1866), pp. 274, 189–90.

39. Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, vol. I (1863; Brussels: Mardaga, 1977), pp. 204–5. Viollet-le-Duc, who expressly made reference to Gobineau in the eighth discourse (vol. 1, p. 342, n. 1), also took from him the idea of the cultural nullity of Rome as a result of the absence of a Roman race (for example: "Rome had nothing that properly belonged to it, neither religion nor laws, nor a language nor a literature. . . ." See Arthur de Gobineau, *Essai sur l'inégalité des races humaines*, vol. 2 [1853–1855; Paris: Firmin-Didot, 1940], p. 273).

ing the different paths the Germans and the French had taken since the thirteenth century: "The French, a motley conglomeration from the point of view of race, and always politically divided, aspire to spiritual unity through the use of force; while the Germans, incomparably more united by blood, love diversity above all and elaborate in an increasingly lively way the specific physiognomy of their tribes (*Stämme*) and landscapes."[40] One could see the same oppositions repeated from century to century, contrasting the political model of Rome, which had attempted to master racial chaos at all costs, with the Greek—but also the Gothic or Romantic—organic model, which was founded itself on one race or a more or less homogenous group of races.

If Viollet-le-Duc played Greece against Rome exactly in the manner of the German Romantics before him, he did so through his reading of Gobineau, through the filter of Aryan myth and of the myth forged by Thierry and Guizot of a France composed of "two races." This led him to the paradoxical construction whereby the French were both "barbarian" and "Greek," for all that the Celts could be considered as barbarian as the ancient Germans. For Viollet-le-Duc, France—originally Gallic, with a genius and art specific to it, and then subject to the Roman empire, which was a "vast political and administrative organization established more to stifle the particular tendencies of the nations under its yoke than to develop them"—had been regenerated by the influx of good Aryan blood. "Those peoples of the North whom we have been taught at college to call barbarians, were destined, by this very contribution of a purer blood, to restore to the arts a distinctive character." It was thanks to these northern peoples that France's racial genius—having survived Roman domination—became incarnate once more in an architecture "called Gothic," but which in the final analysis represented nothing other than "the awakening of the ancient Gallic spirit." Nevertheless, Roman domination soon returned in the guise of the Renaissance, suppressing the national spirit right up until the middle of the nineteenth century. For, as Viollet-le-Duc tirelessly repeated, despite our language, despite our laws, and despite our despicable imitation of Roman monuments, we are not Latin, we are Greeks, from whom we inherited our "sentiment of form," which we have almost lost "since we have imagined ourselves to be Romans."[41]

At the end of the nineteenth century, the very Catholic, very Romantic Louis Courajod—whose influence would be considerable—took up these same themes, at times using the same words as his spiritual master to describe the same imaginary genealogy. But even more than Viollet-le-Duc, Courajod claimed to read this genealogy in the art objects themselves. With irrepressible hatred, this Catholic anti-communard associated ancient Rome with the "evil Italian stepmother," both having, on two separate occasions, cut France off from its Greek, Gallic, and, most importantly, bar-

40. Georg Dehio, *Geschichte der deutschen Kunst*, vol. 1 (1919; Berlin und Leipzig: de Gruyter & Co., 1923), pp. 212–13. Recognizing the "French" origins of the Gothic, Dehio saw it as the product of an epoch and not of race: how was one to know which racial component of France—Gallic, Roman, or Germanic—it could be attributed to?

41. Viollet-le-Duc, *Entretiens sur l'architecture*, vol. 1, pp. 206, 240–41, 342–44, 246, and 274.

baric roots. A Germanist, he preferred Montesquieu over and against the Abbé Dubos and the Romanists, whose "classical pedagogy" had tried to minimize the importance of both the Frankish conquest for the history of France and the "barbarian coefficient" in French art. For him, Boulainvilliers, Guizot, Thierry, or Auguste Geffoy's re-reading of Tacitus furnished historical proof that in fact there had been an "open and often violent" . . . "real, effective and positive conquest" of France by barbarians of Germanic origin, and that "everything comes down to a question of race." He was convinced that from the time of the Roman conquest a terrible conflict had overtaken French lands and the French spirit. This was a conflict "between two completely contradictory intellectual principles that were forever at war: national instinct and foreign influence, freedom and absolute power, the Northern and the Southern spirit, Latin paganism and Christianity." Courajod fought with all his might against the importance accorded to Classical antiquity—especially Roman—in historical culture; it had fueled the catastrophe of the Renaissance and brought about the "decomposition of the ancient style inherited by Western peoples."[42] The barbarian invasions were therefore central to his thought, and his whole practice was geared toward affirming the notion of racial permanence, which despite historical vicissitudes assured the continuity of a Gallo-Germanic French art.

We had forgotten, he wrote, that the "Western world, which had fallen asleep pagan and Roman, woke up Christian and barbarian"; we had forgotten "the barbarians, from whom we indisputably descend"; we had forgotten the powers of race or of "ethnic temperament," an oblivion that made the emergence of the Gothic style incomprehensible. This only became intelligible through the "long and obscure barbarian incubation" that preceded the "flowering of the Romanesque School," of which the Gothic was "the predestined offshoot." This notion of a period of incubation was at the core of his racialized concept of art and its history. It resonated with the ideas of *awakening*, *reminiscence*, and, most importantly, *survival*, which he adroitly manipulated so as to bridge the gap between the biological and the cultural. This allowed him to establish the hereditary nature of the transmission of forms in space and time. The "systems of art," he wrote, "circulate in the moral world in the same way that the blood of the races that invented them circulates in the veins of their descendants."[43] And while he did not deny the persistence of ancient art, he never explained it using the same arguments about race, heredity, and blood: in his eyes, it was simply a foreign element, one that had survived in a modern culture that was essentially Christian and Germanic.

In this manner, barbarian brooches and jewels from the fifth and sixth centuries—the ornamentation of which, Courajod assured us, was common to all "Indo-Germanic races"—allowed him to demonstrate not only the "fraternity" of the Celtic and Germanic races and their diffusion across the whole European con-

42. Louis Courajod, *Leçons professées à l'École du Louvre (1887–1896)*, vol. 3 (Paris: Picard, 1899–1903), pp. 195, 159.
43. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 10, 169, 34, 53.

tinent, but also and especially the fact that the same "blood" produced the same forms, despite the distance of centuries. This could be seen from Romanesque and Gothic decoration, which furnished proof for the "uninterrupted and direct transmission of the family principle." For in the final analysis, "all people of Aryan origin had drawn on the same precious source," and therefore barbarian decorative art was first and foremost the "art of a race, a distant family heritage," which came from an "old, Indian and Asiatic incubation."[44] It is undoubtedly Courajod—deploying the idea of a "survival" that was indivisibly both cultural and biological—whom one must credit with assembling the components of the theory of an ethnic or racial continuity of "styles" that determined German and French art history in the first half of the twentieth century.

We know that Alois Riegl, far from disputing the importance of the Roman heritage in favor of the Oriental one—as Courajod had done, and Strzygowski would do—saw in the equilibrium between the "orientations of Germanic and Latin art" the possibility of a "worldwide mission" that Baroque art in particular had assigned itself.[45] But Riegl also considered the Italian and Germanic civilizations to be radically antagonistic to one another right "up until [his] time."[46] This ambivalence, which can be found throughout Riegl's thought, lies at the heart of his primary work, *Die spätrömische Kunst-industrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn* (translated as *Late Roman Art Industry*). This work was to have two parts: the first was to be an inquiry into the fate of the decorative arts from the third century C.E. onward among the Mediterranean peoples, who had until then been at the head of the development of civilization. The second would determine the role the barbaric peoples of the north had played in the formation of the fine arts during the five centuries between Constantine the Great and Charlemagne.[47] Only the first part was published during his lifetime, in 1901. In it, as one generally says, Riegl wanted to demonstrate that the progressive abandonment of the classical ideal had nothing to do with differences in the ethnic composition of the Late Roman Empire after successive Germanic invasions. What had been considered a degeneration of classicism was in fact the emergence of a new style, which corresponded to a new *Kunstwollen*.[48] But since Riegl also wanted to assign each race its own specific *Kunstwollen*, the result was a profound ambiguity.

The second part, drawn from his courses at the University of Vienna, was pub-

44. Ibid., vol. 1, pp. 213, 185, 186.

45. Alois Riegl, *Die Entstehung der Barockkunst in Rom*, ed. Arthur Burda und Max Dvorák (Vienna: Anton Schroll, 1908), p. 6. See Margaret Olin, "Alois Riegl: The Late Roman Empire in the Late Habsburg Empire," in *The Habsburg Legacy: National Identity in Historical Perspective*, ed. Ritchie Robertson and Edward Timms (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994), pp. 107–20.

46. Alois Riegl, *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*, trans. Jacqueline E. Jung (New York: Zone Books, 2004), p. 262.

47. Alois Riegl, *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie nach den Funden in Österreich-Ungarn im Zusammenhange mit der Gesammtentwicklung der bildenden Künste bei den Mittelmeervölkern* (Vienna: Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, 1901), p. 1.

48. This canonical reading is by Otto Pächt, "Alois Riegl," *The Burlington Magazine* 105, no. 722 (May 1963), pp. 188–93.

lished in 1923. It features an interesting introduction by Riegl himself, which has generally been ignored, despite the fact that it sketched out a remarkable parallel between political and artistic events in the Late Roman Empire during the Germanic migrations. Just as "the political events of the migrations were for the most part the consequence of the Will (*des Willens*) of the Romans (even if this was unconscious) . . . the artistic productions of the migration period were for the most part the result of the aesthetic Will (*des ästhetischen Wollens*) of the Romans."[49] It was therefore impossible to speak of the art of this period as a "barbarian" art. On the other hand, ancient art had been "barbarized" even before Germans entered the history of civilization. From around 375 C.E., the Classical temperament was already in the process of being lost and moving closer to the inferior taste of Germanic barbarians. But, Riegl added, throughout the fourth century we see "continual Classical reactions against the thrust of evolution toward Christianity (that is to say, the cult of a crucified god as state religion). From time to time, the Romans recalled the past and did not want to abandon it; they wanted to stop evolution by force. Here already we see the so-called barbarian (*das sogenannte Barbarische*) element becoming specifically the element of progress (*das eigentliche Fortschittliche*). Both in the political sphere and in the artistic sphere, it was the Germans interventions that cut off the return to the ancients, provoking thereby a decisive turn toward an art constructed on new, non-antique principles." Nonetheless, it became possible to differentiate the *Kunstwollen* of the Germans from that of the Latin peoples only after the migrations. But this difference, he specified, "despite everything, must already have been present during the time of the migrations, and the fact that we cannot identify it at first glance does not free us from the responsibility of trying to understand it."[50]

Otto Pächt, one of Riegl's most fervent disciples, noted that despite Riegl's professed concern about neutrality, his preference for the art of the Northern peoples is clearly discernible.[51] This is euphemistic. From 1898 onward, Riegl's entire theoretical apparatus, clearly set forth in his *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts,* was devoted to demonstrating the driving role of the "peoples of the Germanic race" in the evolution of Western culture in general and Western art in particular. It is difficult not to be perplexed at the immense and lasting success of his theories, given the extreme precariousness of some of the principles on which they are founded. Thus, in 1901, Riegl began to project the fruitful opposition between the "tactile" ("haptic") and the "optic" qualities of art objects—formulat-

49. Among the rare works that mention this second part, I want to single out Christopher Wood's important text, "Riegl's *Mache*," *Res* 46 (Autumn 2004), pp. 155–72. His interpretation differs significantly from mine: for Wood, who also cites this last phrase, Riegl assures us that no external ethnic contribution was needed for Rome to become the source of modernity. Riegl nevertheless writes that it was the Germans who had provoked the "decisive turn" toward an art founded on principles other than those of antiquity.

50. Alois Riegl, "Kunstgewerbe des frühen Mittelalters auf Grundlage des Nachgelassenen Materials Alois Riegls" (part 2), in *Die spätrömische Kunst-Industrie,* ed. E. Heinrich Zimmermann (Vienna: Österreichisches Archäologisches Institut, 1923), pp. 6–7.

51. Pächt, "Alois Riegl," p. 191.

ed by sculptor Adolf von Hildebrand—simultaneously onto the history of art and the psychology of race.[52] Tactility became for Riegl a property of ancient art, one that evolved into the opticality proper to modern art, and the two transformed themselves into the plastic criteria of the cultural opposition between the German and the Latin models. As Julius von Schlosser, an old colleague from the University of Vienna, pointed out, Riegl had taken up the "highly dubious" notion of a "racial psyche," which he "hypostatized through the opposition of the optic and the haptic."[53] These opposing plastic qualities attributed to artistic objects were not only the products of different racial psychologies; as Riegl asserted in the first part of his *Late Roman Art Industry*, they were, first and foremost, the products of biological dispositions that called up related artistic responses:

> To the sense perception of the ancients, external objects appeared confused and mixed; by means of the visual arts, they took individual objects and represented them as a clearly finished unity. The ultimate goal of visual art during all of antiquity was thus to give back to external objects their clear material individuality.[54]

This reads like a kind of reverse recapitulation theory, as if the ancients were as sensorially handicapped as a newborn baby. Riegl's Hegelianism and evolutionism, as Meyer Shapiro rightly pointed out, had led him to describe a historical process "whose every major phase corresponded to a racial disposition."[55] This allowed Riegl to state that after two centuries of dominance in the West, French art had to "surrender its erstwhile leadership to Germanic stock of purer racial consciousness."[56] So "people of the Germanic race," more spiritual and more "optic" than those of the Mediterranean, were called on by nature to occupy the summit of evolution.

The French art historian Henri Focillon assigned ancient Germans the exact opposite position on the ladder of evolution: he claimed that, in a sense, they belonged to prehistory or to "protohistory," and he was just a step away from thinking that twentieth-century Germans could be similarly described. He refused any hint of a linear concept of evolution: just as history was first and foremost a "conflict of the precocious, the current, and the outdated," the history of art pre-

52. Adolf von Hildebrand, *Das Problem der Form in der bildenden Kunst* (Strasbourg: Heitz, 1893). See Margaret Olin, *Forms of Representation in Alois Riegl's Theory of Art* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1992), pp. 134–37; and Margaret Iversen, *Alois Riegl: Art History and Theory* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993), pp. 73–76.

53. Julius von Schlosser, *Die Wiener Schule der Kunstgeschichte*, vol. 13 (Innsbruck: Universitäts-Verlag Wagner, 1934), p. 186. See also Julius von Schlosser, "Alois Riegl," in *Framing Formalism: Riegl's Work* (Amsterdam: G+B Arts International, 2001), p. 38. (This kind of opposition still connects Riegl to Romanticism: for Schiller, A. W. Schlegel, and Mme. de Staël, sculpture was a pagan art while painting belonged to Christian modernity.)

54. Alois Riegl, *Late Roman Art Industry*, trans. Rolf Winkes (Rome: Bretschneider Editore, 1985), p. 21 (translation modified).

55. Meyer Schapiro, "Style," in *Anthropology Today: An Encyclopedic Inventory*, ed. Alfred Louis Kroeber (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), p. 302.

56. Riegl, *Historical Grammar of the Visual Arts*, p. 104.

sented "a simultaneous juxtaposition of survivals and anticipations, of slow and outdated forms coexisting with fast and daring forms."[57] This was because "not all the regions of a certain time live in the same epoch, and the present itself is always infinitely stratified."[58] What bothers us today about Focillon's work is the regularity with which the discussions of these new ideas about the structure of historical time lie next to the "idea of race," and in particular to the idea of historical and contemporary barbarians. The seductive vision of a history constructed out of survivals and anticipations seems to have emerged out of Focillon's reflections on the temporality of the barbarians, and as a response to the racial theories that a number of his German colleagues had put forth.

In 1915 he condemned the Germans for having founded their empire on "a notion of race . . . which anthropological objectivity no longer accepts as a scientific principle," and to have "restored this outmoded term." But he immediately contradicted himself by presenting the art of the German empire as "the program of a race and a resumé of its instincts," "a barbaric shoot sprouting in the middle of civilization, in the heart of the West."[59] In short, Focillon asserted that this backward race used obsolete notions to prolong its own past and reawaken the barbarian within. Despite his sincere conviction that he was fighting against racial determinations, Focillon, with remarkable obstinacy, continued to use the "notion of race" in its most biological definition. This was because, like many of his anti-racist contemporaries, he believed in the reality of race: of enemies whose racial prejudices he wanted to combat, he wrote that "they concretized this unstable force."

Having been raised in the aftermath of the Franco-Prussian War of 1870, having lived through the Great War, and then dying in the United States in 1941, Focillon belonged to a generation for whom each of these wars was a reminder of, if not a return to, the "great Germanic invasions." All of his work devoted to the Middle Ages—which forms the greater part of his oeuvre—is a commentary on these invasions, culminating in the patriotic exaltation of his last texts, in which he condemned Germany for being "uncertain of its geographic form, its political form, its moral form" and "haunted by an instinctive nostalgia for those massive migrations of the barbarian peoples, that (in France) we call the invasions."[60]

As he had during his disputes of 1932 and 1934 with the Austrian Joseph Strzygowski—the most fanatical of the racist art historians and a sworn enemy of Riegl—Focillon developed a remarkable argument in his *Life of Forms in Art*.[61] He

57. Henri Focillon, *Vie des formes* (1934; Paris: PUF, 1970), p. 86–87.
58. Henri Focillon, *L'Art des sculpteurs romans: Recherches sur l'histoire des formes* (Paris: E. Leroux, 1931), p. 15.
59. Henri Focillon, "L'art allemand depuis 1870" (1915), in *Technique et sentiment* (1919; Paris: Société de Propagation des Livres d'Art, 1932), p. 175.
60. Henri Focillon, "Fonction universelle de la France," lecture, Carnegie Hall, New York, December 20, 1940, in *Témoignage pour la France* (New York: Brentano's, 1945), p. 51.
61. *Entretiens sur Goethe à l'occasion du centenaire de sa mort* (Paris: Société des Nations, Institut international de coopération intellectuelle, 1932); *Correspondance 4: Civilisations. Orient—Occident, Génie du Nord—Latinité. Lettres de Henri Focillon, Gilbert Murray, Josef Strzygowski, Rabindranath Tagore* (Paris: Société des Nations, Institut international de coopération intellectuelle, 1935).

wrote that he did not want to submit yet another critique of the "old notion of race, always rife with confusions between ethnography, anthropology, and linguistics." Race, he argued, was not stable or constant, and a "conservatory of pure races" could not actually exist anywhere. Nevertheless, it was important to take into account these "ancient deposits of time," which art sometimes revealed in a "strange relief": "These testaments to the past spring up as erratic blocs within a newly peaceful landscape." Therefore even if "spiritual families" could superimpose their sphere of influence onto that of races, one could still sometimes associate race with formal units:

> Aren't certain formal blocs the authentic language of certain races? Doesn't interlace design contain the image and the sign of a mode of thought proper to the Northern peoples? But interlace, and geometric formal vocabulary in general, are a property common to all primitive humanity and, when they reappear at the beginning of the Middle Ages, when they cover and denature Mediterranean anthropomorphism, this is *much less the clash of two races than the meeting of two states of time or, to put it even more clearly, two states of humanity.*[62]

Less linear than Riegl's, Focillon's evolutionism did not assign each race a definite historical position. He introduced art history to the idea of a layering or stratification of time—similar to what Ernst Bloch, at that period, described as the irruption of the "non-contemporary" in the present. And yet Focillon did not subscribe any less to the nineteenth-century practice of racial differentiation or essentialism, one linked to a notion of the limited perfectibility of certain races, who thereby remain tied to the same forms throughout history.

Without doubt, ever since the beginning of the nineteenth century, the barbarian invasions have constituted a mythical place and time on the basis of which a non-classical art history has become possible. If Winckelmann had been the "first to decompose Antiquity"[63] by analyzing the times, the peoples, and the styles of the ancients, one still had to decompose that which was neither Antiquity nor its Renaissance. In order to move beyond classical eternity, beyond its normative values, one still had to invent new temporalities, which were neither those of Vasari's *Lives* nor the dynastic temporalities of national histories. The barbarian invasions, a constitutive moment for modern European peoples, were seen by the Romantics and some of their successors as the model for an absolute new beginning. But the price paid for this was the construction of other, as it were parallel eternities, which turned to the notion of "race" for support.

—Translated from the French by Hélène Amal

62. Focillon, *Vie des formes,* pp. 88–89.
63. Antoine C. Quatremère de Quincy, *Lettres à Miranda sur le déplacement des monuments de l'art de l'Italie* (1796), ed. E. Pommier (Paris: Macula, 1989), p. 103.

Between the Academy and the Avant-Garde: Carl Einstein and Fritz Saxl Correspond

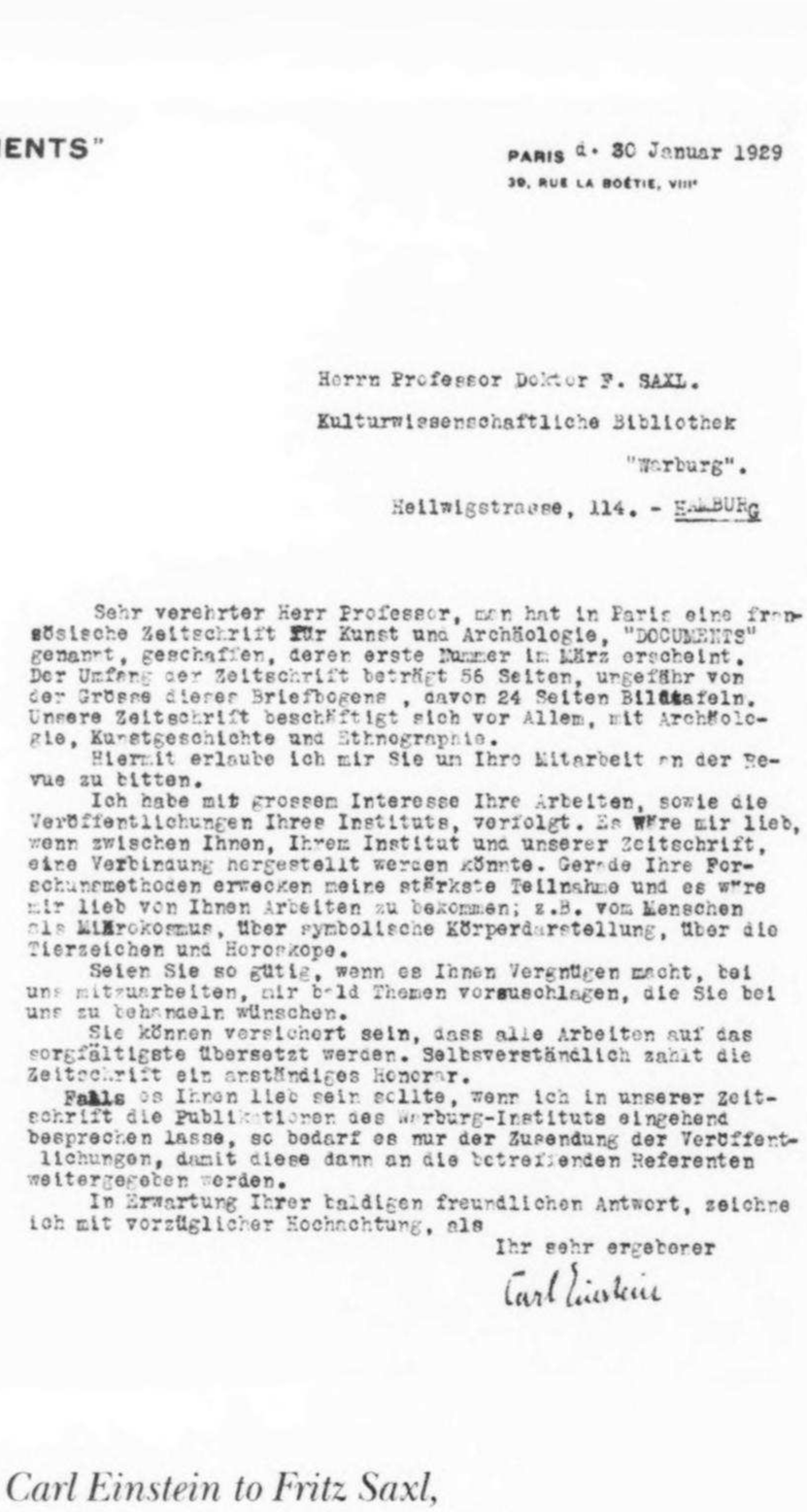
SPYROS PAPAPETROS

Can we rethink art-historical discourse by recasting one of its most "academic" (to use a term of Bataille's) or even "conservative" (to use a term of Carl Einstein's) media, that of editorial correspondence? Moreover, what if we attempt to expand such correspondence from an epistolary exchange between two editors to a tentative conceptual agreement between the institutions that these two individuals represent? And what if the expressed objective of this correspondence—that is, the prospect of collaboration—ultimately fails: what form of intellectual or methodological affinities between the two parties might their aborted communication ultimately disclose? The following sequence of letters describes an interrupted exchange between the representatives of two well-known institutions, whose circles appeared momentarily to intersect only to become tangential shortly thereafter. This transitory connection and its textual vestiges—in letters, archival manuscripts, and printed articles—indicates that the original subject of this editorial correspondence was ultimately *correspondence* in and of itself: an epistemological system based on reflection and analogy—two terms that both correspondents exhaustively theorized in their writings yet failed to carry out in their institutional relations.

Analogy, *correspondence*, *similarity*, *likeness*, *resemblance*, and *similitude* are terms that have been used to describe the survival of premodern mentalities within the heterotopias of mid-nineteenth and twentieth-century modernisms. But likeness produces more likeness, and a similar homology or uncritical automatism informs the literature that attempts to interpret these recurring analogies. In his critique of Baudelaire's "Correspondences," Paul de Man cautions that "[t]he transcendence of substitutive, analogical tropes" associated with certain metaphors of likeness occasionally states their "totalizing power" as they move "from analogy to identity and from simile to symbol and to a higher order of truth."[1] Unlike other analogical parallels within the histories of modern art, anthropology, and literature, the following exchange of letters constitutes a form of correspondence between an academic library and a purportedly avant-garde revue that is singular in the history of the two institutions. The brevity of this momentary encounter

1. Paul de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), p. 248.

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 77–96. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*



"DOCUMENTS"

PARIS d. 30 Januar 1929
39, RUE LA BOÉTIE, VIII^e

Herrn Professor Doktor F. SAXL.
Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek
"Warburg".
Heilwigstrasse, 114. - HAMBURG

Sehr verehrter Herr Professor, man hat in Paris eine französische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Archäologie, "DOCUMENTS" genannt, geschaffen, deren erste Nummer im März erscheint. Der Umfang der Zeitschrift beträgt 56 Seiten, ungefähr von der Grösse dieses Briefbogens , davon 24 Seiten Bildtafeln. Unsere Zeitschrift beschäftigt sich vor Allem, mit Archäologie, Kunstgeschichte und Ethnographie.

Hiermit erlaube ich mir Sie um Ihre Mitarbeit an der Revue zu bitten.

Ich habe mit grossem Interesse Ihre Arbeiten, sowie die Veröffentlichungen Ihres Instituts, verfolgt. Es wäre mir lieb, wenn zwischen Ihnen, Ihrem Institut und unserer Zeitschrift, eine Verbindung hergestellt werden könnte. Gerade Ihre Forschungsmethoden erwecken meine stärkste Teilnahme und es wäre mir lieb von Ihnen Arbeiten zu bekommen; z.B. vom Menschen als Mikrokosmus, über symbolische Körperdarstellung, über die Tierzeichen und Horoskope.

Seien Sie so gütig, wenn es Ihnen Vergnügen macht, bei uns mitzuarbeiten, mir bald Themen vorzuschlagen, die Sie bei uns zu behandeln wünschen.

Sie können versichert sein, dass alle Arbeiten auf das sorgfältigste übersetzt werden. Selbstverständlich zahlt die Zeitschrift ein anständiges Honorar.

Falls es Ihnen lieb sein sollte, wenn ich in unserer Zeitschrift die Publikationen des Warburg-Instituts eingehend besprechen lasse, so bedarf es nur der Zusendung der Veröffentlichungen, damit diese dann an die betreffenden Referenten weitergegeben werden.

In Erwartung Ihrer baldigen freundlichen Antwort, zeichne ich mit vorzüglicher Hochachtung, als

Ihr sehr ergebener

Carl Einstein

Letter from Carl Einstein to Fritz Saxl, January 30, 1929. Courtesy WIA, London.

demonstrates that analogy has limits too, and that its sympathetic influence cannot always be generalized.[2]

Documents/Documentation

"January 30th 1929: A French journal for Art and Archaeology titled *Documents* was created in Paris, whose first number appears in March . . . 56 pages in length, approximately the size of this letterhead, of these 24 are image-tables. Our journal is predominantly involved with archaeology, art history and ethnography." This is the opening paragraph of a letter of introduction by Carl Einstein, member of the editorial committee of *Documents*, soliciting the participation of Fritz Saxl, co-director of the Warburg Library for the Science of

2. For an early-twentieth-century analysis of analogical concepts, see Harald Høffding, *Der Begriff der Analogie* (Leipzig: O.R. Reisland, 1924). Høffding's book was part of the Warburg library's collection. For an English translation of Høffding's theory, see his "On Analogy and Its Philosophical Importance," *Mind* 14 (1905), pp. 199–209. See also the classic study by G. E. R. Lloyd, *Polarity and Analogy: Two Types of Argumentation in Early Greek Thought* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966).

Culture—Kulturwissenschaftliche Bibliothek Warburg (KBW)—in Hamburg.[3] "I have followed your work, as well as the publications of your institute, with great interest," continues Einstein, who states that he would be very pleased if a "link" could be established between the Hamburg center and the French journal. "Precisely your research methods provoke my strongest sense of partisanship," Einstein emphasizes, and he indicates that he would be delighted to receive works from the KBW scholars, particularly on the subjects of "the human figure as microcosm, the symbolic representation of bodies, zodiacs and horoscopes."

Saxl answered immediately with a two-page letter dated February 2 in which he thanks Einstein particularly for his offer to review the KBW publications in France.[4] Saxl underlines the aspiration of the Warburg Library to be "methodologically relevant outside Germany and to strengthen connections with abroad." Saxl accompanies his response with a copy of Panofsky's *Idea* and proposes to send the manuscript of a lecture on the theme of "Macrocosm and Microcosm in the Images of the late Middle Ages"—a paper that Saxl had presented "years ago" at the Berlin Society for the Science of Religion—but questions whether it would be too long, warning further that the essay is written for "a public that has a more specialized interest in such documents and subjects." Saxl also accompanies his letter with a printed list of KBW publications in which he underlines all works relevant to the research topics mentioned by Einstein. [5]

The KBW publications appear to have raised Einstein's interest, and in his reply of February 7 he asks for more of them to be sent, including works by Reitzenstein, Cassirer, and Norden (, the latter twoof whose lectures, as Einstein mentions, he had heard during his student days). Again the editor of the Parisian journal underscores the importance of common methodological patterns: "The problem setting that you exhibit in your studies always interested me rather lively, because it goes beyond banal research methods." Einstein asks to read Saxl's manuscript on the microcosm and suggests that if the entire work is too long, the editors of *Documents* could perhaps select a piece for publication. "An article for us can be four or five printed pages with three pages of images"; Einstein requests that Saxl let him know until what date he should wait for his contribution so that he might reserve a space.

Saxl's reply came only two weeks later, and was significantly shorter than his first letter. It was also less congenial, especially with regard to Einstein's solicitation of articles by KBW members other than Saxl: "Panofsky and I may be one company-firm, but it is not so that I can write his articles for him. . . . I have passed your proposal to Panofsky, but I would doubt that he could write this article [on "proportional figures"] in an instant."[6]

3. Warburg Institute Archive (WIA), General Correspondence (GC), Carl Einstein to Fritz Saxl, January 30, 1929, Paris. Iimages and quotations from archival material are published with the permission of the Warburg Institute. Letters between Einstein and Saxl have also been reprinted in Conor Joyce, *Carl Einstein in* Documents *and His Collaboration with Georges Bataille* (Bloomington, Indiana: XLibris, 2003), pp. 230–38.
4. WIA, GC, Saxl to Einstein, February 2, 1929, Hamburg.
5. WIA, GC, Einstein to Saxl, February 7, 1929, Paris.
6. WIA, GC, Saxl to Einstein, February 20, 1929, Hamburg.

To save the collaboration from falling apart, Einstein answers immediately, announcing to Saxl that it was *his* publication on mythological and astrological manuscripts from the Middle Ages that would be reviewed in the very first issue of *Documents*, and asks for reproductions of two images from the book.[7] Einstein also reiterates his request to Saxl to forward the manuscript of his lecture and reassures him that if it proves too long, Saxl could perhaps send "an abstract or piece from it of [his] choice with images." For the third time, Einstein emphasizes the affinity in method: "I have already told you before that I enormously appreciate the methods of your circle and consider them to be very fruitful." And Einstein further promises to review the publications sent by Saxl in detail.

Saxl's answer came almost one month later, on March 19, 1929, and was very brief: he had too much work at that moment to put together a manuscript that would be ready for publication.[8] But he did finally send a typescript of his entire lecture on "Microcosm and Macrocosm," hoping that the editors of *Documents* "may perhaps find it possible to publish part of it." Einstein answered five days later to thank Saxl for sending the typescript and promised that as soon as he had read it he could suggest in which form "this important and very interesting work" could be published in *Documents*.[9]

After which nothing was heard from either side for nearly seven months.

On October 12 of the same year, Saxl, while in London working on a new catalog of illuminated manuscripts from British libraries, sent a note to one of the secretaries of the KBW in Hamburg to write to "a certain Dr. Einstein in Paris" and inquire about the manuscript that he had sent for publication a long time ago.[10] On October 18, Fräulein Ehrenberg wrote to Einstein asking if he was still interested in the typescript, otherwise he should return it to Hamburg.[11]

There is no evidence of a reply or any other indication that Saxl's typescript was ever returned to Hamburg. On October 26, 1929, eight days after the library's letter to Einstein, its founder Aby Warburg died suddenly, perhaps suspending further inquiries from the Hamburg institution. In spite of Einstein's reassurances, Saxl's essay "Microcosm and Macrocosm" was never published in *Documents*. Instead, Michel Leiris wrote a three-page essay, "Two Microcosmic Figures from the Fourteenth and the Fifteenth Centuries," based (rather freely) on two illustrations from Saxl's recently published catalog of astrological manuscripts from the Middle Ages (*Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters*), but with no explicit reference to Saxl's 1926 lecture.[12] Leiris's cosmological essay was pub-

7. WIA, GC, Einstein to Saxl, February 22, 1929, Paris.
8. WIA, GC, Saxl to Einstein, March 19, 1929, Hamburg.
9. WIA, GC, Einstein to Saxl, March 24, 1929, Paris.
10. WIA, GC, Saxl to Hertha Ehrenberg, October 12, 1929, London.
11. WIA, GC, Hertha Ehrenberg to Einstein, October 18, 1929, Hamburg.
12. Fritz Saxl, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handscriften des lateinischen Mittelalters in römischen Bibliotheken* (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1915). Saxl published two more volumes on medieval astrological illuminated manuscripts from Roman and Austrian libraries in 1926 and 1927; these are the publications that Einstein was interested in reviewing in *Documents*. Fritz Saxl, *Verzeichnis astrologischer und mythologischer illustrierter Handschriften des lateinischen Mittelalters, vol 2: Die Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Wien*, in *Sitzungsberichte der Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften.*

lished in the first issue of *Documents* following Einstein's "Methodological Aphorisms" and his reflections on "Certain Paintings of 1928" by Picasso.[13] Saxl's *Verzeichnis* was in fact the only work by a KBW scholar ever to be mentioned in the Parisian journal, whose second issue, nonetheless, included the names of "Panofski" [sic] and Saxl in its list of collaborators.

Academy/Avant-Garde

Initially, the micro-history of this botched collaboration might serve as an example of how academic art-historical institutions can be tentative in their willingness to join forces with publications associated with the literary or artistic avant-garde. However, the terms "academic" and "avant-garde" do not exactly apply to either of these two circles.

It is well known that even though Einstein never completed his university studies, he had studied art history and, like a number of modern art and architecture critics and historians such as Adolf Behne and Sigfried Giedion, had attended lectures by Heinrich Wölfflin. However, both in his published art historical texts and unpublished aesthetic fragments, Einstein almost never makes any concrete references to art historians (while he does mention a number of aesthetic philosophers and theorists, such as Hegel, Nietzsche, [Adolf] Hildebrand, and Bergson). Therefore Einstein's correspondence with Saxl and his references to the works of Panofsky, Norden, and Rietzenstein, as well as the "research methods" of the KBW, are precious evidence of his interest in contemporary art-historical, philological, and anthropological scholarship.

It is also a fact that when *Documents* was launched, its general secretary Georges Bataille was working in the Cabinet des Medailles, a department of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France and one of the oldest museum collections in the country. Additionally, the review's editorial board and list of contributors included established art historians such as the historian of Northern art Frederik Adama van Scheltema and Josef Strzygowsky, professor at the University of Vienna and member of the so-called Vienna school of art history with which the KBW, and Saxl in particular, had an occasionally tense relationship.[14]

On the other hand, the Warburg Library was not exactly an academic organization, since very few of the scholars in its circle had permanent university positions. Moreover, even if the library was devoted mainly to the study of Renaissance culture, its members approached a number of other periods, disciplines, and subjects, and had at least some familiarity with what was happening

---

Phil-hist. Klasse, Abhandlungen 2 (Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1925/26, 1927).

13. Michel Leiris, "Notes sur deux figures microcosmiques des 14e et 15e siècles," *Documents* 1, no. 1 (1929), pp. 48–52, and in the same issue: Carl Einstein, "Aphorismes méthodiques," pp. 32–34 and "Pablo Picasso: Quelques tableaux de 1928," pp. 35–38.

14. See Dorothea McEwan, "Aby Warburg's and Fritz Saxl's Assessment of the 'Wiener Schule,'" in *Journal of Art Historiography* 1 (December 2009, electronic publication, University of Glasgow: arthistoriography.files.wordpress.com/2011/02/media_139130_en.pdf). During the late 1920s, the KBW was contemplating publishing part of Alois Riegl's *Nachlass*, but the project did not materialize.

in contemporary art and architecture. Warburg himself dealt with art of the period (which was mainly turn-of-the-century) and had a sizable art collection that included works by contemporary artists such the Expressionist Franz Marc.[15] Symptomatically, Warburg's personal correspondence includes a letter written only a few weeks before his death in which the Hamburg art historian contemplates purchasing some lithographs by Picasso.[16]

But among the larger circle of Warburg scholars, it was precisely Saxl who developed a number of connections to modern art and architecture during his directorship of the Institute, before and after its migration to London in 1933. Saxl's 1938 lecture on "Science and Art in Renaissance Italy," presented the same year at the International Exhibition of Surrealism in London, starts with an unconventional pair of images: Le Corbusier's Villa Stein at Garches, built in 1927 (reproduced from an illustration in Sigfried Giedion's *Bauen in Frankreich,* first published in 1928) juxtaposed with Salvador Dalí's *Soft Construction with Boiled Beans* of 1936.[17] Indeed, in one of the Renaissance scholar's last lectures, titled "Why Art History?" and delivered in 1948, its broad methodological arguments was illustrated by an array of examples ranging from drawings and frescoes by Rembrandt, Giotto, and Ghirlandaio to paintings by Cézanne and Picasso, as well as a mask of the Baluba tribe from Congo—a constellation of images reminiscent of the assortment of art-historical and ethnographic material unfolding in the pages of *Documents.*[18]

In spite, then, of the collapse of their publishing collaboration, *Documents* and KBW share a number of methodological affinities whose latent existence might elucidate the initial attraction between the two correspondents. Similar to the tentative juxtaposition of the academy and the avant-garde (with which both the Parisian journal and the German art-historical institute maintained promiscuous relationships), the two parties appear on opposing sides of a polarity, rather than in direct analogy or unequivocal likeness. It is, nonetheless, the act of "compensation" or "balancing" (what Warburg called *Ausgleich*), supported by a layer of embedded correspondences, that keeps such a polarity in constant tension, and therefore anxiously alive.[19] The same polarizing tension indicates that the correspondence between the two circles remains active even if their epistolary exchange was irrevocably terminated.

15. See Ernst Gombrich, *Aby Warburg: An Intellectual Biography* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), pp. 317–18.
16. WIA, GC, Aby Warburg to Herbert Bittner, September 25, 1929.
17. Fritz Saxl, "Science and Art in the Italian Renaissance" (1938), in *Lectures,* vol. 1 (London: The Warburg Institute, 1957), pp. 111–24, and vol. II, plate 62. Compare with Sigfried Giedion, *Bauen in Frankreich; Eisen; Eisenbeton* (Leipzig: Klinckhardt & Biermann, 1928).
18. Fritz Saxl, "Why Art History?," in *Lectures,* vol. 1, pp. 345–57 and vol. II, plates 239–42.
19. On Warburg's understanding of polarity and compensation (*Ausgleich*), see Martin Warnke, "Vier Stichworte: Ikonologie—Pathosformel—Polarität und Ausgleich—Schlagbilder und Bilderfahrzeuge," in *Die Menschenrechte des Auges: Über Aby Warburg,* ed. Werner Hofmann and Georg Syamken (Frankfurt: Europaische, Verlagsanstalt, 1980), pp. 53–61.

*

Within this analogical circle, temporal relationships—such as the synchronicity or lack thereof of the two correspondents—become integral: not only Einstein and Saxl in their exchange of letters, but also the publishing habits of the institutions the two editors represented, were out-of-sync. While *Documents* appeared seven to eight times per year, the KBW publications, such as the individual studies (*Studien*) or the collection of lectures presented in the library (*Vorträge*), emerged annually and after years of preparation. All articles published in *Documents* were rather short—"four or five printed pages," as Einstein mentions in his letter to Saxl, while essays in the KBW *Vorträge*, such as Panofsky's well-known lecture "Perspective as Symbolic Form," were much lengthier and were expanded by an abundance of footnotes that could often exceed the word count of the main text.[20] It becomes apparent then why Saxl (and Panofsky) would be unwilling or unable to conform to Einstein's requests for the fast-paced production of the semi-scholarly synopses that were required for *Documents*. The two publishing planets had different orbits. The scholarly publication had a much more protracted periodicity. While Einstein's review could reproduce a miniature (microcosmic) image of Warburgian scholarship, it could not afford to follow its temporal (macrocosmic) circulation.

Microcosm/Macrocosm as Image/Method

Such new systemic affinities reopen the question of *method*, and more specifically the purported methodological analogies between the texts published in *Documents* and the writings of the KBW scholars, whose studies, as Einstein mentioned to Saxl, moved "beyond banal research methods."

Partly, in this case, the alternative method is in empathetic correspondence with the eccentric *subject* of investigation, that is, the repertory of unconventional themes that preoccupied the Warburg scholars, such as the symbolism of the human figure, astral animal signs, cosmological diagrams, and horoscopes. These analogical motifs retraced a number of correspondences, not only between humans or animals and the cosmos but also between different mentalities both antique and modern. The very title of Saxl's essay "Microcosm and Macrocosm" was emblematic of the analogical relationship between two different thought patterns that corresponded to two diametrically opposite *scales* of research, namely the microscopic and telescopic perspectives informing the investigations of both the KBW and *Documents*.

Common to both correspondents was, for example, the fascination with the microcosm of marginal, natural, or man-made objects: snakes, hair, draperies,

20. Erwin Panofsky "Die Perspektive als symbolische Form," in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1924–25*, ed. Fritz Saxl (Leipzig: Taubner, 1927), pp. 258–330.

accessories, and other winding extensions that overwhelmed the iconography of the Warburg circle, matched by the reptiles, crustaceans, seaweed, primitive jewelry, and other cultural or bodily relics (such as "the big toe") that structured the circle of representation in *Documents*. In both cases, we deal with rudiments of previously fully functioning organs: even having degenerated into marginal accessories, such specimens remain menacingly alive despite the limitations of their atrophied extensions. The archaeological project of the KBW was, then, to map and to protract the tumultuous afterlife that such archaic vestiges enjoyed in modern milieus. For Warburg, such peripheral objects were part of an all-encompassing epistemological *Umfangsbestimmung*—the conceptual "definition of a periphery" encircling a certain idea, or an entire mentality that in spite of its geometric definition remains open and therefore relatively undefined.[21]

Out of the microcosmic image comes the microcosm as a methodological model of investigation. For Warburg's well-known motto "The good God hides in details" (following a statement by Jean Paul) extends not only to the "micrological" research of scholars in the circle of his library but also echoes some of the perhaps less scholarly investigations of the *Documents* editors, illustrated by the enlarged images of the wings and legs of flies seen through a microscope that graced the pages of one of the Parisian review's last issues.[22]

Next to the magnifying process of microscopic details characterizing their research methods stands the macrocosmic aspiration of both publishing venues—an impulse manifested by a shared interest in cosmological, astrological, and ethnological investigations and by the desire of the two institutions to expand their research across continents. For the KBW, such an impulse was expressed in Saxl's and Warburg's intent to disseminate their methods beyond Germany, in Europe and America, by means of publications, conferences, and exhibitions. This dissemination of scholarly methodology would in fact mirror Warburg's and Saxl's concept of the meandering *Wanderstrassen*—the wandering pathways of ideas that in their periodic migration from Europe to the Orient (and vice versa) follow similar transcontinental trajectories across distant historical eras.[23]

Following Warburg's own ethnographic expedition to the American Southwest, his library hosted a number of lectures and conferences—some of them published in its *Vörtrage*—that were based on anthropological and ethnographic research and dealt with the origins of ritual and dramatic performance.[24]

21. On Warburg's notion of "Umfangsbestimmung," see Gombrich, *Aby Warburg*, pp. 77–78 and 218–19; see also the recently published text by Warburg, "Symbolismus als Umfangsbestimmung" (1896–1901), in *Warburg in einem Band*, ed. Martin Treml, Sigrid Weigel, and Perdita Ladwig (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2010), pp. 615–28.

22. "Mouche-détails (grossissements): Photos de l'institut de micrographie," in *Documents* 2, no. 8 (1930), p. 491.

23. On Warburg's "map of ideas," see Claudia Wedepohl, "*Ideengeographie*, Ein Versuch zu Aby Warburgs 'Wanderstrassen der Kultur,'" in *Entgrenzte Räume: Kulturelle Transfers um 1900 und in der Gegenwart*, ed. Helga Mitterbauer and Katharina Scherke (Vienna: Passagen Verlag, 2004), pp. 227–51.

24. On the presence of anthropological and ethnographic research in the KBW, see the essays by Konrad Theodor Preuss and others in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg 1927/28: Untersuchungen zur Geschichte des Dramas* (Leipzig/Berlin: Taubner, 1930).

Similarly, in *Documents*, the aspiration of its editors was to map the world both in its modern and archaic countenance, via the lens of colonial ethnography. It was, moreover, the ethnographic museum, specifically the Trocadéro, whose decrepit condition was lamented in an article in the review's first issue, which offered a fragmentary image of that world as an exotic yet interiorized periphery.[25] For *Documents*, the "macrocosm" surrounding man's microcosmic figure was not the heavenly firmament that preoccupied Renaissance scholars, but the geographic territory of this earth, especially its reconstituted border.

Viewed through the concentric frames of their microscopic methods and macrocosmic aspirations, the two institutions appear to *mirror* one another. Within the limits of such likeness, the historiographic legacy of the KBW could pose as the unknown prehistory or the aborted origin of *Documents*. Yet it is precisely this mirroring or doubling effect between the two circles that also discloses the imaginary or idealist *méconnaissance* that both triggered and arrested their encounter.

Much of this imaginary correspondence was in fact enacted on the level of the image—a series of optical constellations through which the two institutions would appear to communicate. Previous commentators have detected a similar method of organization between the Memory Atlas (*Mnemosyne Atlas*) project by Warburg and Saxl (which had in fact originated as an ideographic mapping project)[26] and the incongruous mappings of images that appeared in various issues of *Documents*, such as the assemblages of human and animal legs, bird wings attached to angels in Byzantine icons, or dancers in modern variety-spectacles.[27]

Beyond optical similarities there is, nonetheless, an essential difference between the illustrating techniques of *Documents* and the Warburgian Atlas. Warburg's image constellations are structured upon the principle of an essential iconographic continuity—a hidden, serpentine hyperlink that binds two dissimilar figures to a common origin and traces their future variations. In *Documents*, such continuity is essentially elided by a series of pseudomorphic resemblances, which while they visually rhyme, have no essential affinity in meaning. Iconographic and narrative links appear to be broken via the mechanical reproduction of the photograph as black-and-white illustration. Divorced from their macrocosmic frame, the microcosmic extensions of human toes and crustacean antennae appear to brandish their inorganic autonomy and allegorical loss of signification. And yet the same epistemological buoyancy allows them to form what Roger Caillois would have called "adventurous coherences" among objects and fields that appear prohibitively distant.[28] It is precisely such telepathy *of and between* images that allows *Documents*' photographic assemblages to correspond with Warburg's Atlas constellations.

25. Georges Henri Rivière, "Le Musée d'ethnographie du Trocadéro," in *Documents* 1, no. 1 (1929), pp. 54–58.
26. Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image survivante: Histoire de l'art et temps des fantômes selon Aby Warburg* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2002), p. 482. On Warburg's *Atlas* and Surrealist montage, see Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "Gerhard Richter's *Atlas*: The Anomic Archive," *October* 88 (Spring 1999), p. 128.
27. George Bataille, "Figure Humaine," in *Documents* 1, no. 4 (1929), pp. 194–201.
28. Roger Caillois, *Cohérences aventureuses* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976).

But perhaps the most essential correspondences between the French journal and the Hamburg library are manifested in the text that constitutes a "blind spot" shared by the two parties' representatives: I refer to Saxl's lecture manuscript on microcosm and macrocosm, which not only was *not* published in *Documents* but in fact remained unpublished throughout Saxl's lifetime. It would finally appear in an English translation under the title "Microcosm and Macrocosm in Medieval Pictures" in an edited volume of Saxl's lectures published in 1957, eight years after the art historian's death and more than thirty years after the lecture was first presented. The typescript of the original 1926 lecture—titled "Macrocosm and Microcosm: Persian Astrological Beliefs in the Occidental Middle Ages" (*Makrokosmos und Mikrokosmos: Persischer Sternglaube im abendländischen Mittelalter*) and most probably the text sent to Einstein in Paris—is preserved in the archive of the Warburg Institute in two copies and is twenty-one pages long, while Einstein was soliciting a much shorter article.[29] Even if there were likely other reasons—based less on practical and more on ideological grounds—that prevented Saxl's text from being published in *Documents*, a close reading of the first issue reveals that Saxl's lecture informed the contents of that volume in its very absence. We will perhaps never fully grasp the cosmological correspondences that underlie this well-orchestrated sequence of texts by Einstein, Leiris, and Bataille in *Documents*' inaugural issue if we do not recover the content of Saxl's missing lecture. However distant these three coeditors may have often been in their opinions,[30] here they appear more or less united in their stance against the idealist principles associated with Renaissance humanism and Kantian Enlightenment that at least partly—via the study of Panofsky, Cassirer, and the Neo-Kantian aesthetics of Hermann Cohen—informed Saxl's epistemological agenda.[31]

The subject of Saxl's 1926 study was the transformation not simply of cosmological beliefs but of the *image* that converts such theoretical principles into a visual symbol, that is, the microcosmic figure of man (including the so-called Vitruvian figure) and its manifold iterations from Greek and Oriental antiquity to the early Renaissance.[32] Saxl had in fact written his dissertation on illuminated

29. For two typescript versions of Saxl's original lecture, see the Saxl Papers in the Archive of the Warburg Institute in London (unnumbered). For a published version of the same essay in an English translation, see Fritz Saxl, "Microcosm and Macrocosm in Mediaeval Pictures," in *Lectures*, vol. I, pp. 58–72, and vol. II, plates 34–42.

30. On the editorial policies of Einstein and Bataille, see Joyce, *Carl Einstein in* Documents, n. 3; on the actual correspondence between Bataille and Leiris, see Georges Bataille and Michel Leiris, *Correspondence*, ed. Louis Vert, trans. Liz Heron (New York: Seagull, 2004).

31. Hermann Cohen, *Kants Begründung der Aesthetik* (Berlin: Dürmmler, 1889). On Neo-Kantianism within the KBW circle, see also my "The Eternal Seesaw: Oscillations in Warburg's Revival," *Oxford Art Journal* 26, no. 2 (2003), p. 172.

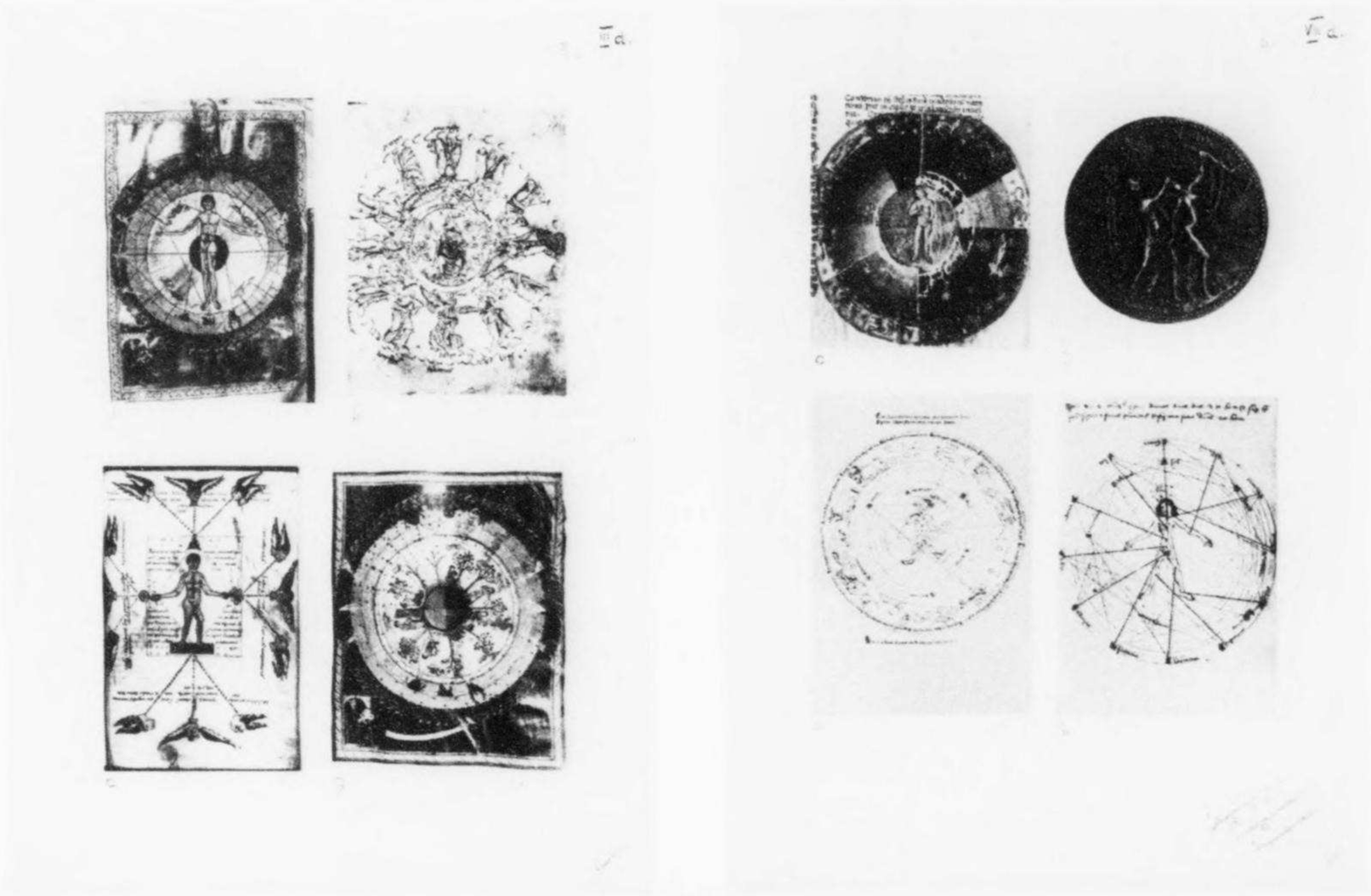
32. Saxl's lecture on macrocosm and microcosm was first presented to the Gesellschaft für vergleichende Religionswissenschaft (Society for the Comparative Study of Religion) in October 1926 in Hamburg. For an earlier historical and theoretical analysis of the same concept, see Adolf Meyer, *Wesen und Geschichte der Theorie vom Mikro- und Makrokosmos* (Bern: Druck von C. Sturzenegger, 1900). Meyer's book was part of the KBW collection.

medieval manuscripts containing an array of cosmological images, and published a multi-volume catalog on the same subject, the most recent volumes of which formed the basis of Leiris's essay in the first issue of *Documents*.[33]

In the opening statements of his lecture, Saxl argues that the belief in the correspondence between the human body and the world can be traced back to an Iranian myth of creation that refers to a "first man," whose height equals his width and whose skin and bodily orifices represent the sky and other parts of the universe. While focusing on its Persian origins, Saxl emphasizes that similar versions of this "magical anatomy" can be found in several regions of the world, from the Chinese to the Maoris, who also attribute a number of "demonic" properties to specific body parts. Expanding on these "Asiatic origins," while reiterating an argument first made by Warburg, Saxl points out that Vitruvius's reference to the equal dimensions of the human body was indebted to similar principles found in ancient Oriental texts and later "aestheticized" in Greek and Roman discourses.[34]

Saxl argues that the reappearance of anthropomorphic concepts of the universe in a number of twelfth-century illuminated manuscripts confirms the fact that medieval writers were familiar with ancient, hermetic, cosmogonic traditions, as evidenced, for example, by the Christological visions of Hildegard von Bingen that represent man in the center of the heavenly sphere, outstretched arms and feet touch-

33. On Saxl's catalog, see n. 10 above.
34. From the text of the 1926 lecture: Saxl Papers, WIA, p. 6. In the English edition, the same reference is reduced to a footnote: Saxl, *Lectures*, vol. I, p. 70n.



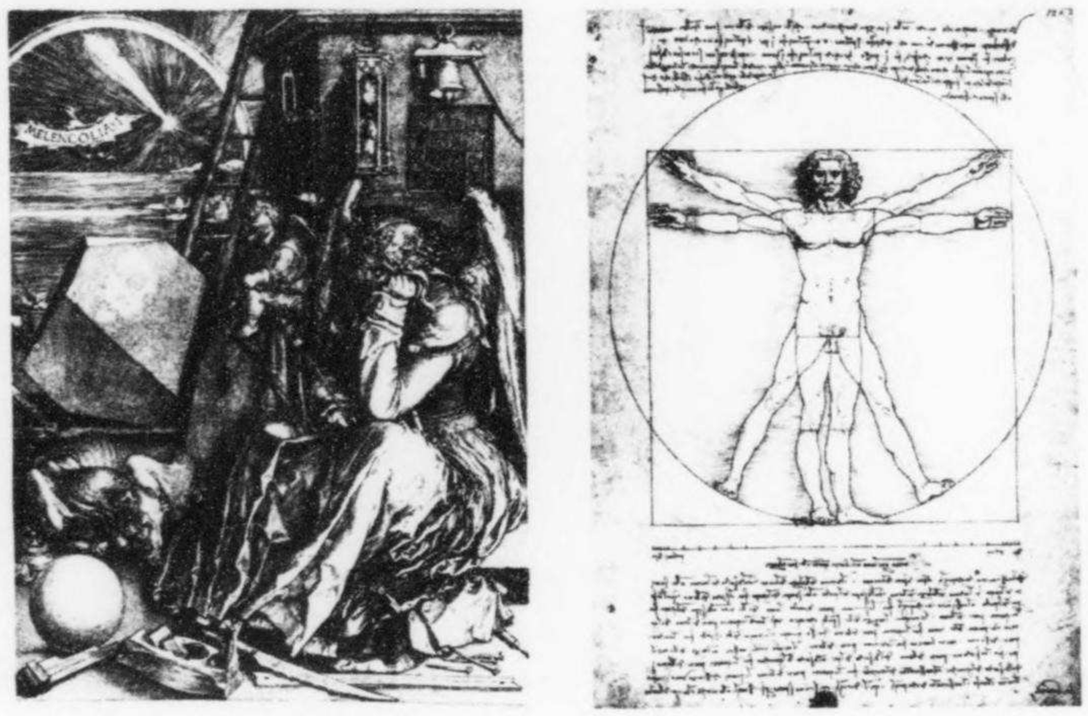
Layout from "Microcosm and Macrocosm in Mediaeval Pictures" by Fritz Saxl. 1957. Courtesy WIA, London.

ing a circle.[35] While Christian authors resisted the "pagan" origins of Oriental astrology, they replicated its repertory of images and totem-like constellations.

Saxl argues, however, that during the two hundred years between the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries, ancient cosmology experienced a transforming "revival in theory and practice." What previously had been a merely "illustrative" or "metaphorical" use of images gradually led to an acceptance of their ancient meaning, as well as their inclusion in official practices performed by the state and the church: "The step from a metaphorical use to the practical application of the images is not the sign of a new superstition but an example of regressive evolution."[36] For Saxl, the Renaissance took a step backwards in order to move ahead: it regressed into ancient cosmological interpretation to discover a rational cosmic order, one that granted a central place to the human individual and led to the creation of the modern subject (which truly emerges a century later in the philosophy of Descartes).[37]

One can trace this epistemological transition in Leonardo's well-known Vitruvian man, which, according to Saxl, no longer reflects the influence of cosmological speculation but rather appropriates the combination of empirical observation and scientific reasoning. Leonardo's project is both anthropocentric and anthropometric; it is based on measurement and numerical proportion instead of abstract medieval influences. At the close of his lecture, Saxl juxtaposes Leonardo's Vitruvian

35. Saxl, "Microcosm and Macrocosm," p. 62.
36. Ibid., p. 66.
37. This is an extension of Saxl's argument presented in a contemporary newspaper review of the lecture included in the Saxl Papers (WIA).



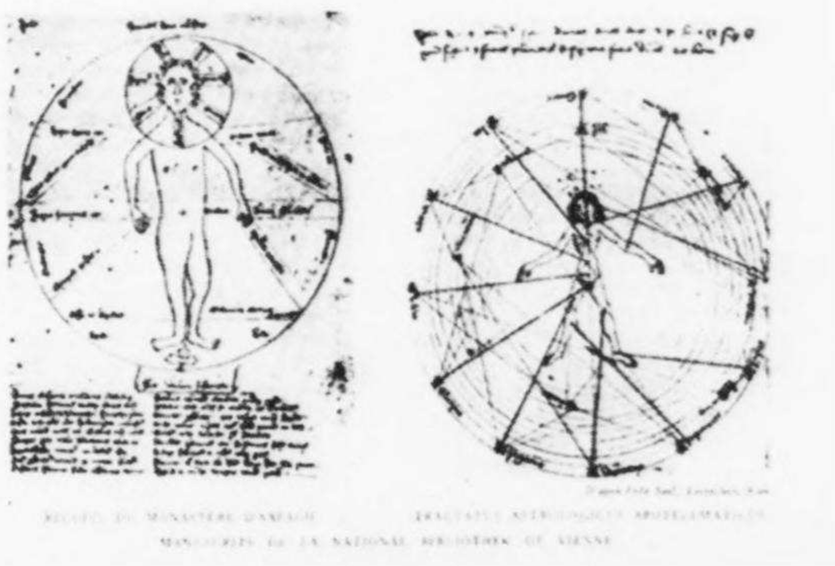
Layout from "Microcosm and Macrocosm in Mediaeval Pictures" by Fritz Saxl. 1957. Courtesy WIA, London.

drawing with Albrecht Dürer's *Melancholia* in order to illustrate the differences between Northern and Southern European mentalities. For Dürer, Saxl writes, the Saturnian "Melancholy is a symbol of the individual mind looking for its own image in the mirror of the universe," while for Leonardo the Vitruvian figure serves as a model of "the mind" that "acquiesces" in the world of external objects by recognizing "its own principle of inherent regularity."[38] In other words, Dürer is inclined towards self-reflective allegory, while Leonardo reaffirms the body as a symbol with a quantifiable presence within the realm of science and the natural world.

One may place Saxl's 1926 lecture "Microcosm and Macrocosm" among a number of interwar European philosophical discourses questioning (and reaffirming) the centrality of the human subject following a global anthropological perspective. And here one may discover a number of "correspondences" as well as disparities with the texts by Leiris and Einstein that were published in *Documents* perhaps *en lieu* of Saxl's.

In his "Notes sur deux figures microcosmiques des XIVe et XVe siècles," extracted from Saxl's catalog of illuminated medieval manuscripts, for example, Leiris, reads such figures as remnants of an "anthropomorphic phase" of the world, a stage in which man lives in "harmony" with his surroundings and "fraternizes" with nature. While "far from equal," man appears to be "parallel" to all natural forces.[39] Similar to Saxl, Leiris describes the correspondences between specific body parts and the universe, quoting from the study of ancient syncretism in Iranian and Greek cultures by Reitzenstein (whose name Einstein had repeatedly mentioned in his correspondence with Saxl and whose book, published by the KBW, included a number of the same illustrations as those in Saxl's catalog).[40] While describing a microcosmic figure from Saxl's *Verzeichnis*, Leiris observes that here man appears as a "prisoner" (*prisonnier*) of his own influences: his figure is traversed by the intersecting lines of the seven planets and the twelve divisions of the zodiac circle. But in spite of its overdetermination,

38. Saxl, "Microcosm and Macrocosm," pp. 69–70.
39. Leiris, "Notes sur deux figures microcosmiques," p. 48.
40. Richard Reitzenstein, *Studien zum antiken Synkretismus aus Iran und Griechenland* (Leipzig: Taubner, 1926).



Diagrams from Verzeichnis *by Fritz Saxl, as published in* Documents *1, no. 1. 1929.*

there is a certain plasticity in all such analogical definitions: "The stars incline, they do not require," Leiris quotes the ancient astrologists as saying.[41] Which means man always retains a *little freedom* within the network of forces that exceeds his own stature. Unlike the Vitruvian canon, the cosmic analogies traced by Leiris are neither inescapable nor entirely fixed.

While emphasizing the archaic cabalistic origins of such images, Leiris, like Saxl, in fact closes his article with a reference to Leonardo's Vitruvian figure and laments the fact that its symbolic origins have been reduced to a number of "aesthetic" principles, such as the "canon of Polyclitus" or the "golden section," which were in fact experiencing a revival in aesthetics and academic art theory during the interwar period in France.[42] Yet at the same time, the primitive symbolic systems of signification that had generated such proportional principles had been forgotten. Far from facilitating free-floating analogies, such aesthetic norms consolidated inflexible *homologies* with one and the same object, ratio, or ideological position. The "harmony" of the ancient world and the mobility of its analogical mentality were frozen into a set of static "principles" reifying academic canons. And here lies an essential difference between Leiris's view of the modern microcosmic figure and Saxl's conclusions on the same proportional figures: for even if the Warburg scholar had also lamented the "aesthetization" of such ideas, he hailed their "rationalization" in the scientific culture of the Renaissance as an inevitable step towards enlightenment, something that Leiris, and even more emphatically Einstein and Bataille, would challenge.

Animisms/Fetishisms

Indeed the rift (as well as the ineffable *correspondence*) between KBW and *Documents* becomes even more palpable in the two articles by Einstein that precede Leiris's commentary. In his "Methodological Aphorisms," Einstein declares that "in the era of the Renaissance, the macrocosm corresponded (*concordait*) to the microcosm"—a statement that echoes both Saxl and Leiris. And yet such "concordance" is not an axiomatic or eternal law, but a volatile reflection cast by inner impulses: "a sort of naturalism of the canon and of the archetype-inspired belief because psychological processes seemed to correspond to processes of nature."[43] Einstein too protests even more strongly against the reduction of such harmonious analogies into a "canon"

41. "Les astres inclinent, ils ne nécessitent pas . . . " See Leiris, "Notes sur deux figures microcosmiques," p. 51.

42. See, for example, Miloutine Borissavlievitch, *Les théories de l'architecture; Essai critique sur les principales doctrines relatives a l'esthétique de l'architecture* (Paris: Payot, 1926).

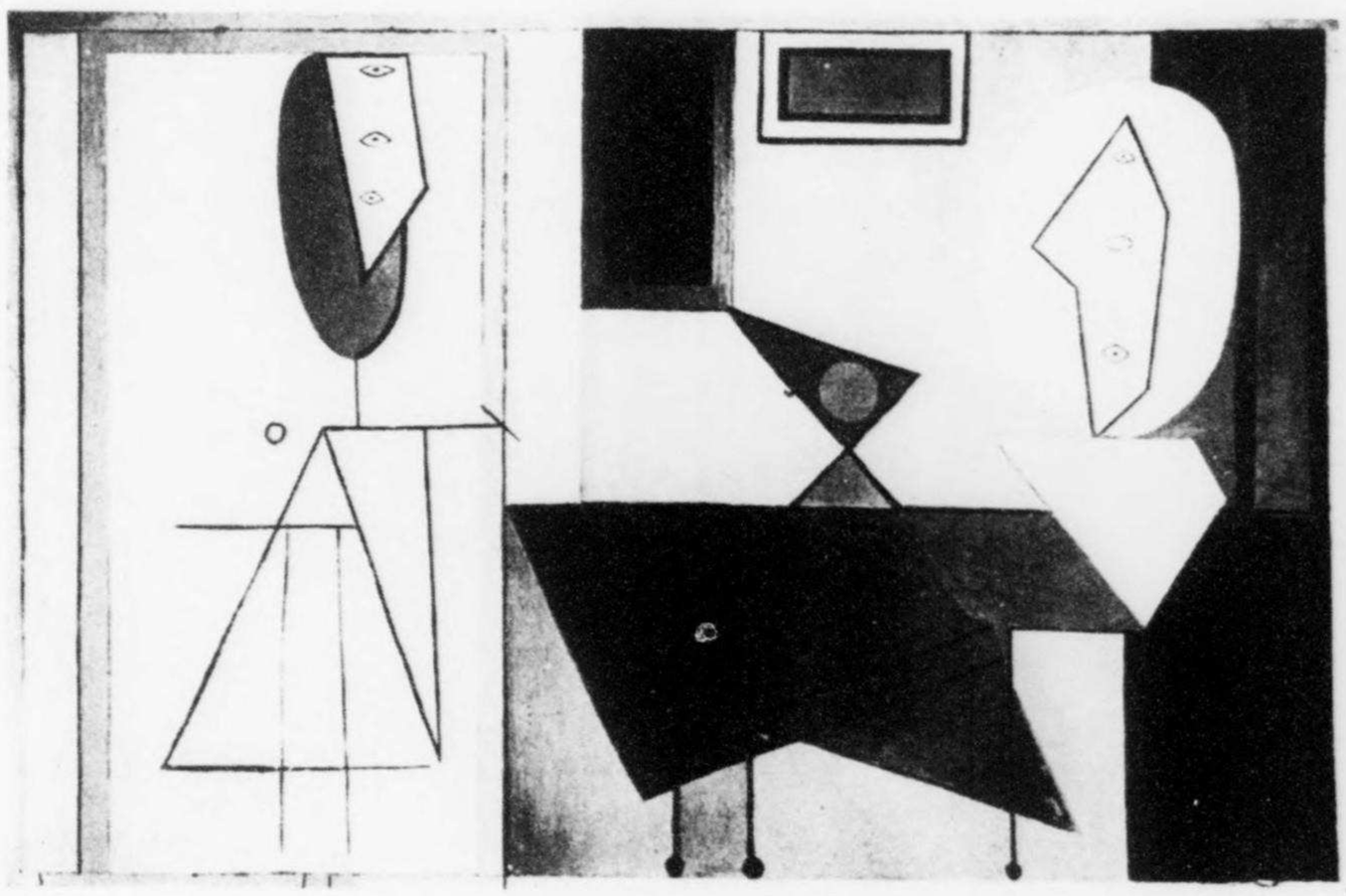
43. Einstein, "Aphorismes méthodiques," p. 34. English edition: "Methodological Aphorisms," trans. Charles W. Haxtausen, *October* 107 (Winter 2004), p. 149 (translation modified). Einstein expands on similar methodological issues in the study of art history and aesthetics in a number of unpublished texts; see, for example, Carl Einstein, "Geschichtsprozesse. Stil- und Perzeptionsveränderungen. Realismus. Impressionismus," in Carl Einstein, *Werke Band 4, Texte aus dem Nachlass I,* ed. Hermann Haarmann and Klaus Siebenhaarp (Berlin: Fannei and Walz, 1992), pp. 325–30.

and a repertory of "academic forms" employed as "protection" against "infinity and the fleeting analogies born of the religious imagination."[44]

For Einstein, Renaissance culture created an isomorphic relation between natural laws and human reason; it warranted the renewal of a scientific form of fetishism claiming to comprise a reality based on man's identification with the external world. Only the mobilization of such reified analogies and the acceptance of their "hallucinatory" aspect can ultimately "swindle" man from "monotonous continuity."[45]

Such mobilizing "continuities" would in fact reappear in Einstein's next article on "Some Paintings of 1928" by Picasso—a brief text that initially seems to have nothing to do with cosmological concepts, but if read carefully, reveals a number of analogies with Einstein's previous article and with the cosmological speculations articulated by Leiris in his reflections on Saxl's medieval image catalogs. In his remarks on Picasso, Einstein repeatedly refers to analogies, and more specifically "a certain continuity of analogous forms" re-created in the artist's paintings by a "multiplicity" of figures and compositional axes.[46] Moving away from the "tautological" repetition of

44. Einstein, "Aphorismes méthodiques," p. 32.
45. Ibid., p. 34.
46. Einstein, "Pablo Picasso: Quelques tableaux de 1928," pp. 35 and 38. A number of similar concepts appear in Einstein's chapter on Picasso in his account of twentieth-century art: see Carl Einstein, *Die Kunst des 20. Jahrhunderts*, ed. Uwe Fleckner and Thomas W. Gaehtgens (Berlin: Fannei and Walz, 1996), pp. 110–135.



PICASSO. INTÉRIEUR (1928)

Page from Documents *1, no. 1. 1929.*

"biological forms" espoused by Renaissance painters, modern art after Picasso enacts an "immediate" form of hallucination removed from reality but not in an allegorical manner, as might have occurred in the Renaissance. Signaling the end of "the convention of the vertebral column" and the establishment of a more complex "equilibrium of different axes," Picasso introduces a "surface polyphony"—a quasi-cosmological system or "force field (*champ des forces*)" with multiple indications of the subject in space. Figures and architectural interiors are entirely remodeled by a new set of analogical relationships expressed as "formal radiations."[47]

Since for Einstein "all parts are given from the analogies of the total composition," man and the proportions of his body are no longer the center of the recombined universe; the human figure is simply an equal member among a community of forms, including those of so-called inanimate objects. Within this new analogical universe, all forms communicate with one another from a distance—what Einstein describes as "telepathy of the analogous imaginary forms"—a macrocosmic influence between subjects and objects based on the multiplication and variation of their plastic contours.[48]

In Picasso's pictures, all outlines are left free to reconstitute a new hallucinatory reality that escapes "biological conservatism" and creates a new "mythology of forms" within a thoroughly "invented" composition. Proportions are entirely reconstituted; bodily parts still act as fulcrums of analogical relations, but also as diagonal epistemological correspondences, tracing new connections both with the world and with the self. There is no microcosm or macrocosm proper: it is impossible to redefine objects in scale or place them in any type of hierarchical order. Everything is connected to a "linear *calligram*" with no perceptible periphery or symmetry axis. The nonhierarchical cosmos encompassing such boundless analogies is the interiorized world of the artist's studio and in extension the surface of his canvas.

As opposed to the Renaissance's "scientific fetishism"[49] (the overvaluation of a singular object or figural principle), Einstein's epistemological paradigm inspired by Picasso points to a "diffused animism"[50]: a state in which all objects share an equal value based on their analogical capacity, meaning their ability to connect and become interchangeable with one another. The same animating force energizes every member of the social circuitry of forms in Picasso's composition. The painting becomes a field of ontological equanimity—a tectonic microcosm animated by equivalent possibilities of existence. If we accept the hypothesis of Saxl's covert influence on Einstein's article, then the latter's commentary on Picasso is one of the rare instances in which the cosmological principles of the Renaissance correspond (both in harmony and dissonance)

47. Ibid., p. 38.
48. Ibid.
49. Einstein, "Aphorismes méthodiques," p. 34.
50. Ibid., p. 32.

with the animistic theories of Lévy-Bruhl and other early-twentieth-century anthropologists.[51]

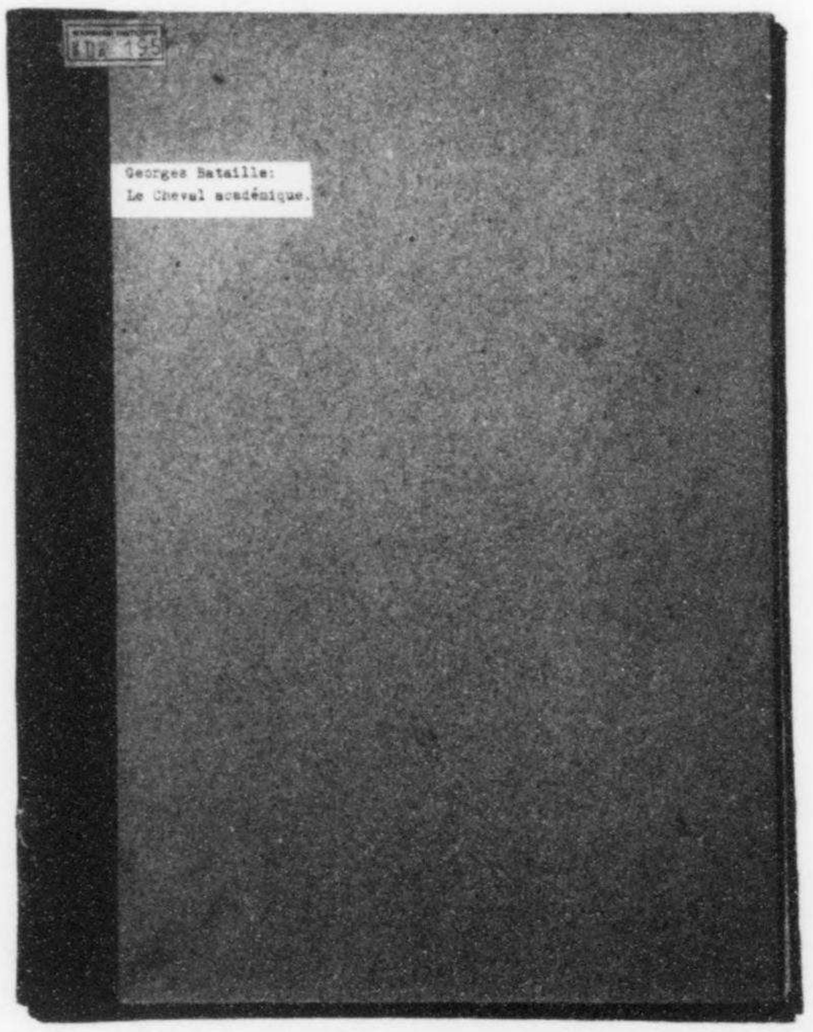
All of the above shows that the afterlife, or *Nachleben*, of an idea, such as that of micro- and macrocosmic correspondence, can never be the same as its antique life, or *Leben*. The common task of both the KBW and *Documents*, in spite of their differences, was to study not simply the survival but the *renewal* and active transformation of ancient analogical or animistic beliefs within the recombined spaces of modernity. The purpose of such an epistemological vestige is not to conserve an archaic mentality but to propel a modern one. Notwithstanding such common ulterior motives, at a certain point, the two corresponding circles appear to have parted ways, reducing their preexisting analogies into a polarity of diametrically different opinions vis-à-vis the significance of the Renaissance era. If for Einstein the Renaissance represented the hallucinatory illusion of "biological conservatism," for KBW scholars such as Saxl and in particular Panofsky, the "scientific" discoveries of the Renaissance, such as the invention of perspective and use of mathematical proportion, achieved "the objectification of the subjective"—the rationalization of psychological tendencies into an intersubjective principle. This fundamental divergence of opinion might be the more essential reason why Panofsky could never find any time to write for *Documents* and why the purported collaboration between the Warburg scholars and the editors of the French review never progressed beyond its first issue.

It seems finally that the planets of the KBW and *Documents* not only had different orbits, but were in fact stars from distant galaxies that only accidentally produced a mirage-like constellation. However, the same momentary coincidence produced a symptomatic eclipse, its aftermath ultimately illuminating connections of modern historiographies of art with the histories of epistemological systems, including the associative patterns of analogical mentality—an ancient mode of thinking that art history, a discipline originally founded upon the notions of similarity and resemblance, would inevitably *return to*, either via the composite ethnography of *Documents* or the anthropological investigations of the Warburg Library.

Postscript: Gifts/Horses

The KBW never had a subscription to *Documents*. However, in addition to an offprint of the article by Leiris on the two images from Saxl's catalog, there are two more offprints that have become part of the holdings of the library and can

51. On Einstein, Picasso, and the theories of Lévy-Bruhl and Marcel Mauss, see Sebastian Zeidler, "Life and Death from Babylon to Picasso: Carl Einstein's Ontology of Art at the Time of *Documents*," in *Papers of Surrealism* 7 (2007), and Christopher Green, *Picasso, Architecture, and Vertigo* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 202–6.



Warburg library offprint cover of "Le cheval académique" by Georges Bataille in Documents *1, no. 1. 1929. Courtesy WIA, London.*

still be found today on the dusty shelves of its premises in London. Both offprints are of articles written by Bataille, the "general secretary" of *Documents*, and refer to ancient numismatics, namely "The Academic Horse" (*Le cheval académique*) and "Base Materialism and Gnosticism" (*Le bas matérialisme et la gnose*).[52]

The two texts, published in the first issues of 1929 and 1930, respectively, carry perhaps the core of Bataille's evolutionary argument on their (horse) backs. Both articles make a plea for hybridity—the corruption of a previously idealized academic form such as that of the horse or the human figure into a grotesque creature that resembles a "spider," a "hippopotamus," or a "bird-headed" human. Such formal atavisms were certainly not unknown to Warburg and the scholars of his circle, who often studied a variety of "animal-human" or other monstrous representations from Egyptian, medieval, and Northern Renaissance iconographies. Warburg and Saxl would also often refer to the con-

52. Georges Bataille, "Le cheval académique," *Documents* 1, no. 1 (1929), pp. 27–31; and "Le bas matérialisme et la gnose," *Documents* 2, no. 1 (1930), pp. 1–8; English edition: "Base Materialism and Gnosticism," in Georges Bataille, *Visions of Excess: Selected Writings 1927–1939*, trans. Allan Stoekl, et al. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), pp. 45–52. In the Warburg Library, the first article is an offprint from the French cataloged with the classmark KDK 195 (Celtic art), and the second article is a photostat from the London Science Library cataloged under FCB 585 (magical amulets and antique gems), respectively. Leiris's review-article is cataloged under FAF 770 (astrological iconography).

cept of "regressive evolution" (*evolution régressive*)—an undulating form of progress initiated by Darwin in his theory of rudiments (arguing for the existence of vestiges from former atrophied organs in humans and animal organisms),[53] but then expanded by a number of turn-of-the-century biologists and sociologists, according to whom regression, atrophy, and deformation were necessary stages in the evolution of man and his socio-cultural customs.[54] No organism could ever evolve without stepping backwards: in order to gain, all species had to lose something *first*. But this quasi-utilitarian view of deformation is not the one supported by Bataille. The French author describes a form of regression that grows haphazardly with time, a devolution that moves forward and entirely dismantles the culture of the "vertical vertebrae," forcing an animal or cultural process to return to point zero or move in entirely unpredictable directions.

We do not know how these offprints from *Documents* became part of the Warburg Library. Yet we can imagine the reactions of some of its scholars when (or if) they read them. Bataille's "base materialism," which stripped all formerly "academic" figures and their cosmic correspondences from any notion of ideal perfection and other Neoplatonist accoutrements, might have appeared shocking to some of the scholars in the Warburg circle, who were also intrigued by the same animalic images. One can perhaps understand, then, why a book such as Panofsky's *Idea*, sent as a "gift" to Einstein, did not in fact appeal to the art critic, and why he asked Saxl for further publications by Norden, Cassirer, and Reitzenstein that reached further back to more "symbolic" and less idealist analogical systems.[55]

The texts offered in return by Einstein, Leiris, and Bataille in the first issue of *Documents* were more ambivalent: the offprint of Bataille's "academic horse" was essentially a Trojan horse aimed to destroy the territory in which it had entered. One could perhaps expand the Trojan attributes of this gift exchange into the mutually deforming impact of the academy's interaction with the avant-garde. But here the academy, and not the avant-garde, is the unruly element that can create havoc with its galloping backwards. To ride the "academic horse," one has to ride by its rules or else turn over the reins and be prepared to be trampled.

53. Charles Darwin, "Mutual Affinities of Organic Beings: Morphology, Embryology, Rudimentary Organs," chap. 14 in *The Origin of the Species* (New York: Random House, 1993), pp. 601–9. In the original edition of 1859, the section on rudiments was in chapter 13.

54. Jean Demoor, Jean Massart, and Émile Vandervelde, *L'évolution regressive en biologie et sociologie* (Paris: Alcan, 1897). For Saxl's reference to the same concept, see note 30 above. For contemporary discussions of *neoteny*, the morphological retention of juvenile characteristics in adulthood, see the formulation of the concept in the lecture by the anatomist Leon Bolk, *Das Problem der Menschwerdung*, (Jena: G. Fischer, 1926).

55. For Einstein's references to a number of anthropomorphic themes echoing those examined by philologists and historians of religion, such as Norden and Rietzenstein, see his unpublished fragment "Fiktion, das Reale, Stilbildung. Christentum und Antike. Untergang der religiösen Symbolik," in Einstein, *Werke Band 4*, pp. 386–88.

Such intellectual perversion was not dissimilar to the corruption of the analogical mentality of the Renaissance into a "diffused animistic" system proposed by Einstein and his French colleagues—a radical dissolution of the epistemological subject that would probably have repelled Saxl and some of his colleagues at the Warburg Library. Einstein's original proposal to the KBW was part of that broken analogical circle—the residue of an impetus for correspondence and affiliation. But such a drive does not always reach its aim. Ultimately the two corresponding parties were either too distant or too close, thus there was no viable space for the network of analogy to grow beyond their individual circles.[56]

56. On January 4th, 1933, almost four years after his first epistolary exchange with Saxl, Einstein sent a letter to Panofsky in response to a "kind piece of writing" sent by Panofsky some time earlier. In the letter, Einstein expresses his sympathy with methodological tendencies in the work of Panofsky and his "friends," whom Einstein praises as "currently quite important." Einstein admits that he does not yet know Panofsky's works, but now that he has some time he can familiarize himself with them. He parenthetically mentions that he urgently needs to read Saxl's recent book on Mithras as soon as he can get hold of a copy (Fritz Saxl, *Mithras: Typengeschichtliche Untersuchungen*, [Berlin: Keller, 1931]). Einstein offers (in return) to send copies of his own publications, including his *Art of the Twentieth Century* as well as the brochure from an exhibition on early antique bronzes published two years earlier in the United States (Carl Einstein, "Exhibition of Bronze Statuettes B.C." [New York: Storia Art Galleries, 1931]). Einstein also promises to send the following week a "thick manuscript" for Panofsky's perusal. He closes his letter with greetings to both Panofsky and Saxl hoping that they will all stay in contact. Panofsky's diplomatic yet highly evasive response came two days later: he would be happy to read Einstein's writings but he is about to depart for America in a few days and therefore advises sending the manuscript directly to Professor Saxl at the KBW. If the occasion is not very urgent, Panofsky continues, and Einstein could stand the delay, he would be delighted to read the manuscript upon returning to Germany five months hence. Panofsky forwarded Einstein's letter and his own reply to the KBW and asked Saxl to take note. There is however no mention of Einstein in Saxl's subsequent correspondence with Panofsky during the latter's 1933 trip to the States and no trace of further correspondence between Einstein and Panofsky. (Carl Einstein to Erwin Panofsky, January 4, 1933, and Erwin Panofsky to Carl Einstein, January 6, 1933 [Warburg Institute Archive, Saxl Correspondence], reprinted in Erwin Panofsky, *Korrespondenz 1910 bis 1936*, edited by Dieter Wuttke [Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2001], pp. 557–58).

Moscow-Rome-Havana: A Film-Theory Road Map

MASHA SALAZKINA

All groups of kino-observers will be drawn into the production of future kino-eye series. They will be the author-creators of all subsequent film-objects.

—Dziga Vertov, "Provisional Instructions to Kino-Eye Groups," 1926[1]

[It is urgent] to take over the medium with a cost so low it could be within the reach of many individuals, like paper and ink, paints; film and lenses should have been brought home like sewing machines . . .

—Cesare Zavattini, "Wonder," 1940[2]

Imperfect cinema cannot lose sight of the fact that its essential goal as a new poetic is to disappear. . . . Art will not disappear into nothingness: it will disappear into everything.

—Julio García Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema," 1967[3]

These quotations—from the celebrated Soviet pioneer of avant-garde documentary; the Italian writer and filmmaker most commonly associated with his contributions to Neorealist cinema; and one of the leaders of the Cuban Institute of Film Art and Industry, respectively—come from filmmakers from

* Many thanks to Georgio Bertellini, Luca Caminati, Roger Gathman, Anne Kern, Ilya Kliger, and Joshua Malitsky for their helpful suggestions on earlier drafts of this essay, and Malcolm Turvey for his editorial feedback.

1. Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley: University of California, 1984), pp. 70–71.
2. "I sogni migliori," *Cinema* 92 (1940), translated in English as "Wonders," in *Zavattini: Sequences from a Cinematic Life*, trans. William Weaver (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall), p. 2.
3. Julio García Espinosa, "Por un cine imperfecto," *Cine Cubano* 42–44 (1967); trans. as "For an Imperfect Cinema," in *New Latin American Cinema*, vol. 1, ed. Michael T. Martin (Detroit: Wayne State University, 1997), p. 82.

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 97–116. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

different generations and continents. Yet they articulate a similar utopian call to democratize cinema by abolishing individual film authorship and dismantling film's status as art, thereby opening cinematic production to the masses and in the process liberating humankind. Such a call is particularly striking not only because it issues from well-established auteurs but because it emerges precisely at the moment of the institutionalization of cinema both as practice and as discourse in the Soviet Union, Italy, and Cuba. It raises two sets of questions. First, what does this dissolution of authorship and art promise as it emerges in these different contexts, and what contradictions, if any, does it point to in their respective historical and cultural moments? Second, what are the historical links, both artistic and theoretical, between these moments? While it is commonplace to point to the importance of the historical avant-gardes—and early Soviet film, in particular—for the development of theories and practices of Third Cinema (to which Cuban cinema of the 1960s belongs), the exact nature of the connection remains unexplored.

This essay traces one strand of the global network of leftist artists and their debates as they migrated from one cultural and regional context to another. It is this migration of motifs, interpretations, agents, and institutions that ultimately connects the initial moment of political modernism in cinema—the 1920s—to its critical and artistic revival in the 1960s, and that creates a system of reverberations between the respective theoretical and artistic approaches of these periods. This particular history begins in 1920s Italy.

Soviet-Italian Cinematic Exchanges

Italian film culture of the 1920s and 1930s developed in active dialogue with contemporary film theory and practice, a dialogue that both reflected and subverted the Fascist ethos of the time. Soviet cinema occupied a privileged place in Italian film criticism, and dialogue between the two was extensive during these decades, both on the Fascist state-sponsored level and among leftist cultural and artistic figures.

As Ruth Ben-Ghiat explores in detail in her work, the Italian attitude to Soviet Russia in the 1920s and '30s synthesized certain Fascist preoccupations and positions. While the Fascists admired Soviet cinema as a model of the alternative development of one of modernity's key industries, they did not intend to give any weight to the Soviet-materialist analysis of film.[4] Yet the interests of the Fascist state in the economic organization of the Soviet film industry and the use of film as a didactic instrument meant there were intersections with certain features of the materialist approach to filmmaking. Moreover, the theoretical polemics that preoccupied scholars, critics, and producers of Soviet cinema were similar to those discussed in the Italian artistic scene among leftist fac-

4. Ruth Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities: Italy, 1922–1945* (Berkeley: University of California, 2001).

tions of the late Futurist movement and the proponents of Gramsci's Proletarian Culture group. These polemics centered on the questions of what form a revolutionary art should take and what "realism" meant in the context of progressive art.[5] Such debates came to an abrupt end after the Fascist clampdown on artistic pluralism, but many of their themes migrated into film criticism and pedagogy, in particular under the auspices of the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, and helped shape the conceptual structure of Italian film discourse in the immediate pre-and postwar years.

In the 1920s and early '30s, Mussolini's government encouraged Italians to look at Soviet Russia as a state with which their own new order had many affinities—albeit as fascism's "enemy twin."[6] The press of the time exploited the various similarities between the Soviet and Italian situation, and Lenin's dictum "Cinema is the most important of the arts" was rephrased by Mussolini as "Cinema is the strongest weapon!" Given that the legitimacy of both countries was grounded in an appeal to the masses, it was logical that the new mass art would become the preferred channel of Italian-Soviet détente. In addition, Soviet film theory and practice became a special reference point in critical debates about cinema's medium-specific properties among certain Italian artists engaged in the broader debates of European film circles.[7] The most advanced at using the state's power to implement the development of cinema as a didactic tool, Soviet Russia seems to have been an inevitable model for the Italian film industry. Film schools already existed in Germany and France, and isolated film courses were being taught in U.S. universities. But only Soviet cinematic education was implemented on a truly broad scale as part of a larger humanities framework, in which it was integrated not only with craft training and film appreciation but also with the study of aesthetics at large, while at the same time remaining a distinct scholarly discipline.

A number of journals over these years featured regular pieces on Soviet cinema that celebrated Soviet montage for demonstrating the essential, distinguishing capability of cinema. Alessandro Blasetti's *Cinematografo*, which led the battle to define cinema as an art, published numerous articles debating whether Soviet film should be used as an appropriate model for reenergizing the laggard Italian film industry.[8] Starting in the late 1920s, Italian journals—both those specifically dedi-

5. For a detailed account of this, see Umberto Carpi, *Bolscevico immaginista: Comunismo e avanguardie artistiche nell'Italia degli anni venti* (Naples: Liguori editore, 1981), and Giovanni Lista, *Arte e politica : il futurismo di sinistra in Italia* (Milano: Multhipla, 1980).

6. Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, p. 38.

7. For a larger European context for this dynamic, see Malte Hagener, *Moving Forward, Looking Back: The European Avant-garde and the Invention of the Film Culture 1919–1939* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University, 2007).

8. See in particular Vinicio Paladini's accounts of his visit to the Soviet film studios in 1927, and the debate started by Libero Solaroli's article "Il Cinema Italiano deve imitare quello Russo," in *Cinematografo* 5 (March 1929), followed by a serious of articles "Cenni sulla cinematografia russa" by Mario da Silva and responses to it in *Cinematografo* 3 (March 1930) and "Ancora sulla cinematografia russa," *Cinematografo* 7 (July 1930).

cated to cinema, such as *Cinemalia*, *Lo Schermo*, *Cinematografo*, and *Lo spettacolo d'Italia*, as well as literary and cultural journals such as *La fiera letteraria*, *L'Italia litteraria*, and *Occidente*—regularly featured articles and reviews of contemporary Soviet film.[9] By the early 1930s, translations of Soviet film theorists started to appear in these and other venues as well.[10]

These and other sites for the transmission and translation of Soviet cinema and film theory almost without exception occupied an institutional gray area that, while fully aligned with the Italian Fascist state, nonetheless enjoyed a semi-autonomous status and effectively engaged in—and sometimes succeeded in creating—a film culture as a public sphere. These were cine-clubs and GUFs (university Fascist youth clubs that screened and produced films); educational and research centers such as the International Institute of Educational Cinematography (L'Instituto Internazionale di Cinema Educativo or L'IICE); the National Film School (to become Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia); the journals associated with these institutions: *Revue internationale du cinéma educateur*, *Intercine*, *Cinema*, and *Bianco e nero*; and, to some degree, even the Venice Film Festival (founded by the head of L'IICE, Luciano De Feo). All of these institutions were interconnected, and all remained in close contact with Soviet cinema and promoted it in their practices. L'IICE, for example, was founded in 1928 under the auspices of the League of Nations and aimed to promote educational documentaries and serve as a major forum for international cinematic discourse.[11] During its brief existence, the Institute organized several film and photography exhibits, including the Venice Film Festival; sponsored a monthly journal published in five languages between 1929 and 1934; carried out a series of massive international surveys on film and education; and even attempted to undertake the creation of a complete encyclopedia of cinematography. Rudolf Arnheim, a member of L'IICE, began writing his seminal *Film as Art* as part of this project.[12] Such figures as László Maholy-Nagy and Germaine Dulac were also involved with the League's institute.[13] At the same time, key figures in L'IICE occupied governmental positions in Mussolini's state-run film propaganda units.

9. It is worth noting, however, that most of the knowledge of Soviet cinema in Italy at the time was in fact secondhand, stemming from the critical appraisals in Germany and France, where Soviet films were shown, largely thanks to the efforts of Léon Moussinac and his Ciné-Club de France.

10. For a different articulation of this argument, see Masha Salazkina, "Soviet Film Theory in 1930s Italy: Towards a New Genealogy of Neorealism," in *Global Neorealism: The Transnational History of a Film Style*, ed. Robert Sklar and Saverio Giovacchini (Jackson: University of Mississippi, 2011).

11. See Christel Taillibert, *L'Institut international du cinématographe éducatif* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1999); Zoe Druick, "'Reaching the Multimillions': Liberal Internationalism and the Establishment of Documentary Film," in *Inventing Film Studies*, ed. L. Grievson and H. Wasson (Durham: Duke University, 2008), pp. 67–92; and Zoe Druick, "The International Educational Cinematograph Institute, Reactionary Modernism, and the Formation of Film Studies," *Revue canadienne d'études cinématographiques* 16, no. 1, pp. 80–97.

12. For more on Arnheim's role, see Jürgen Wilke, "Cinematography as a Medium of Communication: The Promotion of Research by the League of Nations and the Role of Rudolf Arnheim," *European Journal of Communication* 6, no. 3 (1991), pp. 337–53.

13. Druick, "The International Educational Cinematograph Institute," p. 88.

In traditional scholarship, L'IICE had been seen as a liberal alternative to communist-oriented cultural cosmopolitanism (i.e., communist internationalism), however tainted by its associations with the Fascist government. Recent research, however, shows that L'IICE planned to involve Soviet film organizations directly. As head of the Institute, De Feo tirelessly searched for ways to include Soviet organizations in its pedagogy, its encyclopedia project, and its congresses. For over a decade, he tried to transplant the Soviet model to Italy by creating a modus vivendi between L'IICE and Soviet film institutions. Thanks to his efforts, a great deal of printed material from the Soviet Union was published in the journals associated with the Institute, *Revue internationale du cinéma educateur (RICE)*, *Intercine*, and even *Cinema*, which at its inception in 1936 was also affiliated with the Institute. Of particular interest to De Feo, as he states in the correspondence, were "cultural, scientific, and educational films, especially films dealing with the rationalization of labor and agriculture."[14] Another area of interest was the Soviet development of sound technology: Alexander Shorin, one of the two Soviet scientists conducting research on sound systems, sent materials for publication in *Intercine* and for inclusion in the Encyclopedia project.[15] As a result of his official visit to the Soviet Union in 1932, De Feo managed to arrange for Soviet participation in the first two Venice Film Festivals.[16] In the end, however, the political obstacles were insurmountable and L'IICE failed to involve the Soviet film industry and its film-education institutions in its world congress on educational cinema or the encyclopedia of the history of cinema.

L'IICE's engagement with the Soviet models of didactic film-making was concentrated, but it was of rather limited consequence to the broader Italian film culture. A much more important development in the interwar years was the founding in Rome of the National Film School (Scuola Nazionale di Cinematografia), which eventually became known as Centro Sperimentale and was inspired by Soviet film educational structures. When the government categorically rejected the Soviet embassy's proposal to give Soviet films a wider distribution, it forced those who wanted to show and discuss Soviet cinema into the noncommercial venues that were springing up to host screenings and discussions of film.[17] Ironically, Soviet cinema thus became the cornerstone of cinematic education in 1930s Italy, primarily through the work of the Centro Sperimentale.

14. This correspondence is in the State Archive of Russian History, GARF f. 5283 op.7, d. 543.
15. GARF f. 5283 op. 7, d. 664.
16. For details, see Stefano Pisu, "L'Urss e l'Occidente: L'Unione Sovietica alla Mostra del cinema di Venezia negli anni Trenta," *Bianco e nero* 567 (May–August 2010), pp. 93–109, and Salazkina, "Soviet-Italian Cinematic Exchanges, 1920s–1950s, from Early Soviet Film Theory to Neorealism," pp. 37–51.
17. Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, p. 78. For more on the importance of the cine-clubs alongside the activities of the Centro Sperimentale for emergent Neorealist filmmakers, see the interview with Carlo Lizzanin in Vito Zagarrio, *Cinema e fascismo: Filmi, modeli, immaginarii* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2004), pp. 266–67.

The Centro

The Centro's role in the history of Italian cinema is well known. Less well known but equally important is its function as a major site of international cultural dialogue both in the pre- and the post-WWII periods. The initial idea for a national Italian film school came from Anton Giulio Bragaglia, one of the key figures of Italian Futurism and someone with long-standing ties to the Russian and Soviet avant-garde (in particular to Vsevolod Meyerhold). In 1930, when Bragaglia proposed establishing a school that would bring together artistic experimentation and academic research, he referred to the School of Screen Arts in Leningrad and to Trauberg and Kuleshov's experimental studios, as well as to the Moscow Institute of Cinematography (GIK, later VGIK) to support his idea. Bragaglia's proposal to the state agency dealing with mass media in Fascist Italy (Corporazione dello specttacolo) drew on German and Russian models and was centered on actor training, teaching, and practice, with the teaching to be based on 1) theoretical culture; 2) experimental application of scholarly ideas; and 3) practical artistic work.[18] The school opened in Rome in 1932, and two years later was reorganized as the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, in a move to give the state more control over film. Luigi Chiarini, who at that point was best known as a literary critic and follower of Giovanni Gentile's neo-Crocean Fascist-idealist ideology, was appointed as the Head of the Centro. Chiarini brought along his friend Umberto Barbaro, and the two of them would be largely responsible for the Centro's program and for the film journal *Bianco e nero,* founded in 1937 under its auspices.

In what amounted to an institutional manifesto, Chiarini announced in 1934 that the theoretical platform for the Centro would serve as an instrument for creating a new realist cinema pointing explicitly to the "new realism" implicit in Pudovkin's use of montage.[19] The reference to Pudovkin is surprising, especially as Chiarini was an ardent supporter of neo-Croceanism, which would seem antithetical to the Soviet avant-garde. Moreover, Pudovkin's films were not in circulation in Italy at the time (except for some isolated screenings that took place at the Soviet embassy). They were not even included in the showcase of Soviet films presented at the 1932 and 1934 Venice Film Festivals. But Chiarini was involved in the publication of Barbaro's translation of Pudovkin's writings under the title *Il soggetto cinematografico* (1932). Translations of Pudovkin's text were collected again in 1935 under the title *Film e fonofilm,* which became one of the primary texts used in the curriculum at the Centro. In addition to Pudovkin's translations, Barbaro and Chiarini put together collections of film texts to be used for cinematic education at the Centro: "I problemi del film," "L'attore" e "L'arte dell'attore," which consisted in large part of

18. Ernesto G. Laura, "CSC dal fascismo allo stato democratico," *Bianco e nero* 5/6 (1976), pp. 4–29.
19. Luigi Chiarini, *Cinematografo* (Roma, 1934). Quoted in ibid., p. 12.

writings by Pudovkin, Eisenstein, and Balázs.[20] As much if not more than Soviet films it was Soviet writing about film that proved critical to the institution's development throughout the 1930s.

Umberto Barbaro

Barbaro viewed Soviet cinema as "the starting point and as an example for the rebirth of Italian cinema."[21] His friendships and artistic collaborations with Vinicio Paladini and other leftist Futurists were key to his engagement with the Soviet avant-garde.[22] From 1925 until the late 1930s, Barbaro and Paladini worked together on a number of avant-garde projects, first within the futurist framework (with Balla, and then in Bragaglia's Teatro degli Indipendienti in Rome), and then as part of Imaginismo, a new group they founded that was a peculiar fusion of Futurism, Constructivism, and Surrealism, with particular emphasis on the circus and Luna Park aesthetic. In the late 1920s, they moved steadily towards cinema and the new discourse on "realism" and "art based on reality," as filtered through the Soviet avant-garde. Paladini's small press, La Bilancia (Libra), named after the Russian symbolist group of the same name, published not only manifestos and essays by Italian avant-garde groups but also works on Soviet art, including a review of the exhibition of Soviet art at the art pavilion in Venice in 1924.[23] Like Barbaro, Paladini saw the Soviet avant-garde as the model for marrying experimental techniques to a radical political program in Italy; he also produced a number of works in the style of Soviet Constructivism, often referring to himself as a "fotomonteur." His theater of "Futurist Mechanical Ballet" was emblematic of the Futurist ethos of the time

20. In advocating for cinema's social and educational use as against its commercial use, Chiarini and Barbaro were unlikely allies. Chiarini idealistically saw cinema as an expression of individual creativity and a means for the aesthetic education of the people; Barbaro viewed it as the product of collective labor that raised the consciousness of the masses about society. The GUF and the Centro were supposed to create a new generation of filmmakers by providing institutional spaces for the emerging social and aesthetic discourse on film within the limits of the Fascist project. Yet the institution's emphasis on international film and dialogue unintentionally undermined the nationalist aesthetic as officially conceived.

21. Quoted in Gian Piero Brunetta, *Storia del cinema italiano*, vol. 2 (Rome: Edizioni Riuniti, 1993), p. 170. Translations mine.

22. By the early 1920s, Paladini, whose mother was born in Moscow and raised in Rome, had an established place in the Italian cultural scene promoting the work of the Soviet avant-garde. in particular the Constructivists and Supremacists. He was on good terms with Gramsci's Ordine Nuovo circle in Turin, where he participated in the 1922 Futurist show and contributed articles to *Avanguardia*, the official organ of the Federation of Young Socialists, a forum for debate on progressive culture and the role of art in socialism in the early 1920s. In 1923–24, together with Barbaro, Paladini published in the near-anarchist (but sympathetic to the Soviet Union) journal *Fede!*, where he continued to develop his ideas about the revolutionary role of the intellectual and artist in society. See Giovanni Lista, *Dal futurismo all'immaginismo: Vinicio Paladini* (Bologna: Edizioni del Cavaliere Azzurro, 1988), p. 22.

23. Vinicio Paladini, *Arte nella Russia dei Soviets; il padiglione dell'U.R.S.S. a Venezia* (Roma: Edizioni de "La Bilancia," 1925).

and explicit about the machine as both a vehicle and a metaphor for the communist revolution, one that mediated between the artist and the industrial production process. Contrary to the aesthetic protest against the dehumanizing effects of industrialization, industrial production itself was here turned into art in the service of modernism understood not in opposition to realism but as a reaction against bourgeois commodity culture with its total separation of production and consumption.[24] In 1927, Paladini entered a contest for set design organized by Blasetti's famous journal *Cinematografo* with sketches clearly modeled on Alexander Exter's work (which he praised in his review of the Russian pavilion), and the following year, reflecting the growing interest he and Barbaro shared in cinema, Paladini made a trip to the Soviet Union where, among other things, he explored the intersections between Constructivism and cinema, and the Soviet movement of factography. Upon his return to Rome, he published a series of texts consisting of an account of his trip and reflections inspired by it.[25] These, and a series of other writings from 1928 and 1929 by Paladini and Barbaro refer to Alexei Gan's recent essays on Constructivism in cinema and works by Pudovkin and Vertov, thereby testifying to the temporary alignment of Italian leftist Futurism with the Soviet Constructivist and Productivist ethos.[26] Paladini also tried to establish regular correspondence with Vertov, whom he had apparently met during his trip to the U.S.S.R., in order to arrange for Vertov's writings to be translated into Italian (although there is no record of a response by Vertov to such eager letters).[27] Paladini continued to work with Barbaro on various film projects, both theoretical and realized, until the late 1930s, in particular on the set of Barbaro's 1937 film *L'ultima nemica*.[28]

It is thus in the context of Barbaro and Paladini's shared artistic production that Barbaro's engagement with Soviet film theory and its incorporation into the new Italian realist aesthetic is best understood. Even though the key moment in Barbaro's theoretical and pedagogical trajectory remains his discovery of Pudovkin's writings and his formulations of realism, this moment should be seen as a continuation of the discursive and artistic field of Futurism and Constructivism. Throughout his life, Barbaro stressed in his critical writings that film's great interest for him lay in its possibility to fuse the aesthetic and the political, its potential to forge a "critical consciousness." This position is perhaps best expressed in the introduction to his published translation of Béla Balázs. As

24. For an articulation of this aspect of modernist art, see Walter Adamson, *Embattled Avant-Gardes: Modernism's Resistance to Commodity Culture in Europe* (Berkeley: University of California, 2007).
25. Vinicio Paladini, "Cinematografo e teatri in Russia sovietica," *Cinemalia* 2, no. 8 (1928), pp. 23–24.
26. See Vinicio Paladini, "Estetica cinematografica," *Cinemalia* 2, no. 19 (1928), p. 35, and "Cinematografo dal Vero," *Cinema-teatro* (September 15, 1928).
27. RGALI f. 2091, op. 2, d. 351.
28. Unlike Barbaro, however, Paladini was unable ultimately to find a niche for himself in Fascist Italy, despite Barbaro's (failed) attempts to get him involved in the Centro; by the late 1930s he had chosen to emigrate to the U.S., where his career in architecture and set design effectively ended.

Gian Piero Brunetta argues, Barbaro's description of Balázs could equally be applied to the translator himself:

> Work for him was an unbreakable union of theoretical and practical activity, not merely a way to understand and explain the world but a contribution to its transformation. [Work] was a free and full expression and expansion of a man solidly tied to other people with the same orientation . . . an exemplary life of a man both free and social, i.e., fully human.[29]

With this goal in mind, Barbaro took up Pudovkin's writings as a weapon for implicitly opposing the Crocean idealist model of art (which was an officially accepted aesthetic position in Fascist Italy best exemplified by the work of Barbaro's colleague Chiarini). Positioning art as the individual expression of a higher order, a realm of beauty and lyrical expression separated from the everyday world, this stance denies cinema's revolutionary potential and relegates the film theorist to the task of writing appreciations and evaluations—precisely the role of the critic in mass media, whose place as an arbiter was prescribed by the system of distribution and publicity of commercial studio film.[30]

What Barbaro found in Pudovkin above all others was a means of understanding an object that demystified the individualistic notion of the auteur and raised questions about the institutional setting in which art was produced, distributed, exhibited, and received—without undermining the organizational role played by the film director.[31] As Pudovkin states in one of his earliest essays:

> A film factory has all the characteristics of industrial production. The leading engineer can do nothing without his experts and workers. Their mutual efforts will come to nothing if each worker were to limit himself to the mechanical execution of his narrow function. Collective work is what makes every part of the work a living and organic part of the larger goal/task. The nature of filmmaking is such that the more people take a direct and organic involvement, and the more varied their involvement in the work—the better is the final product of this process—the film.[32]

While far from Vertov's (and later, Zavattini's) call for the absolute democratization of the medium, Pudovkin's analysis points to the potential alienation of labor involved in the very process of filmmaking, and underscores both its collec-

29. Gian Piero Brunetta, *Intellettuali, cinema e propaganda tra le due guerre* (Bologna: Patron, 1972), p. 149.

30. It is ironic, however, that Barbaro himself, especially in the postwar period, became just that kind of critic, evaluating the films based on his own very narrow ideological criteria of "critical realism" against the "excesses of formalism" following the Zhdanovite line of the Communist Party.

31. Unlike Eisenstein, whose theoretical writings are primarily concerned with form and rarely engage with the conditions of production or questions of collectivism.

32. Vsevolod Pudovkin, "Kollektivizm—baza kinoraboty" (Collectivism is the foundation of cinematic work), in *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomakh*, vol. 1 (Moscow: Iskusstvo, 1974), p. 129. Translations mine.

tive nature and the organizational role of the author-director (so typical of the Constructivist ethos).

It was, however, Pudovkin's insistence on "realism" that resonated most within Italian film culture of the early 1930s. In Barbaro's writings, realism—defined not so much as an artistic style as the artwork's relationship to its material and social context—becomes the central concept. Such a discourse had its origins as part of the larger avant-garde project of reawakening the materiality of the world through art, so that art could transform the material world. In Pudovkin's writings from the 1920s there are resonances of the Russian-formalist slogan of "making stone stony again," where *ostranenie* is understood as a set of formal techniques and as a means by which an individual could reconnect with the world around her through art. Similarly, Soviet avant-garde artists' emphasis on the notion of *faktura* as both a heightened sense of materiality and, in Maria Gough's words, an "index of material presence" was integral to the larger utopian project of overcoming the gap between art and reality.[33] For Soviet cinema of the 1920s this meant an emphasis on textures and film's own photographic qualities, combined with an understanding of montage as conscious "engineering" of the filmic material, thus placing the material composition of film under the same strict rules for organizing labor as the rest of the social and political reality. Cinema—despite the "immateriality" intrinsic to its mechanism of projecting upon the two-dimensional plane of the screen an image of three-dimensional space—contributed to the larger project of revolutionizing the relationship between the human subjects and the material world around them by creating a new sensory regime for the spectator.[34] The ultimate goal of this revolution was, of course, not merely aesthetic but political.

As Barbaro would elaborate it in his later writings,

> art arises from reality and tries to know it and transform it . . . so that an old definition of art may begin to steal into one's mind: the transfiguration of reality. Thus, from direct energy for the satisfaction of an immediate and practical need, the imagination has become more and more intricately conditioned by the forms of social and individual life, transforming itself into energy that becomes conscious of the world in its particular way (through images) and at the same time becomes conscious of its own manifestations and work, of the value of the product and its effects and weight.[35]

At the same time, Pudovkin's writings reflect the general turn in leftist artistic

33. Maria Gough, *The Artist as Producer: Russian Constructivism in Revolution* (Berkeley: University of California, 2005), pp. 11–12.
34. On the role that set design played in this project, see Emma Widdis, "Faktura: Depth and Surface in Early Soviet Set Design," *Studies in Russian and Soviet Cinema* 3, no. 2 (2009), pp. 5–32.
35. Umberto Barbaro, "Materialism and Art," in *Marxism & Art: Writing in Aesthetics and Criticism*, ed. Berel Lang and Forrest Williams (New York: Longman, 1972), p. 161.

circles toward figuration and narrative, and away from the earlier formalist emphasis on the representation of social and economic processes through cinematic style (exemplified by Vertov and Eisenstein's work of the late 1920s, as well as, to some extent, Pudovkin's own). While this shift is usually attributed to the onset of Socialist Realism as the official Stalinist line, outside the strictly Soviet context these developments had larger resonances and helped give rise to a variety of "critical realisms" in the arts of the 1930s and '40s.[36] Despite the traditionalism of Pudovkin's position as compared to Vertov's, for example, his theoretical work of the 1920s must be understood as successfully mediating avant-garde impulses and the emerging aesthetic rhetoric of realism, not unlike the contemporary factographic discourses.[37] The goal of Pudovkin's cinema, as Tret'iakov underscored in his writings, was to create new sets of relations between the sign and the external world, thereby reawakening the materiality of the world and enabling access to the viewer's consciousness and its transformation. At the same time, this cinematic realism employed fixed representational "types," thus continuing the positivist-realist project of the nineteenth century arguably built into the very apparatus of cinema, the photographic representation.[38] Thus, on the one hand, Pudovkin's realism was compatible with the Italian literary legacy that Barbaro and others at the Centro were tracing (such as *verismo* and other "indigenous" literary forms of realism, which also arose under conditions of social upheaval).[39] On the other, Pudovkin's insistence on the primacy of what he calls "expressive visual material" (*vyrazitel'nyi plasticheskii material*) as a point of orientation for screen-writing participates in the debates on cinema's medium-specificity found in Arnheim's and Balázs's theories, which were also in circulation at the Centro. His insistence on the importance of a script underscored the collective nature of filmmaking, an element for organizing a collectivity through a shared artistic task:

> It is not a lone director who is called upon to resolve the creative task [of filmmaking]. Only a community united by a shared idea and a unified understanding of a goal (*zadachi*), creative and controlling itself (*sam sebya kontroliruyuschii*), can do such work [of real filmmaking].[40]

36. For a contemporary position emphasizing the Stalinist vision behind Neorealism, see James T. Farrel, "The Problem of Public Sensibility: A Review of *The Open City*," *October* 128 (Spring 2009), pp. 69–84.

37. Pudovkin, in turn, is used by Sergei Tret'iakov to illustrate factographic principles. See Sergei Tret'iakov, "Our Cinema," quoted in Devin Fore, "The Operative Word in Soviet Factography," *October* 118 (Fall 2006), pp. 104–5.

38. For a detailed elaboration of this, see Nancy Armstrong, *Fiction in the Age of Photography: The Legacy of British Realism* (Cambridge: Harvard University, 1999).

39. For more on the literary origins of the Neorealist debates in Fascist Italy, see Ben-Ghiat, *Fascist Modernities*, pp. 46–61, and Luca Caminati, "The Role of Documentary Film in the Formation of the Neorealist Cinema," in *Global Neorealism*, p. 56.

40. Vsevolod Pudovkin, "O scenarnoi forme," *Sobranie sochinenii v trekh tomax, t.1*, (1974), p. 47. Translation mine.

This vision of artistic creation as creative labor must have seemed to Barbaro to be just what he was searching for as he constructed an ideology for the new Italian cinema that did not sever its connection with realism but did attack the idealist, passive form of it. It was "technical" enough to account for the medium-specificity of cinema, emphasizing montage, and it foregrounded film's popular nature (both in its creation and its effect), which made film a distinctive form of industrial production and consumption, both a genuinely anti-elitist and thoroughly modern practice. But, in the final instance, it redeemed the figure of the artist as a critical organizing force.

For Barbaro, then, the natural consequence of this understanding of realism was a transformative rather than mimetic conception of cinema: art "is not limited to making an interpretation of the world, but intends to actively transform reality."[41] This quotation recapitulates almost exactly the Soviet factographic notion of realism in which "[factography] had nothing to do with the naïve and lying verisimilitude of bourgeois realism's aesthetics of resemblance. Rather its interventionist, operative aesthetic called upon the producer not simply to depict life, but to create it anew in the process."[42] The criticism of Neorealism as "politically ineffective" has caused many to lose sight of this connection; however, it was Barbaro's politicized discussions of Neorealism as realizing the transformative potential of cinema—rather than, say, Bazin's description of Neorealism as a film movement with specific formal and stylistic characteristics—that strongly influenced the global network of theorists and practitioners of political modernism of the 1950s and '60s (including Gillo Pontecorvo, theorists and cineasts of Cinema Novo in Brazil, and of Cuban Imperfect Cinema). Unlike most of these subsequent political filmmakers and theorists, however, Barbaro preferred Pudovkin's theories of montage to Eisenstein's, which he considered too idealist in their philosophical conception. Pudovkin was a greater realist for Barbaro because of his more "pragmatic" attitude towards filmmaking as a collective activity, which required a different kind of organization of production and placed the issue of aesthetic labor at the center of the discussion. Another aspect of Pudovkin's "pragmatism" was the accessibility of his writings and their concern with solving practical filmmaking problems, which made them easy to enlist in the pedagogical critical practice the Centro embraced in its fusion of theory and practice.

The discourse on political cinema in Italy was able to be so strongly shaped by the Soviet one because the two shared a vernacular: Marxists could thus argue against Fascism while using Fascist language. Barbaro's anti-idealist polemic, which employed the Fascist terminology of realism, was in fact an attack on Gentile and the Fascist cultural Establishment. Chiarini opposed the Fascist promotion of

41. Pudovkin, V.I. Pudvkin, *Il soggetto cinematografico* (Eizioni d'Italia: Roma, 1932), quoted in Gian Piero Brunetta, *Umberto Barbaro e l'idea di Neorealismo* (Liviana, 1969), p. 28.

42. Sergei Tret'iakov, *Feld-Herren: der Kampf um eine Kollektiv-Wirtschaft* (Berlin: Malik-Verlag, 1931), p. 23, quoted in Fore, "The Operative Word in Soviet Factography," p. 101. For more on the relationship between factography and cinematic realism, see Joshua Malitsky, "Ideologies in Fact: Still and Moving-Image Documentary in the Soviet Union, 1927–1932," *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20, no. 2 (Fall 2010), pp. 352–71.

entertainment cinema by campaigning for educational film. The Italian state's efforts to organize noncommercial sites of exhibition in fact gave birth to a public sphere that was neither simply an extension of the state nor subject to direct commercial pressure. Thus, the dialogue surrounding cinema revolved around a set of issues with both a Fascist and a hidden materialist agenda, principally the industrial organization of cinema as an educational tool and the role of the state as a guarantor of noncommercial media. The terms of this debate remained the same, while emphasis on one or another of these issues depended on the divergent and often contradictory and competing interests of elements within the larger film culture, be it the state, organizations, critics, or the filmmakers themselves. These last, in fact, in the GUF and Centro, were never clearly distinguished from the producer, critic, or institutional functionary. Barbaro's translations and his critical writings, as well as his pedagogical and editorial work, played an important role in shaping a particularly fruitful—if also highly polemical—cultural space for debate about the role of cinema. Yet while the importance of Italian Neorealism for world cinema has become a staple of film history, the development of the discourse on cinema in Italy has not been fully acknowledged by film scholars.

Two other figures in the Italian cultural scene played key roles in transmitting early Soviet film theory to Latin American critics: Guido Aristarco and Cesare Zavattini. Aristarco's publication in 1950 of a collection of texts on film theory, followed the next year by his *History of Film Theories,* marked a major moment in the institutionalization of the discourse on film theory.[43] Aristarco's volumes (which included and discussed the writings of, among others, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Barbaro) were immediately translated into Spanish and Portuguese and became an essential reference point for the postwar generation of filmmakers, and his editorial activities for the journal *Cinema Nuovo* created an important bridge between the prewar Marxist film discourse and the theoretical apparatus of Latin American "Third Cinemas." The reports on the development of revolutionary cinemas and the interviews (with practitioners of New Cinema in Latin America and important figures in Euro-American film culture such as Siegfried Kracauer) that he published in *Cinema Nuovo* were an important source of information for a growing global network of leftist artists and intellectuals. While Aristarco's postwar ideological stance, largely influenced by Gramsci and Lukàcs, was often directed against Barbaro's more orthodox Marxist-Stalinist orientation, his selection of texts was remarkably consistent with Barbaro's prewar curriculum at the Centro.

Zavattini likewise continued the dialogue between Soviet film theorists and artists of the 1920s and the new Italian film culture. Zavattini, who is still best known as a screenwriter for many of the most famous Neorealist films of the 1930s–50s, was a prolific and talented critic (as well as a writer and artist), whose intellectual and artistic development was shaped by his literary involvement in the 1920s Italian avant-garde culture in his native Parma. His theoretical and political

43. Guido Aristarco, *L'arte del film: Antologia storico-critica* (Milan: Bompiani, 1950); and Guido Aristarco, *Storia delle teoriche del film* (Turin: Einaudi, 1951).

writings centered on the relationship between the institution of cinema and social and political reality, and his artistic work reflected a political commitment to redefining the relationship between film production and exhibition through a more direct engagement with spectators. As Giorgio Bertellini notes in his recent work on Zavattini,

> In 1931, in one of his first visionary articles about cinema entitled "La macchina del 2.000" (The Machine of the Year 2000), he envisioned a much more democratic mode of film circulation capable of bypassing the constraints of traditional exhibition circuits. In the year 2000, he argued, the filmmaking process will be so simple that, in an obvious comparison with book distribution, films will be printed and will become "viewable and hearable from home." The idea of disposing of powerful mediators—exhibitors first, but soon also producers and distributors—would remain a refrain of Zavattini's utopian ideas about cinema. Throughout his successful, but also often for him disappointing, participation in the neorealist project, his ideas about cinema translated into the imagination of unconventional filmmaking and exhibition practices.[44]

While Zavattini's conceptual approach had a distinctly phenomenological dimension (compatible with the postwar critical articulations of realism, such as Bazin's), his commitment to experimental forms of production and exhibition allowed for a close fit with the interests of the Latin American filmmakers and critics who were seeking to create a radical cinematic culture. Like Aristarco, Zavattini was a consistent interlocutor for the emerging critics and filmmakers of the New Latin American cinemas and an active participant in the festival circuits promoting in particular the development of the Cuban film industry and film-educational structures.

Thus, the crucial encounter of Latin American filmmakers and critics was not only with the Italian Neorealist cinema in its reified common-usage sense of "documentation of social reality," as it is often suggested in film historical narratives, but rather with a particular development of Italian cinematic culture, personified by Barbaro, Aristarco, and Zavattini. These figures acted as cultural agents of translation among Soviet, Italian, and Cuban models of film cultures in their critical, institutional, and artistic forms. Their emphasis on non-commodified forms of art should be seen as addressing the possibility—indeed, the necessity—for the creation of a public sphere through film culture. Thus it should not be surprising that their concepts continued to reemerge with particular force in authoritarian states where such a public sphere was threatened. Ironically, the close proximity of cinema to state projects aiming to modernize the population through strict regulations lead to the creation of the apparatus capable of radical reimagining of cinema as an emancipatory mechanism.

44. Cesare Zavattini, "La macchina del 2.000," *Cinema Illustrazione* (February 4, 1931), as quoted in Giorgio Bertellini, "Cesare Zavattini and the Avant-garde Tain of the Neorealist Mirror," unpublished manuscript. I thank the author for sharing this work-in-progress.

ICAIC

These political and aesthetic issues came into sharp relief in postrevolutionary Cuba, where the project of building a new cinematic culture was given the highest priority by the state. In the first decade of its existence, the Cuban Institute of Film Art and Industry (ICAIC) created a sharply demarcated, ideologically determined hierarchy within Cuban film culture; at the same time, it provided a vibrant and cosmopolitan space for artistic and theoretical experimentation for those who were on the inside. Its key foundational figures were in constant dialogue with other Latin American and European leftist artists and intellectuals, and consciously reflected on their broad-based knowledge of cinema, Marxist theory, and the political realities of film institutions. While their engagement with contemporary French, British, and U.S. intellectual figures was clearly marked by the concerns and structures of the New Left, and they were united in their rejection of the conservative legacies of the older communist parties (a process that was also taking place in Italy at the time), much of the ICAIC's practice involved responding to problems formulated by earlier generations of radical filmmakers and theorists. Many of these were assimilated through dialogue with Italian film culture, especially the Centro and its theoretical legacies (including Barbaro's work); through regular contacts with Aristarco's journal *Cinema Nuovo* and Zavattini; as well as through Cuban participation in a number of independent film festivals in Italy in the course of the 1960s.

As a sign of both the influence of the Centro/VGIK model of centralizing film culture and of how much the new Communist regime valued film, one of the first acts of the revolutionary government, in March 1959, was to establish the Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematografica (ICAIC).[45] Law 169, which gave the ICAIC control of film production and distribution, the studios and all other infrastructure, and the training of filmmakers and technicians, explained the government's reasoning: "Because film is an art. Because cinema constitutes, due to its characteristics, an instrument of opinions that form individual and collective consciousness and can contribute to deepen and purify the revolutionary spirit and sustain its creative impulse."[46]

Setting the tone for cultural polemics in Cuba throughout the 1960s, Law 169 raised issues of artistic labor, coupling industry and art in the Institute's very title.[47] It was no accident that Centro-trained film theorists and friends of Zavattini[48]—

45. For the most detailed account of the history of the ICAIC and the Cuban film industry, see Michael Chanan, *Cuban Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).
46. "Creacion del Instituto Cubano del Arte e Industria Cinematográfica (ICAIC)," in *Pensamiento y Política Cultural Cubanos: T. IV*, ed. Matilde del Rosario Sánchez (Havana: Editorial Pueblo y Educaion, 1987), pp. 7–10.
47. For some of the most important texts from these debates, see *Polémicas culturales de los 60*, ed. Graziella Pogolotti (Havana: Letras Cubanas, 2006); for a partial account in English, see Hector Amaya, *Screening Cuba: Film Criticism as Political Performance During the Cold War* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 2010).
48. For a correspondence between them, see Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, *Titón: Volver sobre mis pasos*, ed. Mirtha Ibarra (Havana: Union, 2008).

notably Tomás Gutiérrez Alea and Julio García Espinosa (as well as Fernando Birri, who was the founder of the Documentary Film School in Santa Fe, Argentina, whose artistic stance became paradigmatic for ICAIC)—were from the beginning the creative leaders of the Institute. According to their accounts, as early as 1954, when they returned to Cuba under the influence of their experience in Italy, Julio García Espinosa and Gutiérrez Alea organized a group for the study of Marxism and culture, presumably under the umbrella of Nuestro Tiempo, the Communist-affiliated association based at the University of Havana. The association consisted of several sections, including a film division. In a lecture titled "Neorealism and Cuban Cinema" in May 1954 at a colloquium organized by Nuestro Tiempo, García Espinosa presented a peculiar synthesis of Chiarini's, Barbaro's, and Zavattini's pronouncements on Neorealism. What is striking, however, in light of García Espinosa's later theoretical writings is how closely it corresponded to Barbaro's and Pudovkin's discussions of realism. García Espinosa insisted on the necessity of artistic selection of the material (against the notion of simply "catching the reality of life on the streets"), thereby affirming the importance of the director's organizational role and echoing Pudovkin's concerns. He also stated that Neorealism's goal was "to register life itself on the basis of its most characteristic and typical traits," evoking both Pudovkin's idea of "typage" and Aristarco's Lukácsian language of social types. Throughout his writings from the period, García Espinosa repeated the familiar refrain that art "is not only about interpreting the world but about transforming it."[49] Much like Barbaro, who proposed that Soviet cinema serve as the model for the national rebirth of Italian cinema in the 1930s, García Espinosa insisted in 1954 on Neorealist cinema as a model for Cuban cinema, not through formal and stylistic imitation but as an approach to filmmaking deeply rooted in its own national and cultural traditions.[50] In terms of theoretical sophistication, this is a far cry from his 1969 call for an "Imperfect Cinema," which had more in common with Zavattini's (and Vertov's) project of radically democratizing filmmaking—but it is remarkably consistent with the theoretical stance of the Centro Sperimentale and early 1950s Italian film discourse. This was two years before the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the U.S.S.R., when Khrushchev delivered his famous "secret speech" denouncing the cult of personality, which had immediate reverberations in pro-communist circles around the world. The resultant crisis of the cultural ideologies of the Communist Parties led to critical revisionism and the emergence of the New Left. The intellectual and theoretical formation of most of the key figures of the future ICAIC occurred at this intersection in the history of cultural Marxism, and it coincided with the Cuban revolution, which brought these debates into the open and announced them to be a matter of national priority.

The Castro-ite subsumption of civil society within the state structure was, during the revolution's utopian moment, a powerful political model for under-

49. Julio García Espinosa, *Algo de mí* (Havana: ICAIC, 2009), p. 94.
50. "El Neorealismo y el cine cubano," transcript of the speech at the Cultural Association Nuestro Tiempo on May 13, 1954, reprinted in García Espinosa, *Algo de mí*, pp. 163–74.

standing the organization of filmmaking as a collective project.[51] Consistent with Michael Chanan's claim that "the case of Cuban cinema suggests . . . [that] the public sphere does not simply dissolve, but finds an active and vicarious surrogate on the film screen," the strand of film and critical theory that led from the Soviet Union in the 1920s to Italy in the 1930s was taken up in Cuban cinematic discourse of the 1960s and '70s, when the ICAIC created a cultural dynamic not entirely unlike that of the Centro Sperimentale during Fascism.[52] In Chanan's words:

> While the press and broadcasting became a site of ideological confrontation where the state would soon take direct control, cinema in Cuba came to occupy a unique cultural space as a major site of public discourse that at the same time enjoyed a de facto autonomy because of a privileged relation to the source of power and authority.[53]

The critical apparatus developed within this discourse reflected a preoccupation with a materialist aesthetic that would enable the existence of a genuine civic society.[54] Many of the Cuban filmmakers and critics had previously been actively involved in cine-clubs and cultural organizations in prerevolutionary Cuba. On the level of artistic practice, this is particularly evident in the development of mobile cinemas in Cuba in the 1960s, which were reminiscent of both Soviet cine-train projects of the 1930s and Zavattini's practices of *cinegiornali liberi*.[55] In Cuban intellectual circles, the most urgent debate of the early '60s concerned the status of the intellectual in the revolution and, consequently, what revolutionary role should be assigned to the artist. The solution arrived at by the Cuban school was to preserve the uniqueness of artistic labor and merge it with the democratic process, in as much as this was identified with the massive changes being effected by the revolution. Cuban artists and intellectuals in the 1960s were fully aware of the dangers of the institutionalization of the revolution and the routinization that had befallen Socialist Realism to the point of cliché. In fact, one of the first ICAIC–produced fiction films directed by Gutiérrez Alea was *Twelve Chairs* (*Las Doce Sillas*, 1962), an adaptation of a famous Soviet satirical novel of the 1920s to the realities of '60s Cuba. While ostensibly critiquing prerevolutionary elements, like his later film *Death of a Bureaucrat* (*La Muerte de un burócrata*, 1966), *Twelve Chairs* targeted not only the

51. This corresponds to the shift in the political struggle to a new, anti-institutional (rather than class-based) articulation of a revolutionary position.
52. Chanan, *Cuban Cinema*, p. 16.
53. Ibid, p. 19.
54. For a discussion of the reception of Italian Marxism in Cuba, see Michael Chanan, "Cuba and Civil Society, or Why Cuban Intellectuals Are Talking About Gramsci," *Nepantla* 2, no. 2 (2001).
55. For a recent discussion of Cuban mobile cinemas as extension of the public sphere, see Nicholas Balaisis, "Cuba, Cinema, and the Post-Revolutionary Public Sphere," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies* 19, no. 2 (2010), pp. 26–42, and Tamara Falicov, "Mobile Cinemas in Cuba: The Forms and Ideology of Traveling Exhibitions," *Public* 40 (2010), pp. 104–8. On Zavattini's project of "free newsreels," see Mino Argentieri, "Cinegiornali liberi: Motivi di dissenso e consenso," *Cinema Sessanta* 9, no. 71 (1969).

bureaucratic institutions but also their stylistic platitudes, and it included a parody of ICAIC's own newsreels. Against artistic ossification, these films erupt with the spontaneous, anarchic, and liberating energy of slapstick comedy.

Meanwhile, the theorists of the ICAIC turned to Barbaro and Zavattini because by emphasizing the notion of film as an expression of collective creativity, their theories turned the modernist debate inside out: it wasn't that the artist was exemplary, but rather that all individuals were repressed artists. True social liberation would thus advance under the slogan that everyone is an artist—and, by extension, civil society an artistic collaboration. In place of individual production, García Espinosa's notion of "Imperfect Cinema" encompassed

> not only an act of social justice—the possibility for everyone to make films—but also a fact of extreme importance for artistic culture: the possibility of recovering . . . the true meaning of artistic activity. *Then* we will be able to understand that art is one of mankind's "impartial" activities. That art is not work, and that the artist is not in the strict sense a worker.
>
> Imperfect cinema cannot lose sight of the fact that its essential goal as a new poetic is to disappear. . . .
>
> Art will not disappear into nothingness: it will disappear into everything.[56]

In this sense, the re-conceptualization of Neorealism in Cuba proved to be exemplary by its lack of prescriptive criteria or fixed means of intervening in material reality. What these theorists realized was that Barbaro's understanding of realism and his use of Pudovkin, unlike the Socialist Realist mandated formula that he advocated in the last years of his life, do not associate specific techniques (like montage in Eisenstein's case or "kino-eye" in Vertov's) with class sensibilities; instead, they allow for a range of formal means, so long as the goal—or "thesis" in Pudovkin and Barbaro's terminology—of serving the revolution is retained. In 1960s Cuba, this approach proved capable of being reconciled with Fidel's famous slogan, "Within revolution—everything; outside revolution—nothing." Informed by Barbaro's thesis, Cuban theorists and filmmakers sought to create a cinema that did not dissolve the contradiction that remained at the heart of contemporary political cinematic debates: how to bridge the gap between art and political reality without suspending the autonomous status of art.

These artists refused to accept the capitalist relations of production, in which surplus value is translated into positional gain in the hierarchy of power

56. García Espinosa, "For an Imperfect Cinema," p. 82.

and under which one can include existing forms of communism as being, in the end, variants of state capitalism.They refused to consider aesthetic labor as reducible to the same criteria as other labor, and thereby necessitated a completely new set of production relations that did not follow the model of capitalist organization. Moreover, their work implied that any kind of quantification of artistic output or any formulaic relation to the aesthetic product was impossible. In 1960s Cuba, such work had, of course, a very concrete political context.[57] The ability of Cuban filmmakers and theorists to articulate this position from within the Marxist aesthetic discourse (however unorthodox) allowed them to successfully reconcile—however temporarily—political pressures with a more sophisticated and clearly modernist approach to filmmaking.

This theoretical position was developed in dialogue with the Soviet avant-garde and Italian Neorealism (as well as with contemporary European and U.S. radical film collectives), and, importantly, with the debates going on in Brazil, Argentina, and Chile that flowed into meetings of the Third World Cinema Committee, among other places.[58] For the historian, then, there are two dimensions that must be investigated in order to produce a panoramic picture of Cuban film in the 1960s: the diachronic plane, parts of which I have begun to uncover here, and two big synchronic fields—the "Third Cinemas," where the question of aesthetic labor is posed within the matrix of issues specific to the postcolonial experience, and a wider historical shift towards post-industrialism in Europe and the U.S. that undermined older certainties about the capitalist social order and gave rise to new political realities, theoretical frameworks, and artistic practices.

It is fair to assume, however, that the historical trajectory I have traced here came to an end sometime in the 1970s, and uncovering it now belongs to the kind of cultural archeology of modernity discussed by T. J. Clark.[59] Any hope for Cuba as a space for political dissent belongs to the same aborted past. Political modernism, which served as a Franco-Anglophone counterpart to Latin America's Third and Imperfect Cinema, and, perhaps, film theory as a discourse *tout court*, also reached what seems to be a permanent crisis.[60] The crises of labor politics and postindustrialism have altered the theorizations of artistic labor. And yet, the very condition of postindustrialism and information-era capitalism

57. As Chanan notes, unlike the Soviet film industry, which was removed from the Commissariat of Education to the Council on National Economy in 1929, Cuban filmmakers and theorists resisted any such developments. Michael Chanan, "Cinemas in Revolution: 1920 Russia, 1960s Cuba," in *Understanding Film, Marxist Perspectives*, ed. Mike Wayne (London: Pluto Press, 2005), p. 243.
58. Mariano Mestman, "From Algiers to Buenos Aires: The Third World Cinema Committee (1973/74) *New Cinemas: Journal of Contemporary Film* 1, no. 1 (2003).
59. T. J. Clark, *Farewell to an Idea: Episodes from a History of Modernism* (Yale University Press, 1999).
60. David N. Rodowick, *The Crisis of Political Modernism: Criticism and Ideology in Contemporary Film Criticism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), and D. N. Rodowick, "An Elegy for Theory," *October* 121 (Summer 2007), pp. 99–110.

raises the questions of radical democratization and an alternative public sphere with new force, not only in relation to cinema but also the new media. The kind of utopian imagination manifested in the theories I have examined in this essay is currently in evidence in the debates concerning the creation of new communities and a new public sphere through the democratization of media platforms. This is why we need to revive and seek to understand older instances of this utopian imagination at work: to provide a much-needed historical perspective on current debates.

"Cinema in the Hands of the People": Chris Marker, the Medvedkin Group, and the Potential of Militant Film*

TREVOR STARK

Approach the groups, listen. A whole population is discussing serious matters, and for the first time workers can be heard exchanging their views on problems which until now have been broached only by philosophers.

—August Villiers de l'Isle-Adam,
Paris, May 19, 1871[1]

I have come to Besançon to speak about the necessity of reconstructing a common culture that permits all of us, anew, to speak to one another and to understand one another . . . that gives the strength to defeat one's fear and to become an actor in one's own life. . . . For me, culture is not solely reserved for the privileged few, it is not for a small elite. . . . I believe in the creative force of capitalism, but I am convinced that capitalism cannot survive without an ethics, without respect for a certain number of spiritual values, moral values, without humanism, without culture. We have to put culture back into capitalism. We have to balance capitalism with culture. We have to put capitalism back in the service of a certain ideal of man.

—Nicolas Sarkozy, Besançon,
March 13, 2007[2]

On May 3, 2007, near the end of his presidential campaign, Nicolas Sarkozy promised the French public that, if elected, he would "liquidate the her-

* This paper developed out of a seminar on postwar European art, directed by Benjamin Buchloh at Harvard University in 2010. I owe my foremost thanks to Buchloh, who supported this project from its inception, and to Malcolm Turvey, for his invaluable editorial critique. Thanks are also due to Maria Gough, my colleagues in the seminar, ISKRA, the Harvard Film Archives, and, for their generous advice on early drafts, Samuel Johnson, Kevin Lotery, and Annie Rudd.

1. August Villiers de l'Isle-Adam, "Tableau de Paris," *Le Tribun du Peuple* (19 May 1871). Reproduced in *La Commune de Paris Aujourd'hui*, ed. Jacques Zwirn (Paris: Les Éditions de l'Atelier, 1999), p. 139. All translations are my own, unless otherwise specified.

2. Nicolas Sarkozy, "Discours à Besançon, 13 Mars, 2007," n.p., sites.univ-provence.fr/veronis/Discours2007transcript.php?n=Sarkozy&p=2007-03-13 (accessed September 1, 2011).

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 117–150. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

Georges Binetruy and the Medvedkin Group. © ISKRA.

itage of May 1968."[3] Yet the stakes of this now-infamous piece of political theater and the connotations of "May" within its rhetoric were most clearly established in another campaign speech delivered in Besançon on March 13, 2007, cited above. In Besançon, Sarkozy contended that to oppose the "heritage of May '68" was to take a stand "against the refusal of all authority, against cultural and moral relativism, against lowering standards [*nivellement par le bas*] . . . against the lack of culture."[4] Sarkozy's decision to deliver his most scathing denunciation of the cultural and political legacy of the French 1960s in Besançon was itself a symbolic gesture of no small strategic significance. For Besançon emblematizes both the immediate prehistory of the upheavals of May '68—in the strikes and factory occupations that began there in March 1967—and their most potent afterlife—in the experiments in *autogestion*, or workers' self-management, that culminated in the cooperative established in the occupied LIP watch factory in 1973. In his association of the struggles for self-determination that took hold in Besançon during the late 1960s with the wholesale denigration of culture, and in his call for culture as a force of reconciliation in service of capital, Sarkozy reveals the contours of what might be called his politics of aesthetics.

It is in Besançon, therefore, that one might begin to establish a counterhistory of the moment that Sarkozy, in high Stalinist language, would "liquidate." The Besançon *Groupe Medvedkine*, one of postwar Europe's most significant experiments in cultural production "from below," stands as an exemplary anamnestic to Sarkozy's claim that a generalized opposition to culture is foremost among the inheritances of May. Between 1967 and 1971, a group of workers at the Rhodiaceta textile factory in Besançon, with no prior training or experience in cinema, produced a number of extraordinarily variegated films reflecting what Kristin Ross has called "the union of

3. Quoted in Louis-Jean Calvet and Jean Véronis, *Les Mots de Nicolas Sarkozy* (Paris: Éditions Seuil, 2008), p. 152.
4. Sarkozy, "Discours à Besançon, 13 Mars, 2007," n.p.

intellectual contestation with workers' struggles" that culminated in 1968.[5] The collective emerged from a sustained *rencontre* with the French filmmaker Chris Marker and the film-production cooperative SLON (*Service de lancement des oeuvres nouvelles*), which dedicated itself during these years to fostering a *cinéma ouvrier*, adamantly refusing any leadership role and with it the model of individual authorship altogether.[6] As Marker put it in an interview from 2003, his project was "to give the power of speech to people who don't have it, and, when it's possible, to help them find their own means of expression."[7]

In the face of the call to "put culture back into capitalism" as the foundation of a new "common culture," it becomes urgent to recover a conception of cultural democratization that entailed not universal access to art as a palliative, but confrontation with the political fault lines running through the field of representation. However, if today the Medvedkin Group is charged with the potential energy of anachronism, so too was it at the moment of its inception. The group's collective moniker itself evinces Marker's untimely resuscitation of the legacy of Soviet factography, as received through its least likely practitioner, the satirical filmmaker Alexander Medvedkin. Tracing the historical conjunctions and disjunctions that led to the genesis of the group, this essay will focus on the first two films produced through the common labor of those previously kept separate: *À bientôt j'espère* (1967–68), a documentary on the struggles at Rhodiaceta by Chris Marker, Mario Marret, and SLON; and *Classe de lutte* (1968), the Medvedkin Group's first collective film. As a means of coming to terms with the specificity of the Medvedkin Group's cinematic practice, this essay will end with a discussion of Jean-Luc Godard's contemporaneous work in the Groupe Dziga Vertov, with its parallel but ultimately irreconcilable claims for self-reflexivity, collectivity, and class consciousness.

"Les Révoltés de la Rhodia"

On February 25, 1967, three thousand workers in Besançon occupied the Rhodiaceta textile factory owned by Rhône-Poulenc, then one of the largest French corporations, and declared a strike that lasted over a month.[8] This was the first factory occupation in France since 1936, a date that reverberated within the factory walls

5. Kristin Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), p. 11.

6. Kristin Ross has argued that the model of the "*rencontre*," to which I will return in closing, exemplifies the challenges to specialization that flourished in May 1968. See ibid., p. 103. In 1974, SLON changed its name to ISKRA (*Image, Son, Kinescope et Réalisations Audiovisuelles*, referencing Lenin's newspaper *Iskra* ["spark" in Russian]) and moved its base from Brussels to Paris. Still operative today, the group is dedicated to producing films "that quxestion our world by giving speech to those who do not have it." For more on SLON and ISKRA see the booklet published with the Medvedkin Group DVD collection, *Les Groupes Medvedkine: Le cinéma est une arme* (Paris: Éditions Montparnasse, 2006), pp. 6–9.

7. Chris Marker, "Marker Direct," *Film Comment* 39, no. 3 (May–June 2003), p. 39.

8. Georges Maurivard, a worker at Rhodiaceta in the 1960s and a member of the Medvedkin Group, has recently offered an account of the strike in Georges Maurivard, "'Classes de Lutte,' luttes de classes," *Critique Communiste* 186 (March 2008), pp. 92–100.

for the duration of the strike, lending the demonstrations an incipient sense of historicity as they quickly spread through the Rhône-Poulenc trust. The events at Rhodiaceta were initiated by those who worked the "4/8," a debilitating seven-day schedule shared by four teams who worked staggered eight-hour morning, afternoon, and night shifts—two morning shifts followed by two afternoons, then three night shifts, and finally two days of rest before the cycle began again. The terms of the strike, however, were not restricted to grievances related to hours, pay, and working conditions. What was unique at Rhodiaceta was that one of the most prevalent demands of the striking workers was access to culture, not as a utopian slogan but as a pragmatic political claim—one to which, however, no factory directorate could adequately respond. In speeches, interviews, tracts, and posters, the workers in Besançon contended that culture was a mechanism for the maintenance of class hierarchies; and by extension, in recognizing themselves as the constitutive exclusion of the cultural sphere, the strikers called into question the conception of culture as a separate category within bourgeois society, supposedly divorced from the means-end rationality of productive existence.

The centrality of culture to the workers' struggle in Besançon can primarily be credited to the local cultural center known as the CCPPO (*Centre culturel populaire de Palente-les-Orchamps*). From its foundation on September 9, 1959, the center's first president, Pol Cèbe (a worker at the Rhodiaceta factory and resident of the working-class district of Palente-les-Orchamps), along with two Besançon teachers, René and Micheline Berchoud, established an ambitious cultural program for the local community, including performances of Brecht plays, lectures on Picasso, and an evening consecrated to Jacques Prévert and his work with the Groupe Octobre during the years of the Popular Front.[9] They also held regular projections of films such as René Vautier's banned *Afrique 50*, *The Grapes of Wrath*, Godard's *La Chinoise*, and works by Eisenstein and Joris Ivens. Concurrently, Cèbe took over the factory library at Rhodiaceta, which had fallen into disuse, and filled the shelves with classics of Marxist and Communist thought as well as with poetry and art monographs, transforming the small library into a space for workers to assemble, hold reading groups, debate, and organize. In their manifold activities, the CCPPO self-consciously adopted Brecht's principle that

> one need not be afraid to produce daring, unusual things for the proletariat so long as they deal with its real situation. There will always be people of culture, connoisseurs of art, who will interject: "Ordinary people do not understand that." But the people will push these persons impatiently aside and come to a direct understanding with artists.[10]

9. For an account of the CCPPO, see ISKRA, pp. 2–5, and Cèbe's brief recollections in Maurivard, p. 100. Bruno Muel offers a remarkable testimony of Cèbe's role in the CCPPO and the Medvedkin Groups in Bruno Muel, "Les riches heures du groupe Medvedkine (Besançon-Sochaux, 1967–1974)," *Images Documentaires* 37/38 (2000), pp. 15–35.

10. Bertolt Brecht, "Popularity and Realism," in *Aesthetics and Politics* (London: Verso Press, 2007), p. 84.

It was into this well-formed atmosphere of cultural contestation that Chris Marker entered on March 8, 1967, when he received a letter from Besançon. Written by René Berchoud, the letter informed Marker of the recent events at Rhodiaceta and asked if he would be willing to send any films for projection in the occupied factory—and why not come down and see what was going on himself? To Marker, who had spent the better part of his career since the 1950s making film-essays in locales such as China, Cuba, Israel, and Siberia, Berchoud made a plea for local matters: "If you aren't in China or elsewhere, come to Rhodia—important things are happening."[11]

This letter, in fact, was the culmination of a prolonged correspondence between Marker and the Berchouds that was predicated on their parallel experiences in French post-Liberation popular-culture movements. In the 1940s, Marker worked for the sister organizations Peuple et Culture and Travail et Culture, which sought to "bring culture to the people and the people to culture" as a means of fostering radically democratic forms of popular expression.[12] Initially a member of the theater workshop, Marker soon worked alongside André Bazin in the film section of Travail et Culture, organized Peuple et Culture's educational dossier, *DOC*, and edited, with Benigno Cacérès, a volume of documents on the history of French working-class movements since the nineteenth century entitled *Regards sur le Mouvement ouvrier.*[13] Marker opened this latter text with Brecht's poem "Questions from a Worker Who Reads," thus evincing the commitments he shared with the activists at the CCPPO.[14] It was, in fact, the Peuple et Culture movement that provided the impetus for the foundation of the CCPPO and for its dedication to a Brechtian paradigm of the popular.[15] However, this historical conjunction linking the filmmaker to the center, and thus providing the conditions of possibility for the Medvedkin Group's eventual formation, remained latent until Berchoud sent his invitation during the strikes of March 1967.

Marker recalls that when he received the message from Besançon he was in the process of editing the first SLON project, *Loin du Vietnam* (1967), a collective cinematic protest against the Vietnam War with contributions from Godard, Ivens, William Klein, Claude Lelouch, Alain Resnais, and Agnès Varda.[16] Abandoning his editing table, Marker drove 400 km from Paris to Besançon with his soundman Antoine Bonfanti, his cameraman Pierre Lhomme, and photographer Michèle Bouder, and met Cèbe, the Berchouds, and a number of striking workers. Soon

11. Berchoud, quoted in ISKRA, p. 5. Until his involvement at Rhodiaceta, Marker's only major films shot in France were *Le Joli Mai* (1963) and *La Jetée* (1962). The former will be discussed briefly below.
12. For a brief but insightful account of Marker's involvement with these organizations, see Catherine Lupton, *Chris Marker: Memories of the Future* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 23–27.
13. Ibid.
14. Bénigno Cacérès and Christian Marker, *Regards sur le Mouvement Ouvrier* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1951), p. 7.
15. Ibid., p. 3.
16. ISKRA, p. 14.

after, Marker published a report on the strike complete with photographs and interviews in the March 22 issue of *Le Nouvel Observateur*. "The question for these men," Marker writes, "is not to negotiate—in the American style—their integration into a 'society of well-being,' but to contest this society itself and the value of the 'compensations' it offers."[17] Marker situates Rhodiaceta at the disavowed center of postwar French prosperity, giving the lie to the propagandistic media tropes of the "end of the class struggle." One worker interviewed by Marker argues, "This movement calls into question the entire society in which we live." Another states, "They want us to always be proles [*prolos*], uncultivated men who are there for work and that's it. How do you think a guy who has just worked eight hours at Rhodia can look to develop himself intellectually? It's almost impossible." He continues, "We can't fight exclusively on the union level or the political level, if we don't fight at the same time on the cultural level, on the level of the development of one's personality, of one's intelligence, etc."[18] At Rhodiaceta, culture signified the capability to express oneself and not be reduced to silence. Not restricted to seeking specific remunerations, the strike contested the very foundation of a political order based upon the division of manual and intellectual labor.

Be Seeing You

Inspired by this experience, over the course of the year, Marker and his crew frequently shuttled between Paris and Besançon, establishing ties with the CCPPO, secretly shooting footage in the factory, interviewing workers, and attempting to involve them directly in the production of a film about the factory occupation and its consequences. The initial result of these trips to Besançon is *À bientôt j'espère*, filmed by Marker between March 1967 and January 1968 with the Communist filmmaker Mario Marret and the SLON team.[19] The film opens on Christmas Eve, 1967, months after the end of the strike, with a shot of workers exiting the Rhodiaceta factory—thereby echoing the image of labor (or, more precisely, its cessation) that inaugurates the cinema itself in *La Sortie des usines Lumière à Lyon* (1895) by those fellow natives of Besançon the Lumière brothers.[20] As the workers exit the factory, Georges (Yoyo) Maurivard, a young militant, attempts to gather together a group to demonstrate in support of recently laid-off comrades from a Rhône-Poulenc factory in Lyon. Marker's film follows Maurivard from his initial *prise de parole* in March to his increasing involvement as a delegate of the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (*Confédération française démocratique du travail*, CFDT) and, by the end of 1967, of the

17. Marker, "Les Révoltés de la Rhodia," *Le Nouvel Observateur* 123 (March 22–29, 1967), p. 26.
18. Ibid., pp. 27–28.
19. The role played by Marret in the film's production is ambiguous. Marker later writes, "It was to him that we owe, throughout *À bientôt j'espère*, this ambiance of perfect equality between filmmakers and filmed that I surely could not have accomplished alone." Marker, "Pour Mario," in ISKRA, pp. 11–19.
20. Making this connection explicit, Marker wrote a script in the early 1970s for an unrealized film entitled *La Sortie des usines Peugeot* that he proposed to Bruno Muel. Muel, "Les riches heures du groupe Medvedkine," pp. 31–32.

General Confederation of Labor (*Confédération générale du travail*, CGT), France's largest trade union, officially affiliated in the 1960s with the French Communist Party (PCF).[21] Interviewed by the filmmakers in December with a group of fellow Rhodiaceta workers, Maurivard describes his faltering and fearful first attempt to stand on an overturned barrel and address his comrades to urge the continuation of the strike. The interview flashes back to a shot of Maurivard in March, reading a tract into a microphone before three thousand striking workers and a mass of supporters. Over a montage pairing footage shot amid and above the crowd with still photographs of workers and graffiti on the factory walls, Marker argues in a voice-over that the originality of the strike could be found in "the idea, continually reprised, that inequality on the level of working conditions translated to inequality in all levels of life, that no salary hikes would suffice to compensate."[22] He continues, "The tangible result of the strike is not the percentage of pay augmentation achieved but the education of a generation of young workers who have discovered in the identity of their conditions, the identity of their struggle." Corroborating Marker's claims, Maurivard states that during the strike, the workers "lived for the first time an experience of collectivity" and that, in the occupied factory, they "mutually discovered one another." As attested by the men

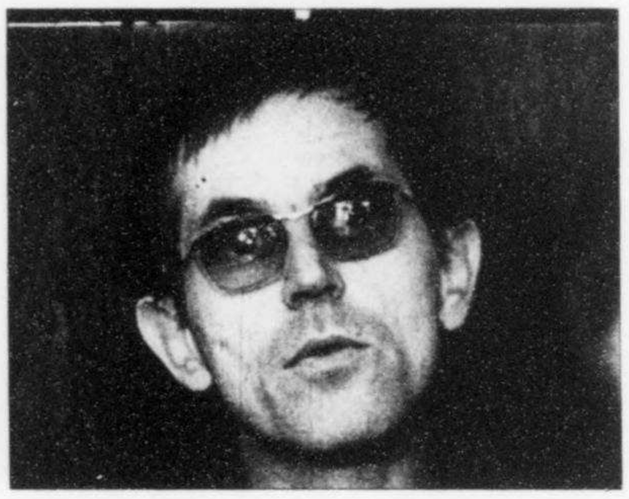
Chris Marker and Mario Marret. À bientôt j'espère. *1967–68. © ISKRA.*

21. George Ross provides a historical context for a shift in allegiance such as Maurivard's, explaining, "The Rhodiaceta strike was interesting because of conflicts between the CFDT and the CGT regarding its conduct. The CFDT in Besançon originally sparked the strike over working conditions (having to do with the work schedules of swing shift workers). When the strike spread through the Rhône-Poulenc complex the CGT took over its guidance, leading to a wages/hours national settlement, according to its own tactical goals. The Besançon/Rhodiaceta CFDT was unhappy at this settlement and continued to agitate around the issues of working conditions, an agitation which bore fruit in May 1968." George Ross, *Workers and Communists in France: From Popular Front to Eurocommunism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), p. 162.

22. All translations of French dialogue from the films are my own.

interviewed in the film, what was most shocking was the experience of entering the factory and feeling *calm*, of setting up a cinema in the factory, of dancing, of appropriating the space of dehumanization as a space for community.

Opposed to a model where "socialism means working hard," the community formed in March did not elevate work into a shared essence.[23] Rather, the testimonials recorded in *À bientôt j'espère* emphasize the liberating experience of laying claim to sectors of life inaccessible to the worker-as-such: to creativity, to culture, to communication. In one sequence, Marker shoots a poster made during the occupations that reads, "The CCPPO demands BREAD for all, but also: peace, laughter, theater, life." Facing the camera in close-up, Cèbe emphasizes these concerns: "For us culture is a struggle, a claim. Just as with the right to have bread and lodgings, we claim the right to culture—it's the same fight for culture as for the union or in the political field." By refusing the stultifying identity of the worker denied all opportunity for "self-cultivation" and by establishing lines of communication between striking workers, artists, and militant student "*comités de soutien*," a community emerged that destabilized monolithic and integral categories of identity, and thereby exceeded the bounds of traditional union or party representation (a conflict that only intensified, as we shall see). In this way, the communitarian experiment of March approached the condition of an "unworked" or inoperative community (*communauté désoeuvrée*) in Jean-Luc Nancy's sense, one profoundly inimical to the discourse of community *as a work* (i.e., a unified "project of fusion") or as being constituted *through work* (as in the ideal Platonic Republic where each person is defined by his or her role within the division of labor).[24] Marker later claimed, "You don't need a degree in sociology to find in this state of things, one year in advance, the essential themes of May '68."[25]



Marker and Marret.
À bientôt j'espère.
1967–68. © ISKRA.

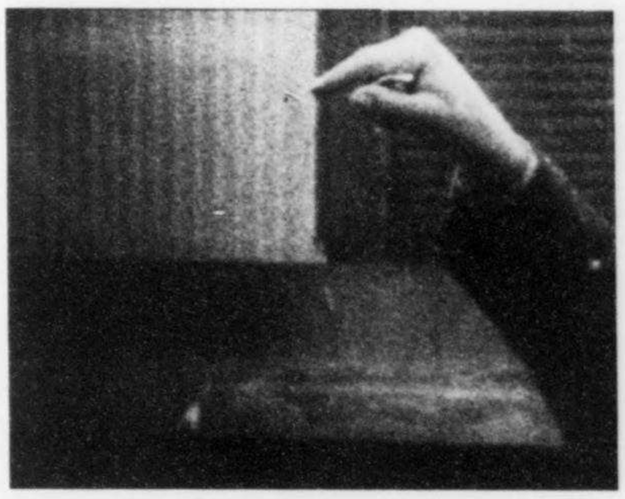
À bientôt j'espère contrasts the efflorescence of protest and communication in March with its suppression in the following months. In a typically dialectical juxtaposition of voiceover and image, Marker pairs a montage of machinery producing syn-

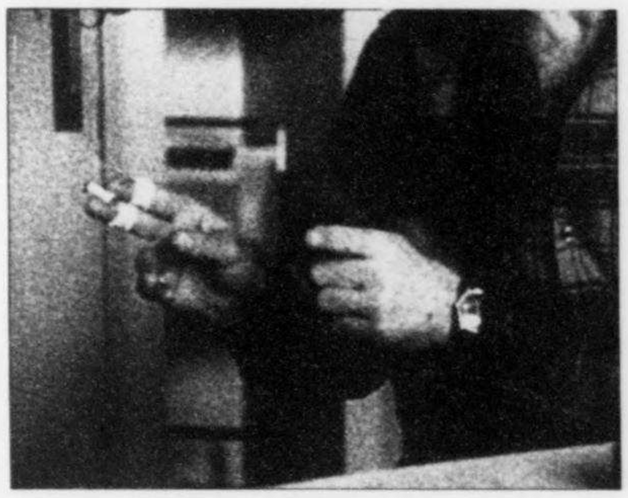
23. Guy Debord quotes this statement by German Social Democrat Friedrich Ebert and notes that it is "a fine herald of that *image of socialism* which was soon to emerge as the mortal enemy of the proletariat." Guy Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle* (1967), trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: Zone Books, 1994), p. 67.

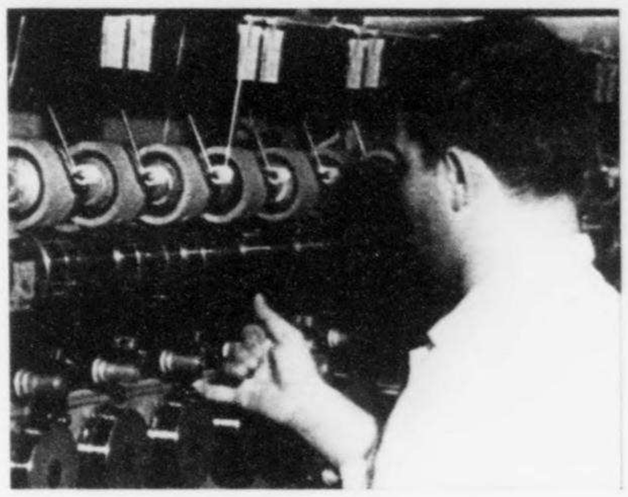
24. Community, for Nancy, is not produced as an *oeuvre*, which would "presuppose that the common being, as such, be objectifiable and producible (in sites, persons, buildings, discourses, institutions, symbols: in short, in subjects)." Rather, community takes place in the interruption or fragmentation of forms of integral and closed being-without-relation. Community, therefore, "is the unworking of work that is social, economic, technical, and institutional." Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, ed. and trans. Peter Connor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), pp. 15, 31.

25. ISKRA, p. 15.

thetic fibers shot secretly in Rhodiaceta by Bruno Muel[26] with the testimony of a worker who describes the way in which the mechanical time of the factory has completely quantified even the most personal, internal, physiological aspects of his life: "To eat, in principle, one must be hungry. However, when we eat, it's not because we're hungry, it's because the electronic brain thought that we should eat because of a gap in production." Another worker describes the reified and exchangeable time of the factory as an inescapable repetition, a perpetual return of the same: "It's like always seeing the same film, always listening to the same record." In their emphasis on the petrification of variable human time into static mechanical time, these sequences reflect Georg Lukács' description of the fragmentation of experience under industrial conditions of labor, which "reduces space and time to a common denominator and degrades time to the dimension of space."[27] In order to express this degradation cinematically, Marker interviews a worker who performs the same gesture at a machine two hundred and forty-four times throughout the course of an eight-hour day, the temporal flux of his lived duration measured precisely by the number of times he carries out a predetermined set of motions. He sits in his kitchen and re-performs the rationalized movements of his daily labor for the camera, his bandaged hands moving as determined by the absent machine, in one of the many close-ups of hands in Marker's films. Between these hands and those of Maurivard, pointing and gesturing while speaking to a crowd, the filmmakers trace the transformations and disappointments of the March movement. As the film ends, Maurivard proclaims







Marker and Marret.
À bientôt j'espère.
1967–68. © ISKRA.

26. Muel recalls that in January 1968, while Marker and Marret were busy editing, they asked him to film inside Rhodiaceta, against the decree of the factory director. Maurivard snuck Muel and René Vautier into the factory, where they shot all *À bientôt j'espère*'s footage of the factory interior. Muel, "Les riches heures du groupe Medvedkine," pp. 18–19.

27. In Bergsonian language, Lukács argues that under capitalism, "time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things' (the reified, mechanically objectified 'performance' of the worker, wholly separated from his total human personality): in short, it becomes space." Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness: Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1971), p. 90.

with conviction that even after the strike's defeat, the experience of community that it fostered has persisted and will form the foundation of a successful working-class movement. Indeed, for Maurivard, this community was in itself a form of culture.

Maurivard's words delineate the central paradox faced by Marker in his first months at Rhodiaceta: How to translate the workers' struggle into cinema such that the filmmaker would not simply reinscribe the relations of domination between those who have access to culture and those who do not, between those who have the power to represent and those who are simply represented? These tensions reached a point of crisis on April 27, 1968, when Marker held the film's première at the CCPPO for the Rhodiaceta workers and the local community. While it had its defenders, Cèbe foremost among them, the film was met with a largely hostile reception, even among those who had actively participated in its production. The union leaders either refused to attend the screening or vehemently aired their protests. In response, Marker held a discussion after the projection, recorded by the soundman Bonfanti.[28] One worker states, "I think that the director is incompetent. . . . And I also think, and I say it bluntly, that the workers of Rhodia have simply been exploited." Another criticizes Marker for the fact that women in the film appear exclusively as wives rather than as workers and militants in their own right. In one of the most incisive comments, Georges Lièvremont, a worker interviewed in *À bientôt j'espère*, proclaims, "I believe that, frankly, Chris is a romantic. He has seen the workers and the union romantically." For Lièvremont, if Marker contrasted the debilitating working conditions at Rhodiaceta with the liberating experience of the strike, he conjured away the pragmatic and unromantic daily labor of organization.

Marker's response to the group, also captured on tape, is worth citing at length:

> We have also carried out a parallel activity, putting cameras and tape recorders into the hands of young militants, led by a hypothesis that is still evident to me: that we will always be at best well-intentioned explorers, more or less friendly, but from the outside; and that, as with its liberation, the cinematic representation and expression of the working class will be its own work. With audiovisual equipment in hand, workers themselves will show us films about the working class, about what it is to go on strike, about the inside of a factory. We could be ten thousand times more crafty, and less romantic, and still be limited by the cinematographic reality that one experiences all the time, whether among penguins or workers, that, of course, one can only ever really express what one lives.[29]

28. The recording is included in ISKRA's *Groupes Medvedkine* DVD collection, and partly transcribed in ISKRA, pp. 20–21.

29. This seemingly enigmatic statement refers to *Les Pingouins*, a film that Mario Marret made in Antarctica, which won the Cannes prize for best nature documentary in 1954. Noted in Muel, "Les riches heures du groupe Medvedkine," p. 19, and Lupton, *Chris Marker*, p. 229.

CCPPO Film Workshop (left to right): Jacques Loiseleux, Henri Traforetti, Georges Binetruy, and Bruno Muel. © ISKRA.

The experience of the film's rejection by the very people for whom it was intended instigated the second phase of Marker's involvement in Besançon. Indeed, Marker titles the sound recording *La Charnière*, or "the hinge point." While filming *À bientôt j'espère*, Marker and SLON, with the encouragement of Cèbe, began teaching basic film technique to any interested workers. Following the perceived failure of *À bientôt j'espère*, this "parallel activity" was formalized as the Besançon Medvedkin Group. Based out of the CCPPO, which was transformed into a film workshop complete with an Atlas editing table brought in from Paris, SLON provided handheld 16mm cameras and tape recorders, and began to make films in collaboration with the workers. Set against the individualism and unilateralism of culture in bourgeois society, this militant cinema would follow a collective and nonhierarchical model of production, seeking to abolish the separation between expert and amateur, between producer and consumer, a gambit that would last almost five years in Besançon before spreading to a Peugeot factory in Sochaux-Montbéliard.

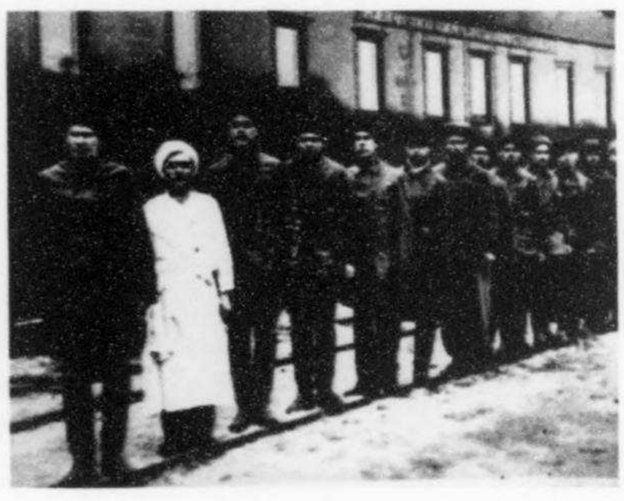
Train of Revolution, Train of History

In forming a collective, the workers at Rhodiaceta adopted the name of the Russian filmmaker Alexander Medvedkin, who by the 1960s was almost totally unknown outside of the Soviet Union. In order to account for this gesture of solidarity across national, political, and generational divides, it is necessary to outline Medvedkin's project in the early 1930s and the impact that it had on Marker's thinking at the time of his engagement in Besançon. It was, in fact, Marker's oblique and partial confrontation with the legacy of Soviet factography, as filtered through Medvedkin's project, that provided the impetus for the filmmaker to place the camera in the hands of those he had sought to represent.

In 1961, at a film festival in Brussels, Marker saw Medvedkin's *Happiness* (*Schastye;* 1935), and described it as "a superb film as beautiful as Eisenstein's, as popular as Mussorgsky's music, deeply moving. . . . Where was the author? Dead? Alive?"[30] Struck by this comedy on the difficult adjustment of an incompetent yet sympathetic peasant to his new life as a collective farmer, a film whose very emphasis on satire seemed to exceed the bounds of Socialist Realism, Marker

30. Anne Philipe, "Medvedkine, tu connais? Interview avec Slon et Chris Maker," *Le Monde* (December 2, 1971), p. 17. Translated in Nora M. Alter, *Chris Marker* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), pp. 139–44.

searched mostly in vain for any information on Medvedkin. In his research, he eventually came across *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (1960) by Jay Leyda, an American filmmaker and historian who had studied with Eisenstein in the 1930s.[31] Leyda's book, in under two pages, provided one of the only English-language accounts of Medvedkin's *kino-poezd*, or ciné-train, which consisted of three train carriages transformed into a film-production studio complete with projection room and living quarters.[32] Leyda concisely describes the "several sided task" of Medvedkin's "self-contained film studio" as they traveled the Soviet Union in 1932 under the orders of the Central Committee with the aim of making agitational films for and with local populations:



Alexander Medvedkin and the ciné-train team. 1932. © Les Films de l'Astrophore.

> In addition to making instructional films to help local problems, for example, overcoming winter conditions to speed up freight shipments, the film crew was able to produce critical films on local conditions (bureaucracy, inefficiency, nepotism, etc.) that they or the local political workers judged to require their ungentle attention. The prime audience for these, as for the instructional films, was the local one, who would greet these barbed film vaudevilles with welcome laughs and blushes.[33]

In 1971, Marker writes that these pages were a dream "for a pseudo-director lost in the jungle where worldly professionalism and corporatism join in preventing the cinema from falling into the hands of the people."[34] For many years, Marker had to be content with these few, mysterious, and tantalizing scraps of information. In November 1967, however, while still working on *À bientôt j'espère*, Marker attended the International Festival of Documentary Film in Leipzig and was introduced by Leyda to Medvedkin. This meeting sparked a close friendship that would last until Medvedkin's death in 1989, at the age of 89. Through hours of conversation and copious correspondence, culminating in a visit to Paris in

31. The extraordinary scope of Leyda's career is outlined in Annette Michelson, "Jay Leyda: 1910–1988," *Cinema Journal* 28, no. 1 (Autumn 1988), pp. 12–16.
32. According to Emma Widdis, the only monograph on Medvedkin until her own book from 2005 was in Russian and written during the Soviet period. Emma Widdis, *Alexander Medvedkin* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2005), p. 2.
33. Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 286–87.
34. Marker, "Le ciné-ours," *Image et Son* 255 (December 1971), p. 4.

1971, Medvedkin recounted the experience of the ciné-train to Marker, Cèbe, and, by proxy, to the workers in Besançon.[35]

Like Dziga Vertov, Medvedkin began his career on the Bolshevik agit-trains of the civil-war years (c. 1917–1922), which traveled the breadth of the future Soviet Union, visiting Red Army outposts, distributing propagandistic pamphlets, staging small exhibitions, and screening films.[36] As Richard Taylor notes, the film sections of the agit-trains had a twofold task: "first, to demonstrate in the provinces agit-films produced in the centre and, second, to supply newsreel and documentary material from the provinces to the centre."[37] Years later, amid the social, political, and productive transformations inaugurated by the rapid industrialization and collectivization of agriculture during Stalin's First Five Year Plan (1928–1932), Medvedkin became convinced of the necessity of reviving and reconceiving the agit-train as a means of revolutionizing the consciousness of a largely illiterate peasantry.[38] Medvedkin's train distinguished itself through its exclusive focus on film, which, because of its dynamism, its popular appeal, its potential for mass reproduction and distribution, and its silence (soliciting real-time interaction and discussion), was deemed ideally suited for the construction of the new Soviet collective subject.[39]

During its first year in 1932, Medvedkin's ciné-train traveled to mines, factories, and collective farms across the USSR and produced 72 films.[40] Filming at an incredible pace, Medvedkin saw his team as "cinematic Stakhanovites"—the Soviet term used for workers who over-fulfilled production targets—following the motto "film today and show it tomorrow."[41] Medvedkin's practice was committed not only

35. In 1971, while in Paris to make a film about the superiority of Soviet environmental policy, Medvedkin met with Marker, Cèbe, and other members of the Medvedkin Group. Marker interviewed Medvedkin at the Noisy-le-Sec train depot, and included this footage in *Le Train en marche* (1971), a film made to introduce SLON's French release of *Happiness*. Cèbe offers a short but remarkable account of his encounter with Medvedkin in Pol Cèbe, "Rencontre avec Medvedkine," *L'Avant-Scène Cinéma* 120 (December 1971), pp. 8–9. Selections of Marker and Medvedkin's letters were recently published for the first time in Russian in the journal *Kinovedcheskie zapiski* 49 (2000).

36. For an account of the genesis of the Soviet agit-trains, see Richard Taylor, "A Medium for the Masses: Agitation in the Soviet Civil War," *Soviet Studies* 22, no. 4 (April 1971), pp. 562–74. For purely pragmatic reasons, Vertov will unfortunately make only brief and refractive appearances in this paper. It will suffice here to note that Vertov was responsible for editing footage shot on the agit-trains, which he incorporated into his weekly newsreels, *Kino-Nedelya*, and later into his full-length films *Anniversary of the Revolution* (1919) and *History of the Civil War* (1921). Ibid., p. 568.

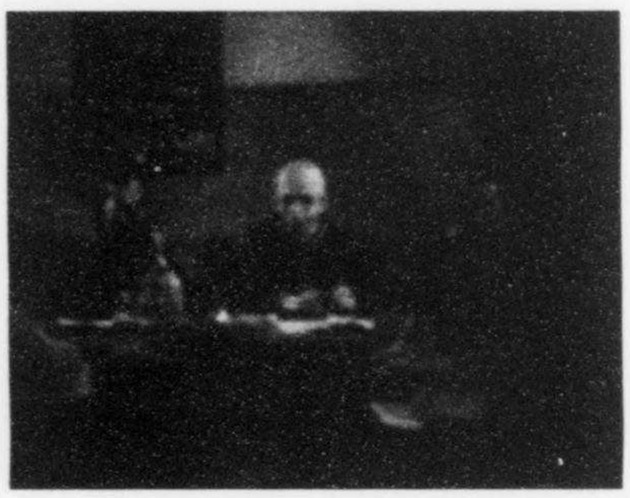
37. Ibid.

38. For an important account of the significance of "cultural revolution" during the First Five Year Plan, see Sheila Fitzpatrick, "Cultural Revolution as Class War," in *Cultural Revolution in Russia, 1928–1931*, ed. Sheila Fitzpatrick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), pp. 8–41.

39. Medvedkin's initial proposal to the Central Film Committee was vetoed, partially because of the administration's resistance to critical satire, leading him to directly petition the Party Central Committee, which agreed to fund the train and provide their assignments. See Stephen Crofts and Masha Enzensberger, "Medvedkin: Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion," *Screen* 19, no. 1 (1978), p. 73.

40. Widdis, *Alexander Medvedkin*, p. 24.

41. Ibid.



Medvedkin ciné-train. How Do You Live, Comrade Miner?
© *Les Films de l'Astrophore.*

to high production rates but also, unlike the centralized model of the civil-war agit-trains, to an ethos of geographical contingency: the subjects of the ciné-train's films were also their intended audience. His films attempted to record the conditions of production at a given site and to encourage hard work as much as to "shame" unproductive or wasteful labor. Presenting workers at a collective farm with both their shortcomings and positive counterexamples (often through segments filmed in neighboring collective farms), the reels singled out individual workers, often by name, with a stock intertitle declaiming, "Comrades, this cannot go on!" The emphasis on the veridical potential of the camera coexisted uneasily with satirical sequences acted out by the train's crew (illustrating productive or ideological deficiencies) and even with primitive forms of animation (a "camel of shame" exposes lazy workers to ridicule). For Medvedkin, this fragile tension between realism and vaudeville, between documentation and agitation, would be sublated in the overriding orientation of the films toward effecting maximal and verifiable changes in the social contexts filmed. Medvedkin claimed with pride that as a result of his screenings, "five collective farms fulfilled the Plan's targets for grain yield." With an evident sense of vindication, Medvedkin wrote in his diary that thanks to the ciné-train's work on one collective farm, ten *kulaks*, or wealthy peasants regarded as class enemies, had their property seized and were forcibly deported.[42] As Medvedkin later put it, this was cinema "acting as public prosecutor."[43]

Medvedkin's work during the ciné-train years is intimately bound up with the Soviet discourses of factography and operativism, which developed in tandem with the First Five Year Plan

42. Ibid., p. 28. For a discussion of the role of artists in "dekulakization," see Maria Gough, "Radical Tourism: Sergei Tret'iakov at the Communist Lighthouse," *October* 118 (Fall 2006), p. 162.
43. Medvedkin, quoted in Crofts and Enzensberger, "Medvedkin," p. 73.

and were given their strongest articulation by the writer and photographer Sergei Tret'iakov. The distance between the two figures is considerable: there is no documentation of any personal relationship between Tret'iakov and Medvedkin, and satire was as unthinkable to the former as it was obligatory to the latter. Nevertheless, they were engaged in parallel projects, both traveling to collective farms in the same years, driven by a need, acutely felt by a generation of Russian artists, to abandon representation for praxis and to make themselves useful in the process of Soviet construction. For Tret'iakov, factography was a practice that sought—whether in written or photographic form—the direct "inscription of facts," not, as with documentary, in order to capture an accurate image of the world, but as part of a commitment to transform it.[44] This latter aspect was described by Tret'iakov as the factographic principle of "operativism," defined as the abandonment of detached observation for an active participation in "the life of the material."[45] In Devin Fore's words, "'Operativity' was the term Tret'iakov used to designate a situational aesthetics that conceptualized representation not as an objective reflection of a static world, but as an operation that by definition intervenes in the context of the aesthetic act."[46] Like Tret'iakov, Medvedkin indissolubly linked "the demonstration of the fact" with "the activation of the spectator."[47] Indeed, both ultimately sought to hold up a transformative and coercive mirror to the people, to show them the facts of their daily existence, which, once reflected back to them, would provoke them to take their lives into their own hands and *change*. In this way, Medvedkin and Tret'iakov turned to the speed, reproducibility, and democratic accessibility of photography and film as means of realizing the avant-garde dream of a shift from spectatorial contemplation to political activation.

The factographic project was significantly driven by a commitment to deprofessionalization. For example, Medvedkin was the only member of his thirty-two-person team to possess any cinematographic experience, and Tret'iakov argued that an accumulation of photographs by any "shutter-clicking kid" (*fotomalchik*) would be preferable to the unique productions of professional artists.[48] Not simply a matter of increasing the rate of mimetic production, the "operativist" emphasis on deskilling and de-specialization stemmed from the conviction that representation was not "a unique individual skill" but rather "the prop-

44. My discussion here is indebted to the pathbreaking work of Maria Gough and Devin Fore on Tret'iakov and factography. See Gough, "Radical Tourism," and Devin Fore, "Introduction," *October* 118 (Fall 2006), pp. 3–10. The words "inscription of facts" are Fore's and aptly echo Soviet critic Osip Brik's phrase "the fixation and montage of fact." See Leah Dickerman, "The Fact and the Photograph," *October* 118 (Fall 2006), p. 134, and Natasha Kurchanova, "Osip Brik and the Politics of the Avant-Garde," *October* 134 (Fall 2010), p. 64.

45. Sergei Tret'iakov, "The Writer and the Socialist Village," *October* 118 (Fall 2006), p. 69.

46. Devin Fore, "The Operative Word in Soviet Factography," *October* 118 (Fall 2006), p. 105.

47. In Tret'iakov's words, "capturing the fact is a task of utmost importance in the country that has presented its citizens with the long, difficult and joyous task of completely restructuring everyday life." Tret'iakov, "Our Cinema," *October* 118 (Fall 2006), p. 35.

48. Widdis, *Alexander Medvedkin*, p. 23. Tret'iakov, quoted in Gough, "Radical Tourism," p. 168.

Medvedkin and Cèbe, 1971. © ISKRA.

erty of public education."[49] As cultural production dissolved itself as a specialized métier and assumed a utilitarian role in shaping consciousness, it would become, in Tret'iakov's words, "an actual weapon in the revolutionary, operative activity of the huge masses who have been summoned to socialist construction."[50] Likewise, Medvedkin argued, "Cinema can be not only a weapon 'in general' but a very real weapon in the Party cells, in concrete areas of socialist construction."[51]

"The ciné-train is somewhat of a myth for us—train of revolution, train of history," Marker states in *Le Train en marche*, a short film made during Medvedkin's 1971 visit to Paris, "but the biggest mistake would be to believe that it had come to a halt."[52] That same year, in an interview about the significance of Medvedkin's project for his own, Marker claimed,

> The train was not bringing art to the people; its function was to incite the people to intervene in matters with which they were concerned. . . . The experience remains unique. The Medvedkin team is alone to have achieved this type of instantaneous invention of a film, with people associated with its creation and interested in its immediate utilization because it was dealing with problems that had to be solved immediately.[53]

Medvedkin, for his part, was happy to emphasize the aspects of his project that were most enthusiastically received by the militants in the West, writing, "I am very glad that our experience has proved useful to French film-makers and has not disappeared without a trace. . . . Having long choked on the bitterness of defeat, I have now tasted the unfamiliar bitterness of victory."[54] Indeed, in his correspondence with Pol Cèbe—who signed each letter "Medvedkinement" rather than "*amicalement*"—Medvedkin encouraged the group, and also emphasized to them the power of film to intercede in local concerns: "To see yourself, your friends, your street on screen is always a disconcerting event in the life of anyone. In our time we realized this quickly, and used it as the most powerful lever in the search for genres of active political cinema."[55] The degree of Medvedkin's influ-

49. Tret'iakov, "The Writer and the Socialist Village," p. 69.
50. Ibid.
51. Medvedkin, quoted in Widdis, *Alexander Medvedkin*, p. 22.
52. Marker, quoted and translated in Alter, *Chris Marker*, p. 86.
53. Marker, quoted in ibid., p. 141.
54. Medvedkin, quoted in Crofts and Enzensberger, "Medvedkin," p. 75.
55. Widdis, *Alexander Medvedkin*, p. 122.

ence at Rhodiaceta is already manifest in Cèbe's defense of Marker after the first screening of *À bientôt j'espère,* recorded in *La Charnière.* Indeed, Cèbe explicitly evokes the factographic tropes of de-professionalization and the pervasive description of cinema as a "weapon": "Maybe you believe that the audiovisual language, like the written language, requires years of study, but we are convinced that this is not the case. . . . We have so many things to say and we have a new way to say it, a new medium, a new weapon."

That the coercive ciné-train of Medvedkin—a lifelong Stalinist and propagandist for the state that executed his former peers, including Meyerhold and Tret'iakov—could be read as a figure of cultural self-determination in the French 1960s involved a historical misprision of no small significance.[56] While factography, in the hands of Tret'iakov and Medvedkin, had been developed as a means of reconciling collective farmers to their new productive conditions, the French filmmakers and workers seized upon these techniques to challenge the colonization of everyday life by the logic of production. It was, therefore, precisely the mythic distance separating the reception of Medvedkin from the realities of state socialism that permitted the recovery of the radical kernel of the Soviet factographic project, resistant to the Stalinist call for idealizing images of "life as it is becoming, rather than life as it is."[57] For the Medvedkin Group, factography and operativism, as filtered through a partial understanding of a unique moment in Medvedkin's work, were seized upon for the principles of deprofessionalization, situational contingency, the fixation of the fact, simultaneous collective production and reception, and a conception of cinema as a dialogic relation between the film and the filmed.[58] In the ciné-train, Marker glimpsed the possibility of exceeding the role of "well-intentioned explorer," and to move from a cinema of *auteurism* to one of *autogestion.*

Class of Struggle

The first collective film by the Besançon Medvedkin Group is *Classe de lutte,* begun during the wildcat strikes and occupations of May 1968. The title—a rever-

56. In 1993 Marker released *The Last Bolshevik,* a film that explores Medvedkin's life as a means of grappling with the history of Russian Communism from the revolutionary élan of October 1917 to the cultural and political repression under Stalin to *perestroika.* The film, in many ways, also represents Marker's coming to terms with the excessive naïveté of the initial French reception of Medvedkin's project and with the place of the USSR within the European left's imaginary.

57. On the resistant dimensions of factography, see Gough, "Radical Tourism." A strong distinction between Marker's mythic Medvedkin and the historical Medvedkin is developed in Kristian Feigelson, "Regards Croisés Est/Ouest: L'histoire revisitée au cinéma (Medvedkine/Marker)," *Théorème* 6 (2002), pp. 119–31. This description of Socialist Realism is borrowed from Sheila Fitzpatrick, *Everyday Stalinism: Ordinary Life in Extraordinary Times: Soviet Russia in the 1930s* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 9, quoted in Gough, "Radical Tourism," p. 174.

58. Benjamin Buchloh describes factography as instantiating "systems of representation/production/distribution which would recognize the collective participation in the actual processes of production of social wealth, systems which, like architecture in the past or cinema in the present, had established conditions of *simultaneous collective reception.*" Benjamin H. D. Buchloh, "From Faktura to Factography," *October* 30 (Autumn 1984), p. 94.

Medvedkin Group.
Classe de lutte.
1968–69. © ISKRA

sal of "lutte de classe" (class struggle) with dual implications of a pedagogy of struggle and of a class defined by its struggles—was, according to Cèbe, itself a critique of representation, forgoing "enormous fresco[es] on the class struggle" for a factographic focus on local concerns.[59] The group, from the beginning, associated filmmaking with the daily labor of militant organization and the communal structure of a strike committee. Thus, the credits list in alphabetical order forty-five *auteurs*, including the Besançon worker-cinematographers (among them, subjects of *À bientôt j'espère* such as Lièvremont, Maurivard, and Henri Traforetti), Marker, Marret, the SLON crew (including soundman Bonfanti and cinematographer Lhomme), and several fellow travelers who did not participate directly in the film's production (Juliet Berto, Godard, and Ivens, for example). Set apart in the credits, and evidently responsible for most of the film's production, are the names of Géo Binetruy, Pol Cèbe, Bruno Muel, and the editor Simone Nedjma Scialom.[60]

Classe de lutte, like *À bientôt j'espère*, focuses on the subjective transformation of a single figure as a metonym for wider changes in class consciousness. The film follows Suzanne Zedet, a young worker at the Yema watch factory in Besançon. She is introduced in footage shot in December 1967 for *À bientôt j'espère*, expressing her desire to become a militant, but being told by her husband that it would put unbearable strain on their already difficult family life. Five months later, Zedet has joined the CGT and is filmed in front of a crowd delivering an agitational speech in favor of a strike. *Classe de lutte*, therefore, seeks to rectify the major—and legitimate—critiques of *À bientôt j'espère*, namely, its romanticism, its abstraction of quotidian struggle, and, most significantly, its occlusion of the role of women in the militant syndicalist movement. Over a montage of images of timepieces (including Dalí's melting clocks), a voice-over states that Besançon produces a third of all French watches, and that thirty-two percent of the city's active working population is composed of women: "This, without humor, translates thusly: precision work requires an agile and docile hand, so the bosses of the clock factories make an appeal to little hands. But, more and more, these little hands hold large banners." The film cuts from shots

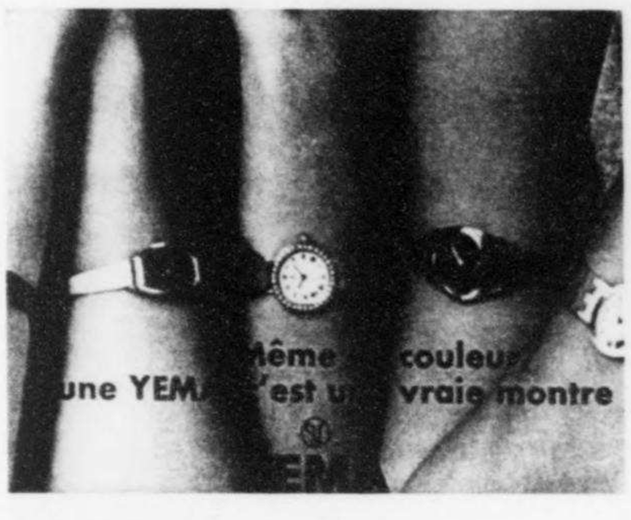
59. Pol Cèbe, "Le Groupe Medvedkine," *Cinéma* 151 (December 1970), p. 94.

60. Marker's role in the production of the Medvedkin Group films tends to be overstated in the literature, scant as it still is. It is important to clarify that although he worked closely with the collective following its foundation, Marker was no more central a participant than any of the Rhodiaceta worker-cinematographers or members of SLON. Bruno Muel attests that Cèbe was the primary editor of the Group's films, with Scialom's assistance for *Classe de lutte*. Muel, "Les riches heures du groupe Medvedkin," p. 23.

of women's hands in a magazine advertisement for Yema watches, to a close-up of Zedet's hand, to the hands of a woman waving a flag in a protest. Echoing Marker's juxtaposition of the exploited hands and the liberated hands in *À bientôt j'espère,* this montage links with striking visual economy the role of women in the circuits of consumption and production.

Throughout the film, the potential of montage to link disparate images is employed to emphasize the indivisibility of economic, political, domestic, and cultural concerns in Zedet's lived experience. In one significant sequence regarding the day-to-day labor that Zedet undertakes as a union militant to break out of what she calls the "individualism" imposed upon workers, images of family life, work, and activism are spliced together, accompanied by a Spanish psychedelic rock song. The sequence cuts rapidly between shots of Zedet speaking to crowds, writing tracts, and establishing lines of communication among her co-workers; between posters advertising a screening of Ivens's *Terre d'Espagne* "in solidarity with the Spanish people" and entreaties to "Help Vietnam"; between Zedet's daily commute to the Yema factory and the family life of her husband and her child. The montage and the song end with Zedet typing in her family home, with a poster for Brecht's *Homme pour Homme* and photos of her child on the wall, when a voice off-camera asks her what she's doing. She smiles and replies, "*Bien, je milite!*"

One focal point for the politics of cinema in *Classe de lutte* is therefore the technical capacity of montage to integrate dialetically the alienated shards of the lifeworld. Just as important, however, is the Medvedkin Group's operativist emphasis on the potential of the camera not simply to record a preexisting, extra-cinematic reality but to participate in its transformation. In the opening scene of *Classe*



Medvedkin Group.
Classe de lutte.
1968–69. © ISKRA.

Top two images: Medvedkin Group. Classe de lutte. *1968-69.* © *ISKRA.*
Bottom image: Marker and Marret. À bientôt j'espère. *1967–68.* © *ISKRA.*

de lutte, Zedet walks into the CCPPO, past an array of placards and banners, and into a back room where an editor (most likely Scialom) works on an Atlas 16mm film-editing table under a poster of Fidel Castro. The editor is pictured splicing an interview with Zedet together with a scene of crowds of women in the demonstrations of May. Zedet watches her flickering image on the screen with evident interest and pleasure. A quick cut reveals Géo Binetruy filming the two women with a handheld camera. Cutting back to Binetruy's camera, the shot pans from the editing table to a manifesto painted on the wall of the room, framed like an intertitle: "Cinema is not magic. It's a technique and a science. A technique born of a science and put to the service of a will: the will that the workers have to liberate themselves." *Classe de lutte* begins with a self-reflexive image of its own simultaneous collective production and reception.

Effectively, the central subject of the Medvedkin Group's film is the operative entry of cinema itself into the events and lives that the film sought to document. In this way, the films made by the Rhodiaceta worker-cinematographers radically expand upon the critique of documentary objectivity developed by Marker since *Le Joli Mai* (1963). In this film, Marker and his collaborator Lhomme exploited new developments in lightweight portable film equipment (the handheld 16mm camera) in order to capture the city of Paris and its inhabitants in the summer of 1962, in the wake of the massacre at Charonne and the signing of the Évian peace accord. Against documentary film's aspiration to capture a reality unaffected by its observation, *Le Joli Mai* emphasizes the filmic apparatus's ineluctable mediation of social reality by

employing disjunctive montage, critical voice-overs, and estranging camerawork.[61] Likewise, *À bientôt j'espère* programmatically makes manifest the social dynamic between the filmmakers and the filmed subjects—for example, when a Rhodiaceta employee being interviewed in his kitchen gets up to go to work and awkwardly shakes hands with each member of the crew behind the camera.

In contrast to *Le Joli Mai*, however, *À bientôt j'espère* is cut through with a degree of authorial self-effacement, with Marker and Marret simplifying the disjunctive quality of montage and largely reneging on the critical relationship of commentary to image. In a sense, the film's willful asceticism before the task of representing the struggles at Rhodiaceta evinces Marker's confrontation with the limits of the "cinematographic reality" subtending the practice of documentary: the inevitable distance inscribed by the camera between the subject and the object of representation. Conversely, the pervasive reflexivity of *Classe de lutte* is less a modernist form of representation critique, and more a shift parallel to the one described by Tret'iakov from journalism to operativism: "Working in this way means that you can't set yourself apart, without accountability, from the object of labor. You can't just observe the object. Instead, by constant work with it, you have to become organically connected with the object."[62] Effectively, the labor of the Medvedkin Group represents the attempt to forge just such an "operative relation," and to accede from detached representation to "participation in the life of the material itself."[63]

The group systematically seeks to register the consequences of this operational shift within the structure of the film itself, whether by reflecting on the processes of cinematic production and reception, or by investigating the effects of this shift on the order of subjectivity. In the latter mode, the film ends not with the disillusionment of June 1968's return to order, but with the liberatory consequences felt by its participants in the *longue durée*. Zedet's union activity during May results in a significant pay cut, a demotion, and warnings from the directorate to keep politics and work separate—though, of course, the entire May movement was based on the critique of such false distinctions. Zedet emphasizes, however, that concurrently with her political struggle she has won a new relationship to the field of culture. During an interview in the CCPPO, in front of a poster of Picasso's *Portrait of Sylvette David in a Green Armchair* (1954), Cèbe, offscreen, suggests, "Tell me about Picasso." Zedet

61. Although Marker acerbically referred to *cinéma vérité* as "*ciné ma verité*" (*ciné* my truth), *Le Joli Mai* could productively be compared to contemporaneous efforts to turn "the ethnographic gaze back upon the *métropole* at the moment of decolonization," as Tom McDonough describes Jean Rouch and Edgar Morin's *Chronique d'un été* (1961). McDonough offers a compelling account of *Chronique d'un été* and of the French *cinéma vérité* project more generally from the point of view of a comparison with the cinema of Guy Debord. Tom McDonough, "Calling from the Inside: Filmic Topologies of the Everyday," *Grey Room* 26 (Winter 2007), p. 7. Citing Marker's pun, Lupton also usefully distinguishes *Le Joli Mai* from *cinéma vérité*, specifically from Rouch and Morin's project, in Lupton, *Chris Marker*, p. 84.

62. Tret'iakov, "The Writer and the Socialist Village," p. 68.

63. Ibid., p. 69.

Medvedkin Group.
Classe de lutte.
1968–69. © ISKRA.

cites Jacques Prévert's poem "La Lanterne Magique de Picasso" (1944), and states that she discovered culture at the same moment that she discovered the workers' movement. "Workers believe," she contends, "that poetry or painting are not for them, we believe that it is reserved for the bourgeoisie." But, she continues, her confrontation with Picasso and Prévert proved to her that poetry and art had a social meaning that bore directly upon her own experience. She then argues that practical struggles such as the union's fight for higher wages must be paired with cultural struggle, and that a poem by Paul Éluard is just as important as a discourse on politics. The interview, and the film, ends with Zedet recounting the significance of her discovery of Maxim Gorky's *Mother* in the factory library run by Cèbe.[64]

Potential Consciousness

> *Vertov, of all of them, he was the closest to you [Medvedkin] in terms of ambition and sincerity. You would be endlessly compared to each other and sometimes opposed. "Isn't that so, Mr. Godard?" You fought on the same propaganda fronts, you had the same enemies, which should be a good bond, you even once lived in the same building. . . . And yet all testimonies confirm that in your whole lives you barely exchanged a few words.*
>
> —Chris Marker, *Le tombeau d'Alexandre (The Last Bolshevik)*, 1993

Of course, the Medvedkin Group was not alone in its claim for the relevance of Soviet cinema in the French 1960s. In early 1969, following years of indifference to Soviet film on the part of the circle orbiting the journal *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Jean-Luc Godard founded his own experiment in collective agitational filmmaking and adopted the name of the filmmaker Dziga Vertov.[65] Vertov, who had famously proclaimed the death of cinematography in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution, developed a vast arsenal of "intricate camera pyrotechnics," in Leyda's words, as a means of

64. One should pause to note, if only in passing, the extreme anachronism of the set of coordinates put forward by the Medvedkin Group as a historically available heritage for oppositional culture in the late 1960s: the Communists Picasso and Éluard, the Prévert of the Popular Front, the canonical text of Socialist Realist literature, and the ciné-train of a Soviet octogenarian.

65. *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s relationship to Soviet film is complex and cannot adequately be dealt with here. However, partly because of the journal's Oedipal struggle with Georges Sadoul's so-called Stalinist criticism, it took until *Cahiers du Cinéma*'s issues on Eisenstein, published between April 1969 and February 1971, for the editors to explicitly reflect upon Soviet cinematic experiments. See Emilie Bickerton, *A Short History of* Cahiers du Cinéma (London: Verso Books, 2009), pp. 26, 65–66.

remaking vision and, indeed, consciousness itself through the camera—just as society would be remade through Communism.[66] Vertov, therefore, emblematized for Godard the synthesis of formal and political revolution, and provided a cinematic model with which to counter Marker's claim on the legacy of Medvedkin.

With the founding of the Dziga Vertov Group, which was the culmination of a period of increasingly explicit politicization (evident in the transition from *La Chinoise* and *Week-End* [1967] to *Le Gai Savoir* and *Un film comme les autres* [1968]), Godard sought to jettison the "bourgeois" auto-critique of cinema for a committed cinematic critique of society. Toward this end, he partnered with the journalist and student militant Jean-Pierre Gorin (editor, with Robert Linhart, Jacques-Alain Miller, and Jacques Rancière, of the journal *Cahiers Marxistes-Léninistes*) and undertook a collaborative project lasting until 1972 to make "political cinema politically."[67] For Godard, the relationship with Gorin was founded on a productive contradiction between the activist seeking new forms of communication and the jaded filmmaker seeking to break out of avant-garde hermeticism: "one wanted to make cinema, the other wanted to leave it." Their project was "to try to make a new unity of these two opposites, according to a Marxist concept."[68] Godard explains that the rupture of May '68 revealed to him that his cinematographic work up to that point had merely represented an "individual revolt" and that it was necessary to "link" himself "to big social movements."[69] However, he critiqued the "utopia" of an "egalitarian" model of production, and retained creative control over the group's films.[70]

Over the course of the next four years, the Vertov Group produced eight films committed to expedient production and diffusion in militant circles for purposes agitational and educational. The first two films, *British Sounds/See You at Mao*, an English-language film on British political struggles, and *Pravda*, filmed in Prague, were made in 1969 with Jean-Henri Roger, a Marseillais militant, and the following four films (*Le Vent d'est, Luttes en Italie,* the unreleased film *Jusqu'à la victoire,* and *Vladimir et Rosa*) were conceived and filmed with Gorin between 1969 and 1971. The final film made in collaboration with Gorin, *Tout va bien* (1972; accompanied that year by a pendant, *Letter to Jane*), is a comparatively big-budget film starring Yves Montand and Jane Fonda as bourgeois intellectuals (a filmmaker and a journalist, respectively) whose attempts to ally themselves with the working class end in disillusionment. In this way, the film allegorizes the perceived failure of the Vertov Group's model of political cinema during the disappointments of the post-'68 years, a failure that Godard would work through for the rest of his career.

66. See Dziga Vertov, "WE: Variant of a Manifesto," in *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 7. Leyda, *Kino*, p. 251. On Vertov's "language of cinema," see Michelson, "From Magician to Epistemologist: Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*," in *The Essential Cinema*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: New York University Press, 1975), pp. 95–111, and more recently, Malcolm Turvey, "City Symphony and *Man with a Movie Camera*," in *The Filming of Modern Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 135–61.
67. Jean-Luc Godard, "Le Groupe 'Dziga Vertov,'" *Cinéma* 151 (December 1970), p. 82.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid., p. 83.
70. Ibid., pp. 86–87.

In a rare acknowledgement, Godard credits Marker's *ciné-tracts*, produced in May '68, as having provided the initial model for the Vertov Group:

> The *ciné-tracts* are Chris Marker's idea. The video camera and all these short films, it was a simple and cheap means to make political cinema for a *section d'entreprise* or an action-committee. . . . For, in the same way as in the classroom, we re-write the films with students, and likewise I believe we must make films with those who watch them.[71]

With the Vertov Group's goal to remake the fundamental relations of cinematic production and reception, Godard faced a set of contradictions similar to those that Marker encountered in Besançon: how could cinema construct an image of "the people" that would exceed mere documentation? How could cinema actively participate in forming a collectivity? And what historical value might the repertoire of avant-garde tactics in film—and the modernist paradigm of self-reflexivity itself—still possess in the face of the exigencies of class struggle?

The profound difference between the positions that the two filmmakers would develop in response to these questions can already be glimpsed in an interview given by Godard in the months following the March 1967 strikes at Rhodiaceta. Here, Godard speaks candidly of the unbridgeable separation between the struggles of the proletariat and the specific demands of the cinematic medium, and implicitly cites Marker's work at Rhodiaceta as a counterexample:

> [T]he one movie that really ought to have been made in France this year—on this point [Philippe] Sollers and I are in complete agreement—is a movie on the strikes at Rhodiaceta. . . . The thing is, once again, the men who know film can't speak the language of strikes and the men who know strikes are better at talking Oury than Resnais or Barnett. . . . If it were made by a movie-maker, it wouldn't be the movie that should have been made. And if it were made by the workers themselves—who, from a technical point of view, could very well make it, if someone gave them a camera and a guy to help them out a bit—it still wouldn't give as accurate a picture of them, from the cultural point of view, as the one they give when they're on the picket-lines. That's where the gap lies.[72]

71. Jean-Paul Fargier and Bernard Sizaire, "Deux Heures avec Jean-Luc Godard," *Tribune Socialiste* 396 (January 23, 1969), p. 18, reprinted in Godard, *Jean-Luc Godard par Jean-Luc Godard*, ed. Alain Bergala (Paris: Editions de l'Etoile, 1985), p. 332.

72. Godard, "Struggle on Two Fronts: A Conversation with Jean-Luc Godard," *Film Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (Winter 1968–Winter 1969), pp. 21–22. Although the Medvedkin Group would not be founded until six months after this interview was first published in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in October 1967, it is almost inconceivable that Godard would not have known of Marker's involvement at Rhodiaceta. Not only had the CCPPO screened *La Chinoise*, but the premiere of *Loin du Vietnam*, to which Godard contributed a sequence, was held in Besançon in October 1967 while Marker was filming *À bientôt j'espère*. Further, his credit in *Classe de lutte* indicates a period of rapprochement or mutual regard between the two directors—one that would end or at least be put under strain with the foundation of the Groupe Dziga Vertov.

Godard identifies a "gap" between the forms of expression proper to the filmmaker and to the working class. The highly specialized language of the cinema is profoundly alien to that of the factory, and a film on the strikes would risk reifying or distorting the class struggle. Conversely, those who speak the "language of strikes" lack the training and fluency to translate the pressing issues of a labor dispute onto celluloid, and were they to try, they would risk falsifying their own experience in the process.

The strategies that Godard deployed in the Vertov Group to address this gap were developed in a dialogical relation with Marker's work, one just as frequently disavowed as stated explicitly. While in January 1969 he affirms the influence of Marker's *ciné-tracts*, in the Vertov Group film *Pravda*, filmed in Prague during March 1969, Godard critiques Marker's involvement at Rhodiaceta. Reading a fictional letter from Lenin to Rosa Luxemburg, a voice-over intones,

> Like Delacroix in Algiers or Chris Marker in the strike-torn factories of Rhodiaceta. The *New York Times* and *Le Monde* call it news. And I agree with you, Rosa, that it isn't enough. Why? Because it's only the knowledge perceived by our senses. Now one has to make the effort to rise above this perceptual knowledge. One needs to struggle to transform it into rational knowledge.[73]

With the conversation between Lenin and Luxemburg, Godard formulates his cinematic opposition to Marker's project through an allegorical reconciliation of two historically opposed forms of communism: where Luxemburg stands for the affirmation of revolutionary creativity from below, Lenin represents its formalization in the advanced "scientific" theory and centralized power of the party apparatus. Concretizing his earlier stance on the fissure between the working class and the artist/intellectual, Godard charges Marker with an exoticism of the proletarian other and with naive pretensions to documentary realism.[74] By rephrasing the pedagogical metaphor of the *ciné-tract* cited above, Godard argues that the task of militant cinema would be to translate the working class's primary or phenomenological experience of their social world into rational knowledge of social contradiction. In this way, Godard imagines a Leninist intellectual vanguard theoretically prior to its fall into disciplinary bureaucracy, a dialectical materialism with an organic connection to the working class.[75] For his part, Marker recalled decades later his desire to produce a film consisting of an hourlong *plan fixe* of Godard and Cèbe sitting in silence across a

73. Dialogue translated in James Roy MacBean, "Godard and the Dziga Vertov Group: Film and Dialectics," *Film Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (Autumn 1972), pp. 35–36.

74. MacBean summarizes Godard's view of the difference between his and Marker's projects in this way, "Godard and Gorin have repeatedly emphasized that unlike other militant film groups such as . . . Chris Marker's SLON . . the Dziga Vertov Group rejects the 'reflection of reality' notion of the cinema and therefore refuses the 'go out and get footage' approach . . . which invariably emphasizes the 'you are there' immediacy quality of events at the expense of a thorough analysis of the causes, effects, relations and contradictions of events." MacBean, "Godard and the Dziga Vertov Group," p. 34.

75. Indeed, *Pravda* was conceived as a critique of both the so-called "revisionism" of the Prague Spring and of Moscow's bureaucratic Communism. See ibid., p. 36.

table from each other. This film, in Marker's words, would capture "the first time in his life Godard laid eyes on a worker," and picture the polarization between the intellectual and the worker reinforced by the Vertov Group.[76] More than simply anecdotal relics of a cinematographic rivalry, these mutual critiques delineate the rift separating the Medvedkin Group from the Vertov Group, drawn along the division of competences structuring the field of culture in class society.

Effectively, the determining question of the Vertov Group films was how to establish solidarity with the working class without reneging on the highly differentiated form of epistemological critique developed by avant-garde film. Godard's militant films insistently take as their point of departure the repertoire of formal tactics that he had developed over the course of the previous decade, namely those of "narrative intransitivity, estrangement, foregrounding, multiple diegesis, aperture, unpleasure, reality," as enumerated by Peter Wollen in 1972.[77] However, these strategies do not remain unaltered by the demands of militancy; rather, in the Vertov Group films, each is systematically imbued with overt political signification. For example, the opening shot of *British Sounds* (1969) references the famous eight-minute continuous tracking shot of a traffic jam from *Week-End*, soundtracked with deafening car horns and ending with mutilated bodies strewn across the road. *British Sounds,* conversely, opens with a ten-minute continuous tracking shot of the production line in a British auto-manufacturing plant, accompanied by screeching mechanical sounds and a voiceover reading passages by Marx on the alienation of labor. Regarding the extreme and unrelenting volume of the factory sound, Godard stated, "The workers have to listen to that sound all day, every day, for weeks, months, and years, but bourgeois audiences can't stand to listen to it for more than a few seconds."[78] Whereas the traffic jam in *Week-End* mapped the demolition of cinematic convention onto the apocalyptic decrepitude of consumer society, *British Sounds* associates the camera with the revelation of the conditions of production under advanced industrial capitalism.

Likewise, from the intertitles of *Vivre sa vie* (1962) to the black screen of *Le Gai Savoir* (1968) Godard increasingly explored the use of blank sequences—the interstitial space between shots—that no longer served a merely grammatical role as cinematic "punctuation marks" (transitioning between sequences and expressing the passage of time), but that dialectically engaged with cinematic structure, as Noël Burch argues.[79] For Gilles Deleuze, following Burch, this practice severed montage from its traditional role of establishing rational linkages and sensory-motor continuity, and

76. Marker, quoted in Min Lee, "Red Skies: Joining Forces with the Militant Collective SLON," *Film Comment* 39, no. 4 (July–August 2003), p. 39. Marker's scenario is complicated by an anecdote related by Bruno Muel, who recalls Cèbe's account of occasional dinners with Godard in Paris, which would usually be spent in amicable silence. Muel, "Les riches heures du groupe Medvedkine," p. 22.

77. Peter Wollen, "Counter Cinema: *Vent d'Est*," *Afterimage* 4 (Autumn 1972), p. 6.

78. Godard, quoted in Richard Brody, *Everything Is Cinema: The Working Life of Jean-Luc Godard* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008), p. 345.

79. Burch writes, "The absence of an image on the screen traditionally constitutes a simple 'punctuation mark' used to 'signify' the passage of time in the same way a dissolve does." Conversely, in Godard's use of the blank, "the opposition of an image and its absence" assumes a dialectical role as "an essential structural element." Noël Burch, *Theory of Film Practice*, trans. Helen R. Lane (New York: Praeger, 1973), pp. 56–7, 60.

instead emphasized the purely disjunctive value of the filmic interstice. In Deleuze's words, "the interval is set free, the interstice becomes irreducible and stands on its own."[80] In this view, the stretches of blank white or black screen, which display nothing but the distance between images, are the ciphers of materialist cinematic practice at its limits. However, in the Vertov Group films, this degree zero of cinema is recuperated as a source of positive and didactic meaning.[81] In a programmatic manner, Godard metaphorically reconceives the cinematic frame as a blackboard in a classroom, an empty surface upon which militant students will inscribe the theory of revolution. In *British Sounds*, over a scene of student activists making posters, a voice-over states:

> During the projection of an imperialist film, the screen sells the voice of the boss to the viewer, the voice caresses and beats into submission. During the projection of a revisionist film, the screen is the loudspeaker for a voice delegated by the people which is no longer the voice of the people. In silence people see their own disfigured face. During the projection of a militant film, the screen is no more than a blackboard, the wall of a school offering concrete analysis of a concrete situation. In front of that screen, the living soul of Marxism, the students criticize, struggle, and transform.

If the black frame of avant-garde film reduced the cinematic medium to an empty set, thus providing, in Deleuze's words, a "pedagogy of the image," in the Vertov Group films the black frame is metaphorized into the militant blackboard, providing a pedagogy of revolution.[82] "So, for once, this black screen really means something," as the narrator states in *Vladimir et Rosa* (1970).[83]

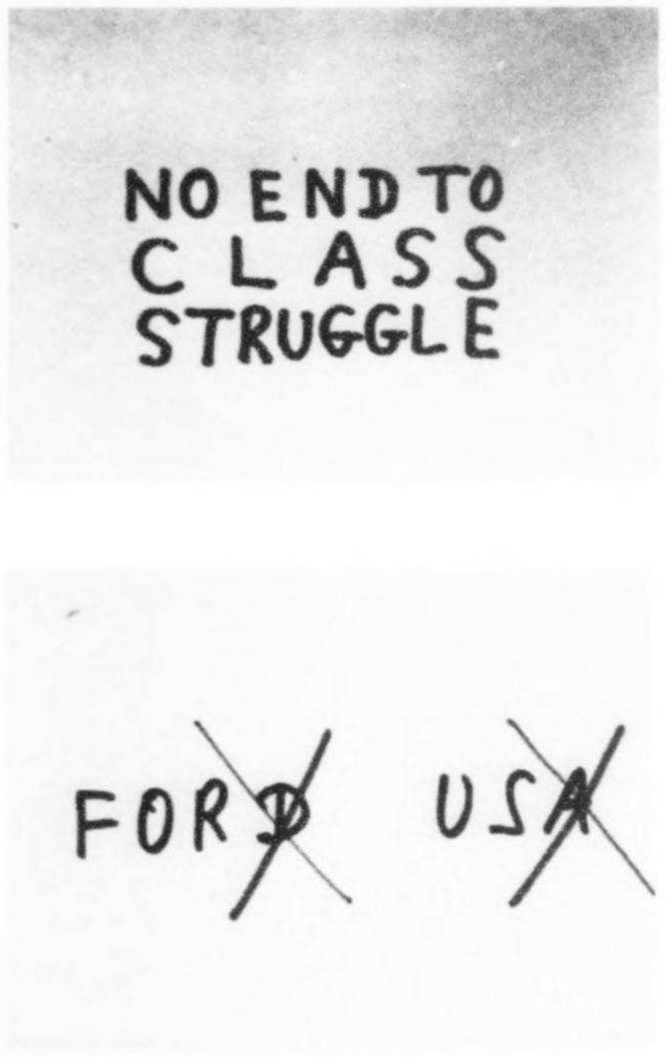
In the trope of the screen as the "living soul of Marxism," Godard makes a claim for the militant film as the structural correlate within culture of the vanguard party within politics. As explicitly stated in *Vladimir et Rosa*—"Ours is a vanguard party," the narrator proclaims—the Vertov Group adopts the Leninist posi-

80. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone, 1989), p. 277.

81. A similar shift could be traced from Godard's formula of coloristic materialism ("it's not blood, it's red") to the Maoist metaphorics of red in the Vertov Group films.

82. "There is a pedagogy of the image, especially in Godard . . . when the frame serves as an opaque surface of information, sometimes blurred by saturation, sometimes reduced to the empty set, to the white or black screen." Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1986), p. 13.

83. The black screen as a site of metaphorical projection is deployed differently in *Vladimir et Rosa*, a film about the distinction between theory and practice in cinema and in revolution that ostensibly portrays the famous 1969 trial of the "Chicago Eight." In a sequence regarding the severance of Black Panther militant Bobby Seale's trial after Seale is held in contempt of court, Godard employs the blank as a means of imaging Seale's very removal from visibility before the law. In a voice-over accompanying a black screen, Godard links the "black leader" of cinema with the "black leader" of the Black Power movement, arguing that this was "not a black image, but an image of a Black." Godard and Jean-Pierre Gorin, "*À Propos de* Vladimir et Rosa," in *Jean-Luc Godard: Documents*, ed. Nicole Brenez (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 2006), p. 163.



Dziga Vertov Group. British Sounds/See You at Mao. *1969.*

tion that the "role of the vanguard fighter can be fulfilled only by a party that is guided by an advanced theory."[84] As with the relationship established by Lenin between the working class and the advanced theoretical position of the party, Godard's militant films attempt to translate "the People's" experience into a form of rational knowledge—exceeding mere documentation for "a concrete analysis of a concrete situation"—and, at the same time, to teach that same "People" about their own experience. Godard aligns the formal innovations of "vanguard" cinema with the theoretical positions of the "vanguard" militant student *groupuscules*, whose tracts he appropriated for dialogue. But Godard found that the people never quite seemed to recognize themselves on the blackboard of militant cinema. The class consciousness (and the cinematic tastes) of the masses inevitably lagged behind the vanguard works presenting to them the rational knowledge of their own objective conditions; as Godard lamented in *Pravda*, "workers talk like Henry Ford, not the Black Panthers."

This delay or discrepancy between the proletariat in theory and the proletariat in practice—a gap that both the Vertov Group and the Medvedkin Group faced—has a long history in Marxist thought as the trope of "potential consciousness," stretching from Marx's *The Holy Family* (1844) to Lukács to the postwar French philosopher Lucien Goldmann. For Marx, the actually existing consciousness of the proletariat as a class had to be distinguished from the historical

84. Vladimir Lenin, "What Is to Be Done?," in *Essential Works of Lenin*, ed. Henry M. Christman (New York: Dover Publications, 1987), p. 70. Further, for Lenin, "By educating the workers' party, Marxism educates the vanguard of the proletariat which is capable of assuming power and of leading the whole people to socialism, of directing and organizing the new order, of being the teacher, guide, and leader of all the toiling and exploited in the task of building up their social life without the bourgeoisie and against the bourgeoisie." Lenin, "The State and Revolution," in *Essential Works of Lenin*, p. 288.

disposition of this same class: "it is not a question of what this or that proletarian, or even the whole proletariat, *regards* as its aim at the moment. It is a question of *what the proletariat is* and what, in accordance with this *being*, it will historically be compelled to do."[85] Following Marx, Lukács argues, "Class consciousness consists in fact of the appropriate and rational reactions 'imputed' (*zugerechnet*) to a particular typical position in the process of production. This consciousness is, therefore, neither the sum nor the average of what is thought or felt by the single individuals who make up the class."[86] To distinguish the "actual, psychological state of consciousness of the proletariat" (that is to say, a false consciousness mystified by ideology and dulled by suffering) from its potential consciousness (the historical awareness of its revolutionary mission) is, for Lukács, precisely the task of dialectical materialism.[87] Consequently, the promise of revolutionary change depends upon "closing the gap between the psychological consciousness and the imputed one," a synthesis achieved in the vanguard party.[88]

This is why, for Lucien Goldmann, a philosopher whose influence in the 1950s and 1960s weighed heavily on francophone Marxist artists and intellectuals such as Marcel Broodthaers and Guy Debord, "the *possible* is the fundamental category for understanding human history."[89] In his essay "The Revolt of the Arts and Letters in Advanced Civilizations," (1968) which discusses Godard's *Le Mépris* (*Contempt*) (1963) and Robbe-Grillet's *Jealousy* (1957), Goldmann offers a remarkably apposite metaphor for differentiating the Vertov and Medvedkin groups, arguing that the dialectical philosopher or historian is not concerned primarily with developing "the most exact and meticulous possible photography of the existing society" but rather with isolating "the potential (*virtuelles*) developing tendencies oriented toward overcoming that society."[90] Following Lukács, Goldmann's cultural criticism identifies the fundamental dialectic of class consciousness as that between the "class-in-itself" and the "class-for-itself."[91] Where the *class-in-itself* represents the actually existing "empirical" consciousness of the proletariat as a

85. Karl Marx, "The Holy Family," in *Writings of the Young Marx on Philosophy and Society*, ed. and trans. Lloyd D. Easton and Kurt H. Guddat (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1967), p. 368. Translation modified as quoted in Jacques Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, ed. Andrew Parker, trans. John Drury, Corinne Oster, and Andrew Parker (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), p. 80.

86 . Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, p. 51.

87. Ibid., p. 74.

88. Ibid.

89. Lucien Goldmann, "The Revolt of the Arts and Letters in Advanced Civilizations," in *Cultural Creation in Modern Society*, trans. Bart Grahl (St. Louis: Telos, 1976), p. 57.

90. Ibid.

91. Lucien Goldmann, *The Human Sciences and Philosophy*, trans. Hayden V. White and Robert Anchor (London: Cape Press, 1969), pp. 118–19. The difference between the in-itself and the for-itself was explored at length in Sartre's *Being and Nothingness*, in which, as Martin Jay explains, "the 'in-itself' was fully self-sufficient, a completed positivity that was identical with itself, [whereas] the 'for itself' was totally dependent on what it was not and yet desired to be. Rather than identity, it implied non-identical difference." Martin Jay, *Marxism and Totality: The Adventures of a Concept from Lukács to Habermas* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 338.

social group defined by its penury, the *class-for-itself* represents the potential revolutionary orientation of this class toward its simultaneous self-abolition and realization in the process of ushering in a classless society.

In Goldmann's schema, it is the historically significant work of art or philosophy that acts from within this aporia. In this sense, the role of the artist or philosopher is to embody the "*maximum of potential consciousness*" of a class, to express its worldview. Goldmann argues,

> World-views are social facts. Great philosophical and artistic works represent the *coherent* and adequate expressions of these world-views. As such, they are *at once individual and social* expressions, their content being determined by the *maximum of potential consciousness* of the group, of the social class in general, and their form being determined by the content for which the writer or thinker finds an adequate expression.[92]

The worldview of a class thus finds its authentic voice, its "*coherent*, exceptional expression, in great works of philosophy and art, or even in the lives of certain exceptional individuals. (The latter plane corresponds more or less to the maximum of *potential* consciousness.)"[93] In contrast to Goldmann's avowedly "social" model of subjectivity as a "transindividual" construction,[94] his cultural concept of maximum potential consciousness reaffirms a mythology of the artist as exceptional individual. Further, his theory of culture effectively substitutes the advanced work of art for the role of the Communist vanguard party as the embodiment of an authentic historicity that remains unconscious in the rest of the social world. In this substitution, a number of contradictions are intensified. The maximum potential consciousness of the proletariat must paradoxically come from outside its own ranks, from a professional class of almost exclusively bourgeois artists; and, being that the working class's ideal consciousness is by necessity of its own disappearance, this class consciousness would approach the metaphysical condition of a presence that can only assert itself as absence. For Jacques Rancière, this model invokes an impossible paradox: "It is too hard a task, even for the best dialecticians, to prove to communist proletarians that they are not communist proletarians by invoking a communist proletariat whose only fault is that it does not yet exist."[95]

In Godard's view, the Medvedkin Group's project of cinematic de-specialization was subtended by a credulous faith in cinema as a putatively unmediated technique that could simply be transferred from the bourgeoisie to the working class.

92. Goldmann, *Human Sciences and Philosophy*, p. 129.
93. Ibid., p. 130.
94. Goldmann argues, for example, "*Every manifestation is the work of its individual author and expresses his thought and his way of feeling, but these ways of thinking and feeling are not independent entities with respect to the actions and behavior of other men. They exist and may be understood only in terms of their inter-subjective relations which give them their whole tenor and richness.*" Emphasis in the original. Ibid., p. 128.
95. Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. 85.

Were the camera to fall into the hands of the people, they would at best merely reflect their own alienated consciousness. Conversely, in the isomorphism of the blank screen and the militant blackboard, the Vertov Group posits that the tactics of cinematic negation, intransitivity, and estrangement are the adequate and appropriate means to represent the potential consciousness of a class destined to abolish itself. As the Vertov Group proclaims in *British Sounds*, militant cinema "doesn't mean bringing films to the people, but making films from and through the people." While Godard conceived of militant film as the vanguard expression of the working class's revolutionary sublation, his model also depended on and reinforced a separation between the maximum potential consciousness of the working class and its "empirical" life context. For, as Godard laments, the proletariat inevitably prefers the popular comedies of Gérard Oury or, at best, the "revisionist" cinema of the "bourgeois" Eisenstein to the school lessons of militant film.[96]

The divergent claims made by Marker and by Godard for the possible legacy of Soviet film reflect their polarized responses to the dialectics of class consciousness. Godard nominally adopted Vertov because of his cinematic mission "to open [people's] eyes and to show the world in the name of the dictatorship of the proletariat."[97] Marker, conversely, turned to Medvedkin because "he had put the camera in the hands of the people" so they could "make films to show things as they felt them to be from their own experience."[98] On the one side, a project that sought to transform the inchoate consciousness of "the People" into the rational cinematic knowledge of their potential liberation, and, on the other, a challenge to the structuring principles of culture and to the class division between those who have the power to speak and those who do not.

Rencontres

If, as Godard contended, the Medvedkin Group did not accept the task of representing the proletariat-for-itself, i.e., of portraying its potential to be realized in a post-revolutionary future, neither did the collective affirm the converse position and hypostatize the proletariat-in-itself by asserting that class identity had stable contours that could be empirically described and valorized only by card-carrying members. Rather, the Medvedkin Group "unworked" integral categories of identity through a political claim to sectors of experience previously deemed inaccessible to a working

96. In an interview regarding the Vertov Group, Godard argues, "We took Vertov's name not in order to apply his program, but to take him as a flag-bearer in relation to Eisenstein, who... is already a revisionist filmmaker. . . . The only films that the proletarians truly accept today are still [Eisenstein's *Battleship*] *Potemkin* or [Herbert J. Biberman's] *The Salt of the Earth*: these are the only films that touch them profoundly, the film of a bourgeois carried along by the revolution and that of a liberal American. . . . [Even if] this boosts [the proletarian's] morale, it gives him no indication of the political forces at play where he is struggling." Godard, "Le Groupe 'Dziga Vertov,'" pp. 82, 85.

97. Ibid., p. 82.

98. Marker, "Le ciné-ours," p. 4.

class that had its essential nature and prospects rooted exclusively in labor. Consequently, in the "impossible identification"[99] between Parisian filmmakers and striking workers from Besançon, and in the alternate circuits of production and distribution established by SLON, the Medvedkin Group is intrinsically bound up with the most radical dimension of the contestations of May 1968. Specifically, the films of the Medvedkin Group are determined at the level of production and reception by what Kristin Ross describes as the pervasive logic running through the general strike, occupations, and demonstrations that overtook Paris for nearly an entire month: that of the *rencontre*, or encounter. For Ross, the *rencontres* that proliferated in May—epitomized by the *Comité d'Action Travailleur/Étudiant*, which invited workers into the occupied Sorbonne and students into the factories in order to establish common social spaces of discussion—consisted of

> meetings that were neither magical nor mythical but simply the experience of incessantly running into people that social, cultural, or professional divisions had previously kept one from meeting up with, little events that produced the sense that those mediations or social compartments had simply withered away.[100]

The *rencontre*, thus, did not represent what Nancy describes as the typical conception of community as a "project of fusion, or in some general way a productive or operative project."[101] Rather than aim toward the abolition of difference or the affirmation of identity, as Ross argues, these meetings sought "to contest the domain of the expert, [and] to disrupt the system of naturalized spheres of competence."[102] In the ebullient communication between workers and intellectuals, artists and militants, a form of community was organized that contested traditional separations between specialized social sectors, yet rejected assimilation into any mythically coherent class, mass, or party. It is firmly within this historical moment, with all its vicissitudes, that the Medvedkin Group must be situated.

During the month of May, however, the organs of the official left, especially the CGT and the PCF, rejected the union between students and workers as a dangerous form of sociological ataxia.[103] For example, adopting the language of reac-

99. For Rancière, political subjectivization almost always involves such an "impossible identification." Giving the example of the May slogan "We are all German Jews," Rancière writes, "We could act as political subjects in the interval or the gap between two identities, neither of which we could assume." Jacques Rancière, "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization," *October* 61 (Summer 1992), p. 61.

100. Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, p. 103.

101. Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, p. 15.

102. Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives*, p. 6.

103. For Guy Debord, the unions and the party contributed more to the *retour à l'ordre* than could any amount of police repression. According to Debord, the institutions of the left conceived of "a sort of being-in-himself worker who, by definition, would exist only in his own factory, where . . . the Stalinists would force him to keep silent," and therefore undermined "the essential need whose vital urgency was felt by so many workers in May: the need for coordination and communication of struggles and ideas, starting from bases of free encounter outside their union-policed factories." Situationist International, "The Beginning of an Era," in *The Situationist International Anthology*, ed. and trans. Ken Knabb (Berkeley: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), p. 239.

tion, the PCF echoed de Gaulle in labeling students "*pègres.*"[104] Likewise, it was primarily the left bureaucracy that instigated the dissolution of the Besançon Medvedkin Group. Medvedkin Group members Binetruy and Traforetti recall being confronted by local PCF representatives who demanded that they stop making films in order to engage in more "serious" militant activity: "It wasn't the content of the films that was aimed at. The more serious transgression was that they accepted working with '*intellos*' without going through the Party's hierarchical structures. '*Intellos*,' even worse, from Paris."[105] As a result of this confrontation, certain members of the Medvedkin Group left the Communist Party, while others abandoned their cinematic experiments to entrench themselves within the traditional institutions of working-class representation.[106] The divisions were just as virulent on the side of the Parisian *intellos.* Marker recalls how forcefully the PCF rejected the group's activities and how his erstwhile collaborator, the director Mario Marret, left the group in order to start a parallel project linked directly to the Communist Party. Marker emphasizes the "*langue de bois,*" or stereotyped party-speak, of these films as opposed to the liberty of expression in the Medvedkin Group.[107] At the heart of the conflict was the implicit challenge presented to the ideology of the party—centered as it was on a fetishization of labor and a mythical conception of "the worker" as a synecdoche of a homogeneous class, of which the party was the privileged representation—by the *rencontre* between artists and workers, who all of a sudden refused to be ventriloquized and demanded to speak for themselves.

For a worker to claim the right to create—to theoretically "unalienated" labor—was a gesture as threatening to the factory bosses as it was to the official organs of the left, with their vision of the worker acceding to a state of *being-in-oneself through work.* Regarding this form of sociological indeterminacy, Rancière argues that "perhaps the truly dangerous classes are . . . the migrants who move at the border between classes, individuals and groups who develop capabilities within themselves which are useless for the improvement of their material lives and which in fact are liable to make them despise material concerns."[108] Further, for Rancière, "Working-class emancipation was not the affirmation of values specific to the world of labor. It was a rupture in the order of things that founded these 'values,' a rupture in the tra-

104. Ross cites an editorial in the Communist Party newspaper *L'Humanité* that describes protesters as "*pègres,*" which she translates as "riff-raff, scum, the underworld." See Ross, *May '68 and Its Afterlives,* p. 107–8.

105. Recounted in ISKRA, p. 37.

106. Georges Maurivard recalls that during the strikes of 1967, the party and unions openly welcomed student groups and filmmakers, though "this all changed in 1968." Maurivard claims that the PCF was "afraid of the dynamic of this period" and told the Medvedkin Group to stop associating with "leftists" (*gauchistes*) such as Marker. Maurivard, " 'Classes de Lutte,' luttes de classes," pp. 96–97.

107. Marker, "Pour Mario," in ISKRA, p. 12.

108. Jacques Rancière, "Good Times, or Pleasure at the Barriers," in *Voices of the People: The Social Life of 'La Sociale' at the End of the Second Empire,* ed. Adrian Rifkin and Roger Thomas, trans. John Moore (New York: Routledge, 1988), p. 49.

ditional division [*partage*] assigning the privilege of thought to some and the tasks of production to others."[109] Binetruy affirms this rupture, recalling that while initially wary of "these Parisians who came stuffed with film and cameras," he quickly realized that "they did not come to teach us any lessons, but rather to transmit technical training that would liberate our spirits through our eyes. Once you have put your eyes behind a camera, you are no longer the same man, your perspective has changed."[110]

The consequences of this perspectival shift were explored in the subsequent films made by the Besançon Medvedkin Group before its dissolution in 1971 and the departure of Cèbe in 1970 to found a second Medvedkin Group at a Peugeot factory in Sochaux-Montbéliard, which would continue until 1975. These films range from a series of short *ciné-tracts* entitled *Nouvelle Société* (1969–1970), which sought to counter Prime Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas's harmonious vision of a renewed French society; to *Lettre à mon ami Pol Cèbe* (1971), a radically discrepant and self-reflexive film made by Rhodia laborers in a car en route to screen *Classe de lutte* at a factory in Lille; and to *Le Traîneau-échelle* (1971), a montage of *détourned* photos, illustrations, and film-reels accompanied by a poem written by a young worker, Jean-Pierre Thiébaud, which dispenses with the languages of agitation and documentary altogether to investigate the mnemonic potential of sound-image relationships.

If the form of cultural politics "from below" that the Medvedkin Group practiced was first developed by their namesake as part of a state-sponsored project of social engineering, the recovery of factography in the 1960s paradoxically propelled the group outside the bounds of the Communist bureaucracy. Indeed, in their challenge to sedimented divisions of competence and consciousness, the Communism of the Medvedkin Group approaches Maurice Blanchot's definition, written in the throes of May: "Communism is what excludes (and excludes itself from) any already constituted community."[111] The Medvedkin Group excluded itself not only from the traditional institutions of working-class representation but also from those of culture conceived as a compensatory *promesse de bonheur* serving to stabilize the excesses of capitalism—a model exemplified today by the sham reconciliations proffered by Sarkozy. The cinematic debate between the Vertov and Medvedkin groups on the social role of the intellectual emerged from the shared conviction that this conception of culture was no longer historically tenable amid the various challenges to specialization and to social atomization put forth by the CCPPO, among many others. Rather than deferring the utopian universalization of creativity into a potential postrevolutionary future, Marker and the worker-cinematographers at Rhodiaceta claimed that the operative entry into culture of a class of people previously denied access to it constituted not simply an intervention into the superstructure but the destabilization of a social order based upon the division of labor.

109. Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, p. 219.
110. ISKRA, p. 5.
111. Maurice Blanchot, "[Communism Without Heirs]," in *Maurice Blanchot: Political Writings, 1953–1993*, trans. Zakir Paul (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), p. 93.

In Search of Lost Space: Stan Douglas's Archaeology of Cinematic Darkness*

NOAM M. ELCOTT

A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine.

For why or? Why in another dark or in the same? And whose voice asking this? Who asks, Whose voice asking this? And answers, His soever who devises it all. In the same dark as his creature or in another.

—Samuel Beckett[1]

You enter a dark space—a gallery or, perhaps, a cinema. Railroad tracks, telegraph poles, and mountainous landscapes unfurl before you through cinematic projection. Or rather, as soon as you have properly lost your bearings, you are projected through the landscape by means of the cinematic ensemble. Thomas Edison's turn-of-the-century film catalogue described the film as follows:

> This scene was taken shortly after the completion of this railroad in 1899. The impression received by the audience is that of riding on the pilot of an engine. Shortly after starting, you plunge into the darkness of the tunnel, afterwards to emerge, and crossing a high trestle skirting the edge of a deep chasm, you continue to wind about among the mountains and gorges. The ice-covered peaks of the distant mountains form an ever changing background.[2]

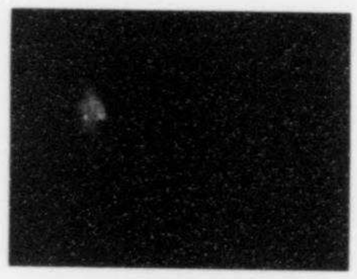
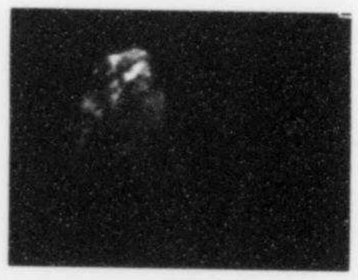
This short description of *Panoramic View of the White Pass Railroad* (1899)—a section of which appears in the film installation in question, namely, Stan

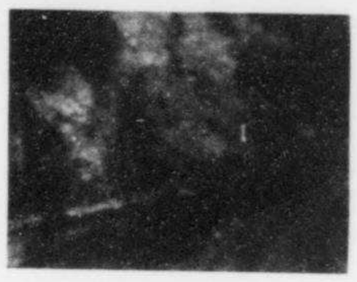
* This essay benefited from the feedback of audiences at Columbia University and NYU, conversations with Alexander Horwath, and the assiduous responses of Malcolm Turvey.

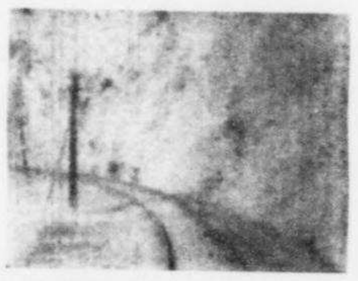
1. Samuel Beckett, *Company* (1981), in Samuel Beckett, *Nohow On: Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho* (New York: Grove Press, 1996), pp. 3, 16–17.

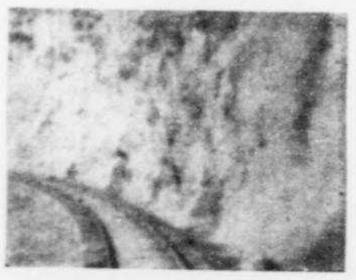
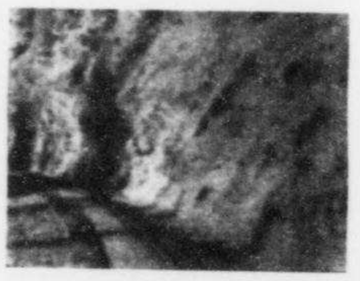
2. *Catalogue of Motion Pictures* (Orange, N. J.: Edison Manufacturing Company, 1902), cited in Colin Browne, *Motion Picture Production in British Columbia, 1898–1940* (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1979), p. 223. As Peter Morris has demonstrated, these films functioned as propaganda to lure settlers into Western Canada. See Peter Morris, "Images of Canada," in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

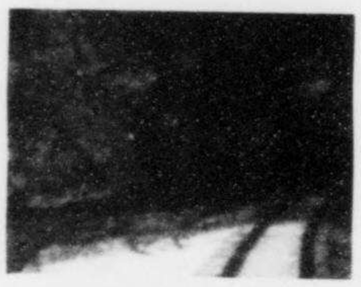
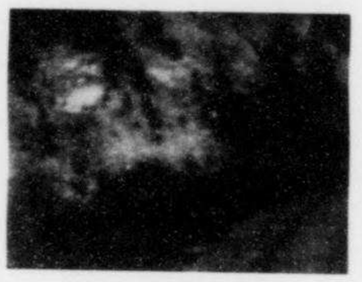
OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 151–182. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

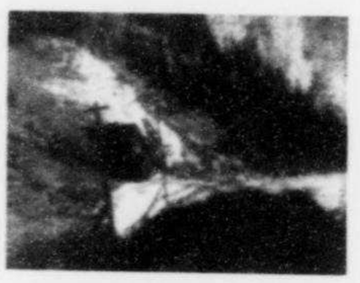



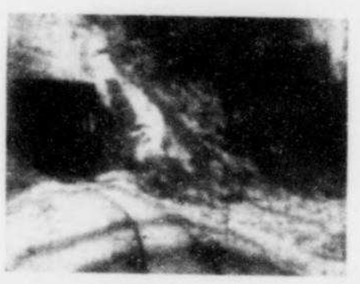


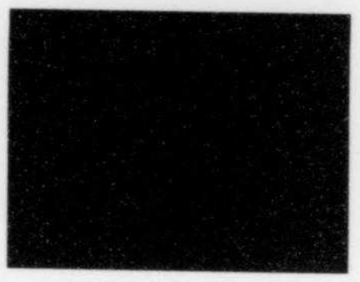
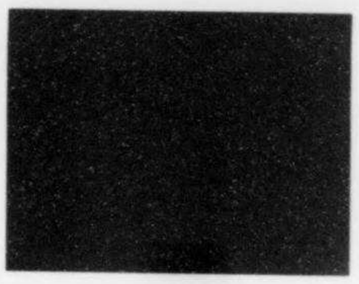


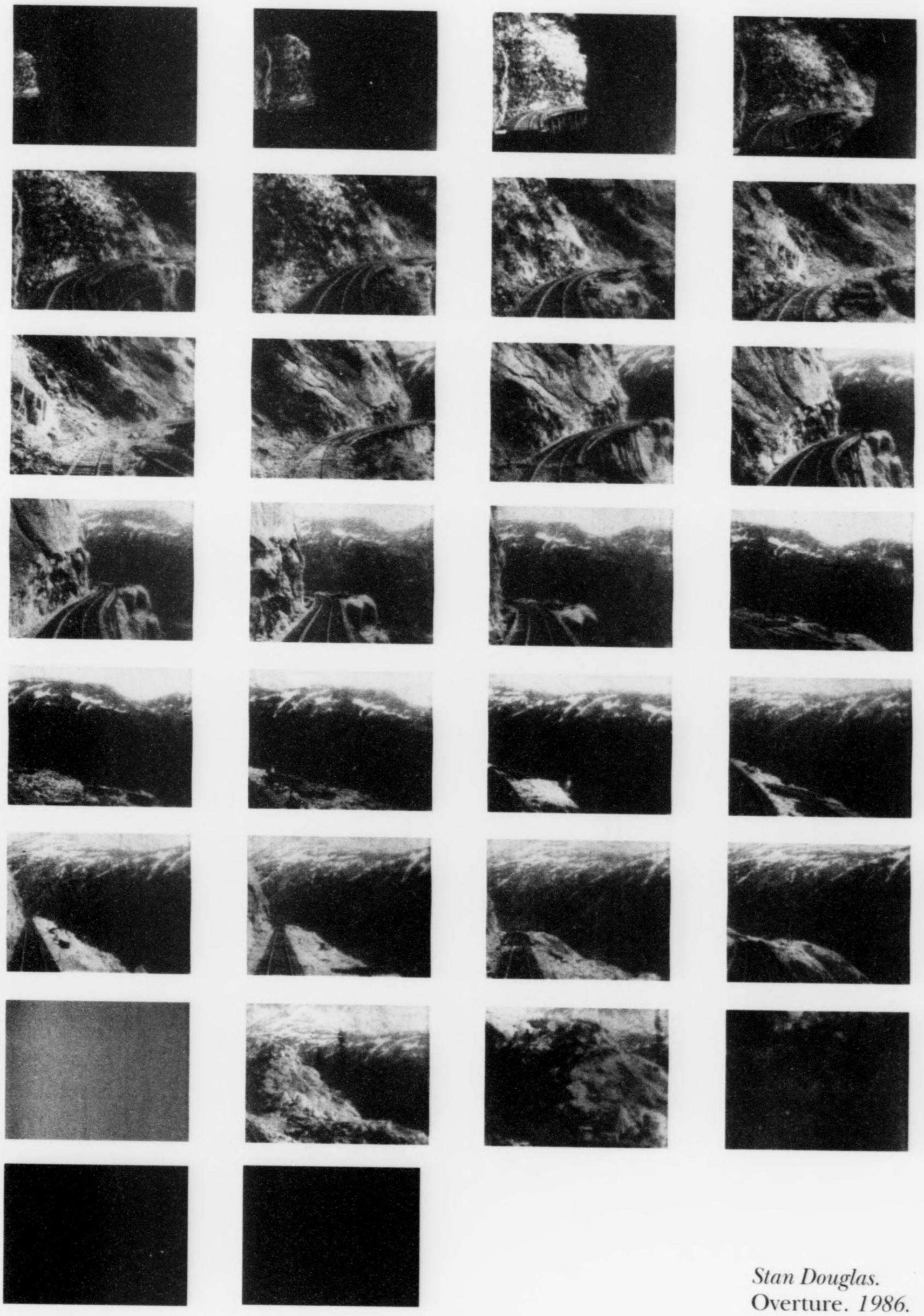









Stan Douglas.
Overture. *1986.*

Douglas's *Overture* (1986)—served primarily to entice potential exhibitors to purchase the film, a so-called "panoramic picture" or "phantom ride" popular at the turn of the century. The descriptive text is nowhere to be found in Douglas's *Overture*; instead, a voice intones six passages, which begin:

> When I had put out my candle, my eyes would close so quickly that I had not even time to say to myself: "I'm falling asleep." . . .
>
> At the same time, my sight would return and I would be astonished to find myself in a state of darkness. . . .
>
> Nearly midnight. . . .
>
> When I awoke in the middle of the night, I could not even be sure at first who I was; for it always happened when I awoke like this, and my mind struggled in an unsuccessful attempt to discover where I was, everything revolved around me through the darkness: things, places, years. . . .
>
> I had lost all sense of the place in which I had gone to sleep. . . .
>
> I would fall asleep again and, thereafter, would reawaken for short snatches only: just long enough to hear the regular creaking of the wainscot, or to open my eyes to stare at the shifting kaleidoscope of the darkness. . . .[3]

If you linger in the installation long enough—roughly six minutes—the disembodied voice begins the cycle anew.

This aural loop is preceded by a visual one, precisely half its duration. Linked by a series of long, dark tunnels, three short (approximately one-minute) film segments follow in succession: one from *Panoramic View of the White Pass Railroad* and two similar sequences from *Panoramic View of Kicking Horse Cañon* (1901). The result is a six-minute aural loop (comprising six literary passages) overlaid with two three-minute silent film loops. But because the three film sequences do not differ markedly to the untrained eye—one traverses a valley floor, another hugs the side of a mountain; all begin and end in tunnels—the structure of the piece cannot be discerned readily. The effect is that of déjà vu as the first film segments return accompanied by unfamiliar passages—or, more precisely, accompanied by passages at once new and strangely familiar. For, as many listeners recognize, the text derives from the opening or "Overture" of Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time.*

3. See Stan Douglas, *Stan Douglas* (Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, 1993), p. 122.

More familiar with Proust's novel than with Edison's panoramic pictures, most commentators have read *Overture* in terms of time and memory or as a confusion of reality and dream. Only one critic, to my knowledge, has looked closely enough at the films and listened sufficiently to the texts selected and edited by Douglas to identify the single recurring theme that unifies the passages and binds them to the image: darkness.[4] Proust's bedroom, Edison's tunnels, and Douglas's installation are all dark spaces. Indeed, Douglas's Proust interrogates space much more than time. And his is hardly an aberrant reading. As Georges Poulet has aptly demonstrated, "From the first moment—one could almost say also: from the first *place*—in the account, the work of Proust asserts itself as a search not only for lost time, but also for lost space."[5] It is the darkness of Proust's bedroom that serves as a space-time machine; his corporeal memory transports him to his childhood room in Combray as well as to rooms in Tansonville, Balbec, Paris, Doncière, Venice, and into bed beside the warm, curled-up body of an oneiric girl; the bedroom, finally, is a proxy for the very darkened room in which Proust slept during the day and composed his introspective epic at night. Where Proust weaves an immeasurable text around these mnemonic destinations, Douglas tarries in the kaleidoscopic darkness of a gallery or a cinema. Like Proust's bedroom, Douglas's sites serve as space-time machines to cinematic sites now long forgotten. These spaces, after all, are not so different. As the Surrealist Robert Desnos avowed: "For us and us alone, the Lumière brothers invented the cinema. There we were at home. Its darkness was like that of our bedrooms before going to sleep."[6]

In *Overture*, darkness is the condition of possibility not only for the installation, but also for the loop structure.[7] For what appears to be a single, continuous panoramic picture or phantom ride is, in fact, a montage of three discrete sequences stitched together at the invisible seams of dark tunnels: the train enters one tunnel only to exit another. The years and miles that intervene between the short segments are elided by the darkness of the tunnels.[8]

And it is here, in the tunnels, that Douglas stages his most significant intervention in what is otherwise largely a work of appropriation and recombination. Douglas augments the darkness of the tunnels—a darkness marred by the residual light near

4. Mark Bartlett foregrounds the darkness but argues for its dispersal through light: "Douglas takes us directly to the filmic moment in which darkness is dispelled and time is revealed; not any time, but the symbolic liminal edge of the deep night, when all things dark are revealed." Mark Bartlett, "Proust/Douglas/Edison: 'something dark indeed . . .'" in *Searchlight: Consciousness at the Millennium* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1999), p. 101.

5. Georges Poulet, *Proustian Space*, trans. Elliott Coleman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1977), p. 12.

6. Robert Desnos, "Fantômas, Les Vampires, Les Mystères de New York," in *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1929*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 398.

7. Douglas's black box galleries were never entirely black. Current installation instructions for *Overture* stipulate a black wall only behind the projection screen; the other walls are to be painted a uniform 10–15% gray, the same shade as the carpet. Early installation practice varied.

8. There are also two subtle jump-cuts within individual panoramic views.

the mouths of the tunnels and pocked with the scars of age and multiple media transpositions (from 35mm film to paper print and, finally, to 16mm film)—with the absolute darkness of black leader: the dark passages in the tunnels are artificially extended by opaque filmstrips. This artificial, interpolated darkness—long enough and foreign enough to refuse diegetic integration—belongs less to the film than to the space of reception. According to Douglas, "one is returned to the space in which one is standing staring at a blank wall beside this whirring machine producing the image."[9] At regular intervals, *Overture* shifts the focus from the image to the space, from the work to the viewer, from the medium of film to the institution of cinema. In this regard, *Overture* is hardly unique. Comparable film installations, however, tend to isolate darkness as an obstacle to overcome. As Claire Bishop argues in regard to several multi-screen installations (including Douglas's *Win, Place or Show* [1998]): "Tellingly, many of these works do not immerse the viewer in darkness: dark space (with its mystical and mystifying atmosphere) would run counter to the focused rationality and concentration needed."[10] In *Overture*, darkness is not an impediment to critical inquiry but rather its vehicle. Douglas is thus "contemporary" as Giorgio Agamben recently defined it: "The contemporary is he who firmly holds his gaze on his own time so as to perceive not its light, but rather its darkness."[11] What is metaphoric for Agamben is, for Douglas, literal, physical, corporeal.

Douglas's darkness, however, is historical as well as phenomenological. The somatic experience of darkness opens onto its historicity: the contemporary is shot through with the past. The years traversed by the work—the years between the capture of Edison's panoramic pictures (1899–1901) and the composition and publication of *Swann's Way* (1908–1913), the inaugural volume of Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*—witnessed a radical transformation in the institution of cinema: not only its narrative forms but also its sites and technologies of reception. A multiplicity of improvisational, repurposed, and short-lived sites—with equally diverse sets of spectatorial conventions—gave way to the first structures built primarily for the exhibition of film, namely, the classical movie theater conceived and constructed as a standardized, if not quite monolithic, technology of cinematic reception. *Overture*, in turn, arrived at a defining moment in the museification of the projected image: the work took its final shape over nearly a decade, beginning in the mid-1980s—a ten-year period that saw the rise of the black-box gallery as a standardized, if not quite monolithic, site of artistic reception.[12] *Overture*'s current form differs fundamentally from that assumed by the piece when first exhibit-

9. Stan Douglas, "YYZ Lecture Jan. 9, 1989," *The Independent Eye* 10, no. 2 (1989), p. 38.
10. Claire Bishop, *Installation Art: A Critical History* (London: Tate, 2005), p. 96. On the potential productivity of darkness in recent film and video installations, see T. J. Demos, "The Art of Darkness: On Steve McQueen," *October* 114 (Fall 2005), pp. 61–89.
11. Giorgio Agamben, "What Is the Contemporary?," in *What Is an Apparatus? and Other Essays* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2009), p. 44.
12. See Liz Kotz, "Video Projection: The Space Between Screens," in *Art and the Moving Image*, ed. Tanya Leighton (London: Tate, 2008), pp. 371–85.

ed at the Surrey Art Gallery in 1986. The residues of its initial, hesitant presentations forge an essential—if unintended or even unconscious—link to the initial, tentative presentations of film at the turn of the century. The strength of *Overture*—its modes of exhibition no less than its images and texts—lies in its capacity to bring these two media archaeological moments in dialogue. This essay, then, effects a double recovery: of the multifarious forms and exhibition formats of *Overture* and, through these forms, of the residual force of cinema archaeology in the art of the present.

This essay argues that *Overture* was and remains at once a pioneering film installation and a meditation on the installation of film at the dawn and dusk of the twentieth century. Where the end of the century witnessed the dispersal of film across disparate sites and media—a trend that has accelerated wildly in recent years—the century began with the quest to secure for it a home. *Overture* links cinema's late dispersal with its early homelessness to foreground its potentialities and pitfalls, its unrealized dreams and thoroughly consummated nightmares. In *Overture*, the medium of both dreaming and waking is darkness. By granting a multifarious history to this darkness, Douglas galvanizes alternative futures. His guiding query—enunciated alongside Samuel Beckett—is: "Why in another dark or in the same?"[13] For *Overture* is, above all, a meditation on mediated darkness.

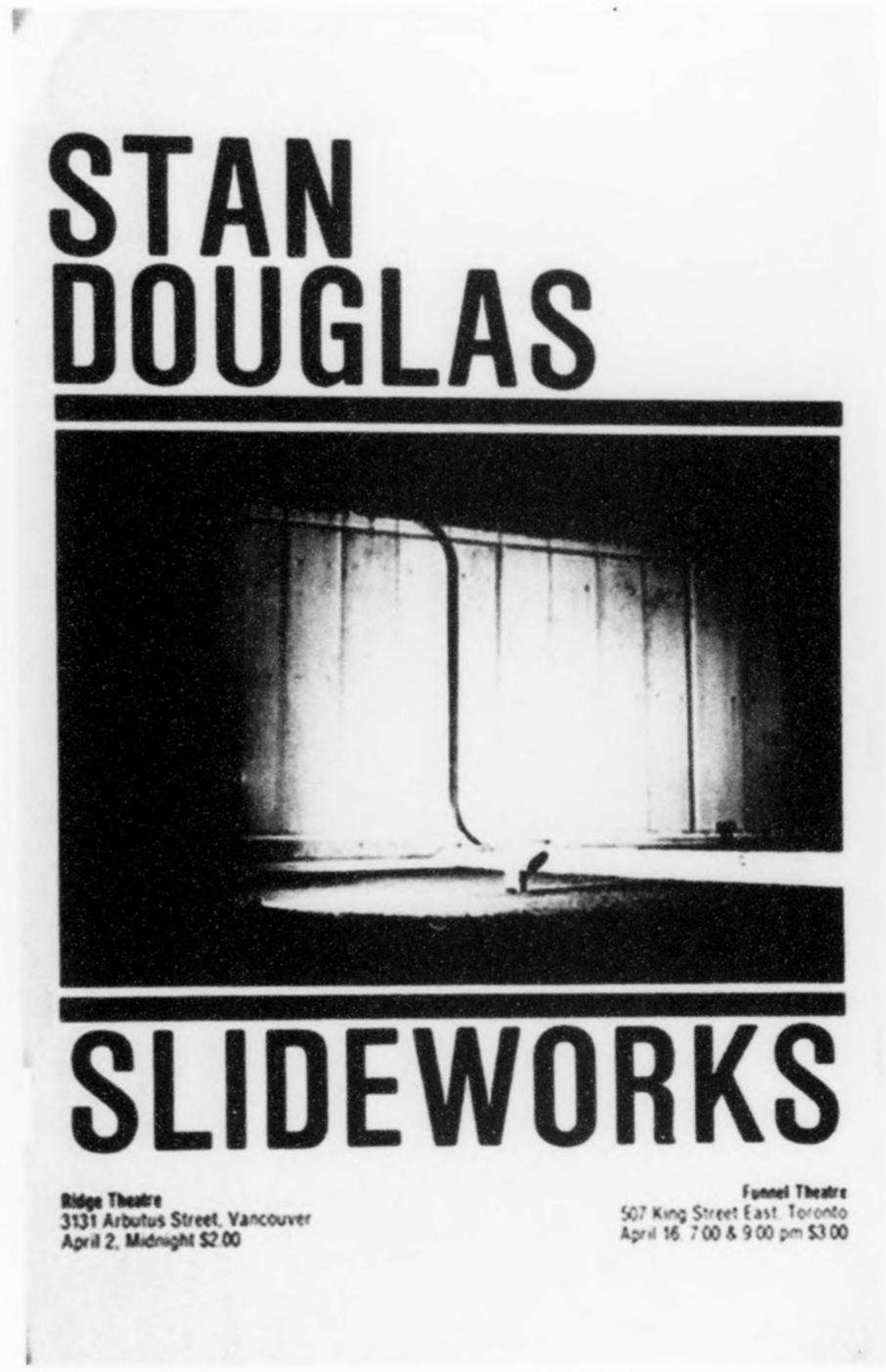
*

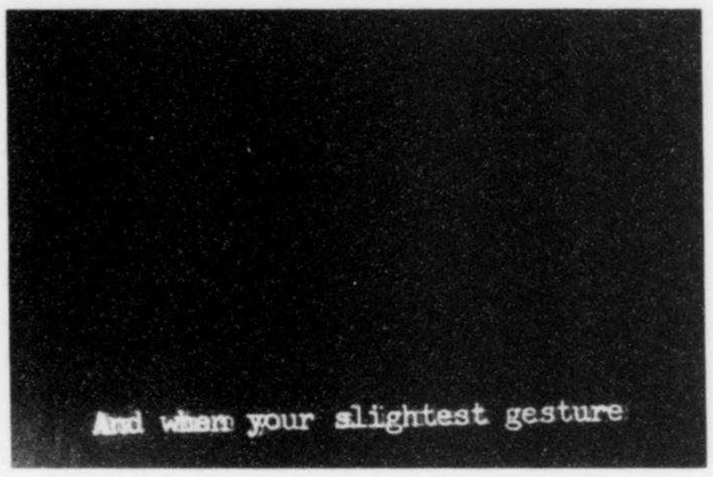
From the first, Stan Douglas was a cinematic artist, challenging the very foundations of cinema as a historical, technological, and ideological institution. Fittingly, his professional artistic career began in a cinema—but without films. Douglas's first solo exhibition, "Slideworks," was a midnight screening at the Ridge (Movie) Theatre, Vancouver, in 1983. Early work included slide pieces like *Jazz* (1981), which mimicked the staging and lighting effects of film noir, and *Residence* (1982–83), which consisted of a series of views of an apartment block.[14] Built on the Omni-Q Projector Dissolve Unit, a programmable double slide projector and audio component designed by Commercial Electronics in Vancouver for corporate conventions, trade shows, and the like, Douglas's early slide pieces were programmed for obsolescence. Neither *Jazz* nor *Residence* survives. At the Ridge Theatre, Douglas also exhibited *Deux devises* (1982–83), the sole slide work Douglas later migrated to Audio Visual Laboratories (AVL) slide-show computers and which, consequently, endures in the present.[15]

13. Beckett, *Company*, quoted in Stan Douglas, "Goodbye Pork-Pie Hat," in *Samuel Beckett Teleplays* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1988), p. 11.

14. On these early, lost slide pieces, see Barbara Fischer, *Perspective 87: Stan Douglas* (Ontario: Art Gallery of Ontario, 1987). Peter Culley incisively emphasizes the centrality of the conditions of reception for the installation of *Residence* in *Vancouver Art and Artists 1931–83*. See Peter Culley, "The Magic Box: Stan Douglas in the Cabinet of Cinema," in *Out of Place* (Vancouver: Vancouver Art Gallery, 1993), p. 76.

15. He likely also exhibited *Burning Building*, another slide work that does not survive and which included nighttime slides of a brewery. Evidence of these early slide-work exhibitions is scant.





Above: Douglas.
Deux devises. *1982–83.*
Left: Douglas.
Poster for Slideworks. *1983.*

As the title suggests, *Deux devises* was to be a double emblem inaugurating Douglas's career proper: all earlier works were abandoned. *Deux devises* consists of two formerly independent slide pieces, *Breath* (1982) and *Mime* (1983). *Breath* couples a sound recording of Charles Gounod's song for tenor "O ma belle rebelle" (c. 1864) with projected English translations typed in white script on monochrome gray slides. *Mime* shares its basic structure with *Breath* but substitutes a 1936 recording of Robert Johnson's "Preachin' Blues" for Gounod's Second Empire chanson and includes, in place of subtitles, close-up photographic slides of Douglas's lips not quite synched to the music. From a contemporary, white, North American vantage point, *Breath*'s distance is inscribed in language, continent, and century. *Mime* offers more familiarity, but distances its white audience through race. That Douglas's own biography shares little with Johnson's short, shadowy life disallows any simple identifications.

From a media archaeological perspective, it is important to note that each part of *Deux devises* omits an integral component of the multimedia experience that is modern cinema. In *Breath*, the cumulative effect is something like a foreign-language film projected without images. In *Mime*, sound and images are roughly synchronized, but the latter proceed in fits and spurts that hint at the illusion of movement only the better to mock it. Placed within what Charles Musser has

dubbed a "history of screen practice," where "cinema appears as a continuation and transformation of magic-lantern traditions," *Deux devises* adopts the role of perfect forebear to *Overture*, with its turn-of-the-century spectacle of motion and retrospective insinuations of continuity editing.[16] But rather than repeat the emergence of cinema as tragedy or farce, Douglas mobilizes the incongruities and disjunctions of the cinematic ensemble to clear spaces for critical reflection—an aspect of Douglas's work identified early on by curator Barbara Fischer:

> Instead of simply producing a film, however, Stan Douglas makes use of the multi-faceted aspects of the cinematic "machine"—photography, film, sound recordings, and even, most recently, television—in order to examine the way in which technology affects culture and functions in it. His projections and installations open onto the site of cinema as that theatre in which technology and, in particular, the simultaneous reproduction of image, sound, and text not only comes to represent but also produce culture. Cinema here is realized as the site of an ongoing dialectic between culture and industry, technology and the imagination, and, most of all, between the spectator's desire and entertainment.[17]

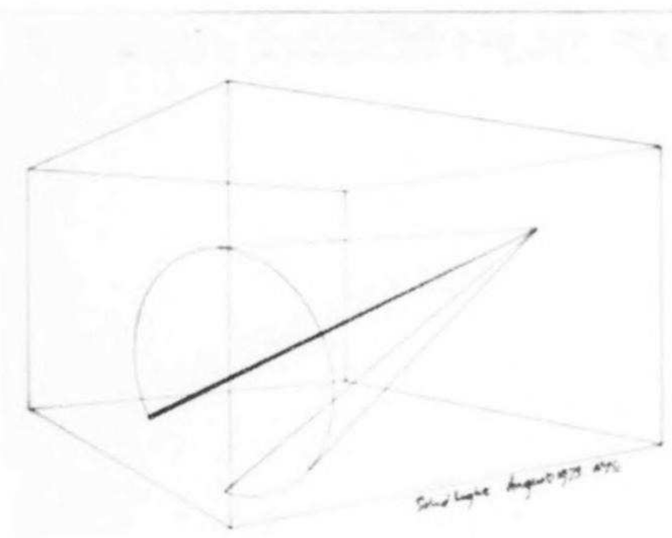
In as much as *Deux devises* helped Douglas to question the various technologies assembled and hidden by the cinematic apparatus and the mechanisms by which the assemblage constructs cultural meaning and viewing subjects, the work served its titular function as emblematic statement. Indeed, *Deux devises* mapped much of the terrain Douglas would later traverse, not least: obsolete technologies, constructed identities, and translations (linguistic, media, or otherwise). But *Deux devises* proved somehow insufficient—enough so that Douglas sought out yet another new beginning, yet another overture to his oeuvre. For if cinema would be realized as the *site* of an ongoing dialectic, he would have to begin with an interrogation of the sites of cinema. And if *Overture* marked the culmination of this effort, its origins lie not in *Breath* or *Mime*, not even in *Jazz* or *Residence*, but rather in an earlier slide piece, a hitherto unknown slide version of Anthony McCall's *Line Describing a Cone* (1973).

Anthony McCall. Line Describing a Cone, *installation view. 1973. Photograph by Peter Moore © The Estate of Peter Moore/VAGA, NYC.*

16. Charles Musser, *Emergence of the Cinema: The American Screen to 1907* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), p. 15.
17. Fischer, p. 5.

The most cogent and penetrating description of *Line Describing a Cone* was submitted by McCall as part of his required statement for *EXPRMNTL5* (the Fifth International Experimental Film Competition, Knokke-Heist, 1974–75):

> *Line Describing a Cone* . . . is projected the normal way, on a 16 mm film projector. . . .
>
> The film begins as a coherent line of light, like a laser beam, and develops through the 30 minute duration into a complete, hollow cone of light. . . .
>
> It is the first film to exist solely in real, three-dimensional, space.
>
> This film exists only in the present: the moment of projection. It refers to nothing beyond this real time. (In contrast, most films allude to past time.)[18]



McCall. Line Describing a Cone. *1973.*

With access to McCall's description but not to the work, Douglas, then a student at the Emily Carr College of Art in Vancouver, set out to re-create the piece with the more modest means at his disposal. He used two slide projectors, a dissolve unit, and 162 slides. Douglas first drew a circle of India ink with a compass on a piece of vellum and covered it with a piece of white paper, exposing the circle frame by frame. To photograph the drawing, he enlisted the service of Kodak technical pan film in a camera with a motor drive and then mounted the high-contrast negatives in pin-registered slide mounts. To fill the room with haze, he utilized a Rosco chemical fog machine. Douglas's reconstruction not only anticipated important aspects of his later work but also established the conditions for the eventual gallery exhibition of *Line Describing a Cone.* McCall generally relied on the dust, humidity, and cigarette smoke that gathered, along with assembled audiences, in 1970s New York lofts. Douglas capitalized on the 1979 commercial introduction of Rosco fog machines to free the piece from its reliance on assembled audiences and external contingencies. He thereby paved the way for the intermittent spectators of gallery installations. Second, unlike McCall's "normal" 16mm projector, configured for a single screening, the double slide projector and dis-

18. Anthony McCall, "Two Statements," in *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: New York University Press, 1978), p. 250. The text has been republished, with slight modifications, in Anthony McCall, "*Line Describing a Cone* and Related Films," *October* 103 (Winter 2003), pp. 42–62.

solve unit employed by Douglas lent themselves to unmanned, looped projection, a prerequisite for gallery exhibitions.

What Douglas extracted from *Line Describing a Cone* is clear: the centrality of the real, three-dimensional space and actual duration of cinematic projection. His shift in emphasis is equally evident. McCall, still very much in dialogue with the London Filmmaker's Co-operative with which he was associated prior to his 1973 arrival in New York, polemically exclaimed that his piece referred to nothing beyond the real space and real time of its projection. Douglas's appropriation, by contrast, insisted not only on allusions to past times but also on highly choreographed dialogues with past spaces. And whereas McCall punctuated the present through light, Douglas would recall the past through darkness.

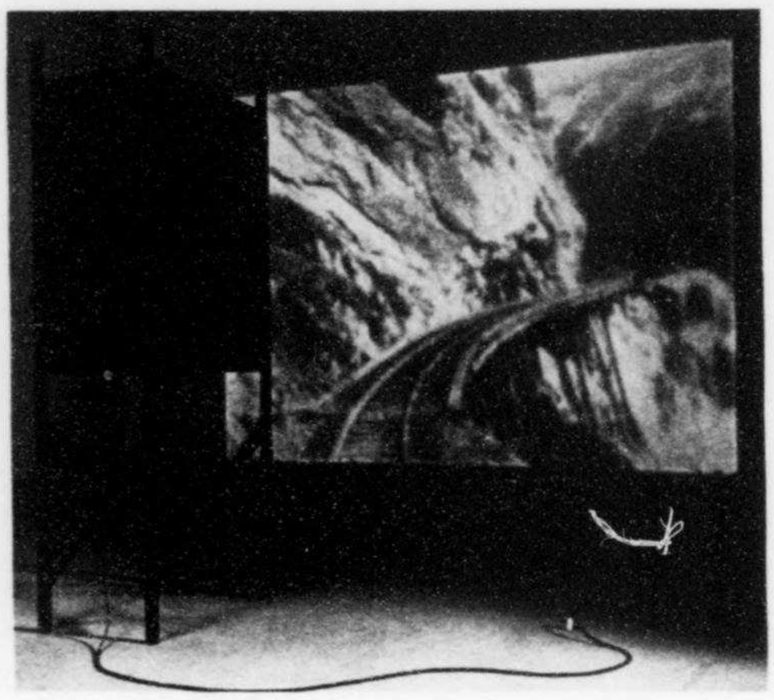
*

In order to historicize the space of cinematic reception, Douglas first had to evacuate it. In the late 1980s, multiple forces conspired against the effort. First, materialist film theory demanded that the apparatus be bared. McCall, for example, stipulated that "the projector be inside the viewing space, i.e., it should not be inside a projection booth. As the focal point, and the source of light, it is an integral part of the film."[19] (Today the materialist stipulation has become something of a fetishization of the outmoded; it's thus no surprise that Douglas—and McCall—now work primarily in digital media.) Second, technical and logistical constraints necessitated the use of a hulking black box, which occupied the center of the galleries in which Douglas first installed *Overture*. The curator who first exhibited *Overture* described the ensemble as "a wood box painted black which looms ten feet high to dominate the Gallery space."[20] The black box housed the primitive looping device, projector, and speakers. Despite efforts to minimize its presence, this black box garnered progressively more attention in each subsequent exhibition. To no avail, Douglas constructed a somewhat less ponderous box when, at the end of the year, he installed *Overture* in the Vancouver Art Gallery's *Broken Muse* exhibition.[21] A year later, installed in *Perspective '87: Stan Douglas*, a solo exhibition at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the black box suddenly shifted from eyesore to ersatz subject. Noting that the narrator's voice—that is, Proust's narrator as recorded by Vancouver-based writer Gerald Creede—emerged not from the image (as in traditional cinema) but from the black box, the curator averred that the box, "realized as a sculptural object, is prominently positioned in the midst of the viewing space. It is as though the booth embodied the position of

19. McCall, "Two Statements," p. 251.

20. Jane Young, "The Mechanics of Memory," ed. Surrey Art Gallery (Surrey, British Columbia: Surrey Art Gallery, 1986), n.p. The precise measurements were 9 feet high, 3 feet to 1.5 feet deep, 4 feet across.

21. A review by the curator of *The Mechanics of Memory* complained that "the loop itself is housed in an ungainly, black wood box." Jane Young, "'Broken Muse'," *C Magazine* 13 (1987), p. 76.



Douglas. Overture. *Installation views: Witte de With, Rotterdam, 1994; Surrey Art Gallery, Surrey, Canada, 1986; Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, 1986.*

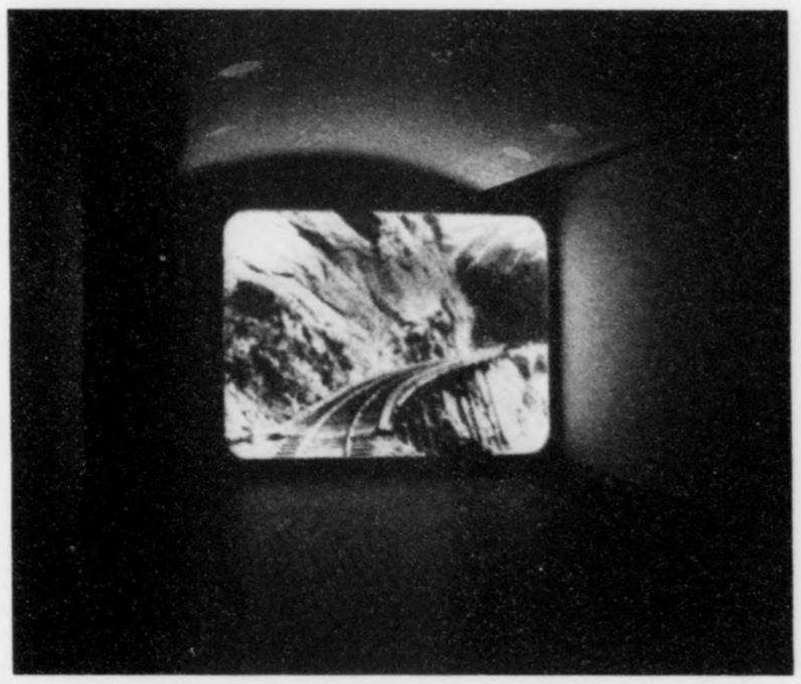
the narrator: the projector's lens, the camera's view, become the narrator's eye, and the loudspeaker, emitting a narrated text in the first person singular, becomes his mouth."[22] By the end of the 1980s, Douglas appeared to subscribe to this reading as well:

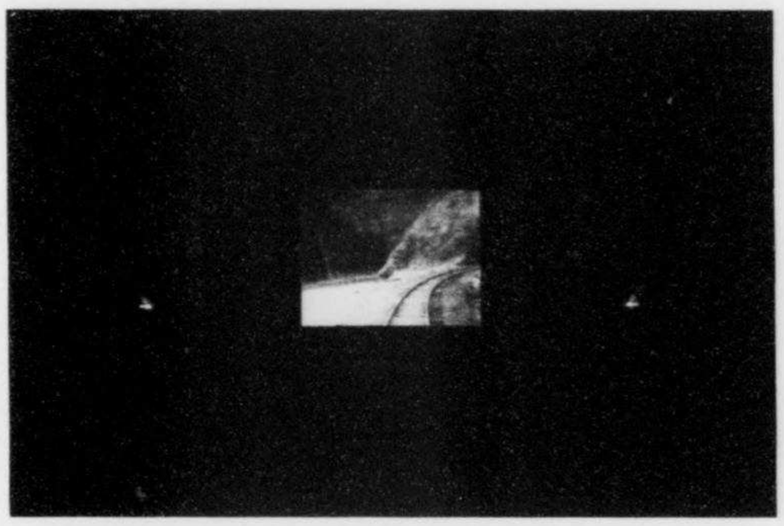
> When installed, there's a quite large eight-and-a-half-foot-high projection box—vaguely anthropomorphic with the lens for an eye and the speaker for a mouth and I guess the fan for an ear—talking at the projection, trying to understand its condition but never being able to leave this fascinating specular image.[23]

The sentiment was echoed succinctly in the pamphlet accompanying a 1991 San Francisco Museum of Modern Art exhibition on the projected image: "The machine is anthropomorphized."[24]

Cumulatively, these descriptions—issued by the curators and the artist—literalized nearly to the point of parody that unsettling quality Michael Fried attributed to certain Minimalist works, which create an experience "not . . . entirely unlike being distanced, or crowded, by the silent presence of another *person*; the experience of coming upon

22. Fischer, p. 15.
23. Douglas, "YYZ Lecture Jan. 9, 1989," p. 38.
24. "The Projected Image" (San Francisco: San Francisco Museum of Modern Art,1991), n.p. This description echoes the statement published in conjunction with the "*Overture/ Television Spots*" at Optica (Montreal, 1988): "As a metaphor for the position of the subject in relation to the object, *Overture* demonstrates the mechanics of our relationship to the artwork. . . . By installing the projection equipment where the spectator is normally situated . . ."





Douglas. Overture. *Installation views: Louisiana Museum of Modern Art, Humlebæk, Denmark, 1996; Künstlerhaus, Vienna, 1999; Hamburger Bahnhof, Berlin, 2006.*

literalist objects unexpectedly—for example, in somewhat darkened rooms—can be strongly, if momentarily, disquieting in just this way."[25] That Douglas would eventually replace the anthropomorphized black box with a black-box gallery testifies not to a Friedian struggle against "theatricality" in favor of "absorption." Quite the contrary. As Fried cogently observed, cinema—that is, the physical absence of actors, the projection from behind the spectator, and the screen devoid of objecthood—is "automatically" absorbing.[26] Cinema and other highly mediated environments engender a phenomenology fundamentally different from the immediacy or presence expected—at least until recently—of one's physical environment. As Alison Butler aptly notes: "In a mediatized environment, contemporary gallery filmmakers can no longer derive critical effects from refer-

25. Michael Fried, "Art and Objecthood," in Michael Fried, *Art and Objecthood* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 155.

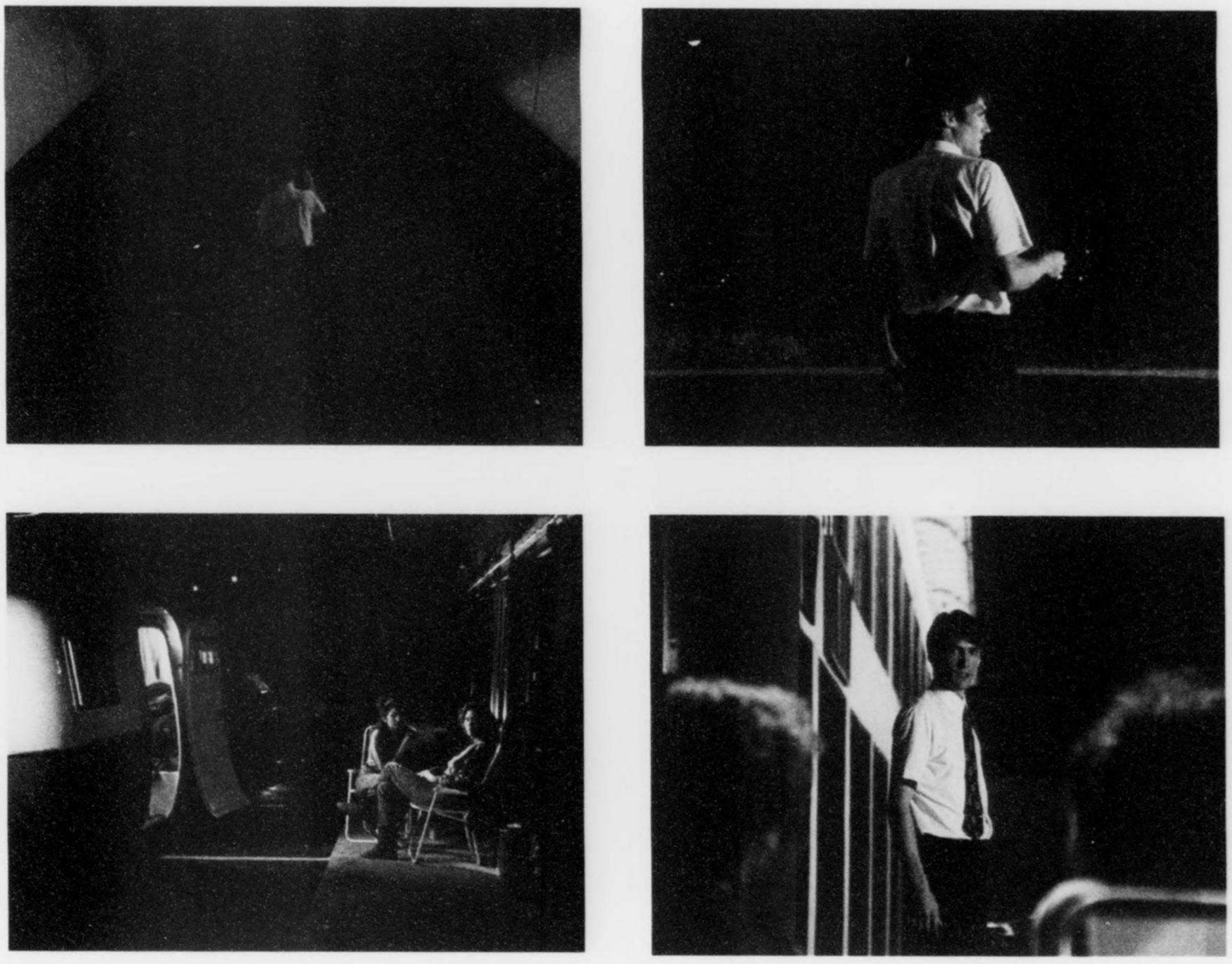
26. Ibid., p. 164. In an extended footnote, Fried recommended an inquiry into the phenomenology of cinematic reception—a recommendation at once presciently ahead of and pitiably behind its time: the phenomenology of cinematic reception had been a preoccupation of countless film critics and theorists (not to mention cinema operators) in the first decades of the century, but became a source of philosophical inquiry again only in the late 1960s and 1970s, shortly after Fried's seminal essay. In retrospect, it appears that the agon between theatricality and absorption that Fried places at the center of modern art may be but a footnote to the conditions of cinematic reception (anticipated in various nineteenth-century technologies). Forty years on, it seems Fried has shelved the issue indefinitely, or, in his words: "The whole question will have to be taken up again on a future occasion." Michael Fried, *Why Photography Matters as Art as Never Before* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), p. 13.

Douglas. "Funny Bus," from
Television Spots. *1987.*

ence to 'real space' and 'real time,' if only because these are no longer understood as the unalloyed substance of everyday experience."[27] An assertion of physical presence in a cinematic environment does not unmask the spectacle any more than the demolition of a toy reveals its inner workings. Furthermore, one cannot reveal darkness through illumination. The darkness of a cinema or black box gallery establishes a paradigm very different from that offered by Minimalism.

In *Overture*, Fried's phenomenology of presence and theology of "presentness"—the absorption achieved by great works of art—gives way to Douglas's media archaeology of absence. The eventual removal of the anthropomorphized machine from the gallery—an excision that unfolded over nearly a decade and that required a sojourn into the cinema—was an acknowledgement, on Douglas's part, that the site of cinema would have to be confronted on its own terms. First, as any number of film theorists have observed, the substitution of an artificial subject position for the spectator is most successful with the elimination of the camera/projector from the

27. Alison Butler, "A Deictic Turn: Space and Location in Contemporary Gallery Film and Video Installation," *Screen* 54, no. 4 (2010), p. 312.



Douglas. "Encampment," from
Monodramas. *1991.*

exhibition space.[28] Much more fundamentally, however, the classical cinematic arrangement is predicated on the extinction of the subject in favor of the luminous image, conditions laid out already in nineteenth-century attractions like the panorama and diorama.[29] As Fried understood, the conditions that govern objecthood and absorption in ordinary life are reversed in highly mediated environments like cinemas. Whereas the Minimalist works attacked by Fried foreground the physiological and institutional construction of space, Douglas's media installation highlights the physiological and institutional annihilation of space that undergirds cinematic and, indeed, many other mediated environments. Any serious meditation on the site of cinema by Douglas would thus require the removal of the black-box "object-cum-subject" from the gallery.

28. See, for example, Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus," in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), esp. pp. 295–96.

29. See Jonathan Crary, "Géricault, the Panorama, and Sites of Reality in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Grey Room* 9 (Fall 2002), pp. 5–25. On the rise of the cinematic *dispositif*, see Jörg Brauns, *Schauplätze: Zur Architektur visueller Medien* (Berlin: Kadmos, 2007), pp. 195–225.

Ironically but necessarily, the transition to a standardized black-box gallery was effected largely through the liquidation of the gallery as a primary site for the reception of Douglas's work.[30] There was, in fact, a double flight: into the cinema—the Ridge Theatre, the Funnel Theatre (Toronto, 1983), and the Robson Square Theatre (Vancouver, 1983), among others—and onto the airwaves. *Television Spots*, which was first aired during regular commercial breaks on local Canadian television stations in 1987, comprises twelve short works (roughly fifteen to thirty seconds each). Droll, incongruous, and devoid of commercial content, the videos proved disconcerting enough that home viewers reportedly called into the station "wondering if the spots were some form of teaser and asking when the real ads would be airing."[31] In 1991, Douglas refined this project and created another dozen short sequences for broadcast television under the banner of *Monodramas*. As with *Television Spots*, most of the works in *Monodramas* lack dénouements or even narrative arcs. Aired repeatedly, one per night, the pieces are utterly forgettable upon first viewing. The television pieces are short, but they feel long: the takes are long, the shots few, the messages withheld; they are exercises in endless deferral. Collectively, *Television Spots* and *Monodramas* are canny *détournements* of late-1980s commercial broadcast television in Canada. But only—and this is their most significant feature—when they were actually broadcast on television.

As Jonathan Crary observed at the time: "Video art, paradoxically, depends for its intelligibility on its isolation from television. It can exist only in the cloister of gallery-museum space or wherever the video monitor claims autonomy and independence from major networks of distribution."[32] Douglas unabashedly situated his work within precisely such networks of distribution rather than in art-world sanctuaries:

> In a way, showing them in the gallery is a cheap shot, it's an easy way to criticize commercial convention, because people will see them differently in that environment. I use the galleries mostly for the convenience of having access to the letterhead, which makes getting access to the airwaves much easier; institutions like talking to other institutions. But I'm interested in the reaction of people who don't specifically set out to see them.[33]

30. This liquidation of the gallery coincided with the rapid decline of the cinema as the primary site of reception for movies. By 1986, according to Douglas Gomery, receipts for rentals and sales of prerecorded tapes (principally movies) for the first time exceeded the box-office take in the United States. Douglas Gomery, *Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992), pp. 283–84.

31. Chris Dafoe, "Visual non sequiturs intrude on the mindlessness of TV," *The Globe and Mail* (January 30, 1992). Similar techniques are now, in fact, widely deployed within the world of advertising.

32. Jonathan Crary, "Eclipse of the Spectacle," in *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation*, ed. Brian Wallis (Boston: David R. Godine, 1984), p. 289, n. 215.

33. Stan Douglas quoted in Dafoe.

In this instance, the gallery was the UBC Fine Arts Gallery, which organized *Monodramas and Loops*, a solo exhibition of Douglas's works, in 1992. Organized, but did not host. For the Gallery itself housed almost nothing of substance.[34] To be sure, the "monodramas" were on view in the gallery, but they were presented on monitors and interspersed with appropriated advertisements that re-created the experience of watching television at home—the site of the main attraction.

The loops in question—*Overture* and *Subject to a Film: Marnie* (1989)—were not on view in the gallery at all but instead were screened at the nearby Starlight Theatre from noon to 5:00 p.m. on January 18 and 19, respectively.[35] The presentation of *Overture* at the Starlight Theatre was the impetus for the removal of the hulking black-box projector from future gallery exhibitions. The fertilization of *Overture* across gallery and cinema is thus a seminal component not only of its exhibition history but also of the form it ultimately assumed. Nevertheless, Douglas recently disavowed the importance of theatrical exhibition in the history and structure of *Overture*. As co-curator of *Beyond Cinema*—a 2006 Berlin exhibition presented in two venues, the Hamburger Bahnhof museum and the Kino Arsenal cinema—Douglas enumerated the criteria that undergirded the choice of venue for each work:

> Works that are materially realized, using projection as a material with extension in space, will be shown in the Hamburger Bahnhof and works that use the window metaphor are being screened in the Arsenal Kino—as opposed to making an art gallery into a cinema.[36]

Overture was exhibited in the Hamburger Bahnhof; projector, looper, and other equipment were removed from the gallery space and secured in a projec-

34. The *Monodramas* were broadcast on BCTV during late-night programming from January 13 through February 5, 1992. The works exhibited exclusively in the gallery were hardly independent; they were, on the one hand, framed photo-textual treatments of the *Monodramas*, i.e., the residues of an earlier piece, and, on the other, *Accompaniment to a Cinematographic Scene: Ruskin B.C.*, a photo-textual mock-up for a future piece.

35. Douglas's *Marnie* is something of a 1980s remake of a pivotal office burglary scene from Alfred Hitchcock's late classic *Marnie* (1964). Shot on distressed black-and-white film (as opposed to Hitchcock's Technicolor), devoid of recorded sound, and looped just before the eponymous heroine can open the safe, Douglas's *Marnie* transforms Hitchcock's psycho(analytic)-thriller into glorified surveillance footage of an anonymous corporate office. In retrospect, the 1992 removal of *Marnie* from the gallery gains particular resonance, as the history of the Starlight Theatre quite nearly replicates the transformation effected on Hitchcock's film. Designed and built as the Bay Theatre by the Dominion Construction company in 1938, just as Hitchcock was lured West, the movie theater thrived during the golden age of Hollywood, struggled in the 1980s, and, in 1994, closed permanently, only to be landmarked and reopened as retail and corporate office space at the end of the decade. The five-hour exhibition of *Marnie* in the Starlight Theatre testifies to the productive imbrication of Douglas's works within the larger socio-economic media networks, not least the death and dispersal of theatrical film.

36. Stan Douglas and Christopher Eamon, "Regarding Shadows," in *Beyond Cinema: The Art of Projection*, ed. Joachim Jäger, Gabriele Knapstein, and Anette Hüsch (Ostfildern: Hatje Cantz, 2006), p. 18. The film program at Kino Arsenal was titled *Beyond the Museum*.

tion booth at the rear. This has been the stable presentation format for *Overture* since the 1990s. And yet, as Douglas was well aware, *Overture* emphatically undermined any simple opposition between the cinema and the museum, between the metaphoric window and material extension in space.

It was the great merit of a 1998 exhibition in Vienna to exploit, rather than suppress, *Overture*'s radically ambivalent position vis-à-vis exhibition venues, past and present. *Ghost Story: Nachbilder des Kinos* at the Künstlerhaus, Vienna, was organized around the displacement of this opposition.[37] Three 16mm film installations by Douglas were augmented by the still works of roughly a dozen other artists. Douglas's work, in particular *Overture*, afforded the opportunity for an historical, conceptual, and institutional exploration of the relationship between the museum and the cinema—specifically, the Künstlerhaus gallery and its physically contiguous but programmatically distinct cinema. Built in the 1860s, the Künstlerhaus was the venerable home of Austria's oldest artists' association; after World War II, a cinema, known as the Künstlerhaus Kino, was appended to the original building. By the late 1990s, the cinema was a profit center for the Künstlerhaus, which outsourced the traditional art-house programming to Constantin Film Verleih. The curators of *Ghost Story: Nachbilder des Kinos* worked to bring the two exhibition venues into dialogue.

At the center of this dialogue was *Overture*. On the one hand, there was a relatively traditional exhibition on the second floor of the Künstlerhaus, including two film-based installations by Douglas. On the other hand, there was a film program that ran—not unlike Douglas's first movie-theater exhibitions—outside normal screening times, often while the exhibition was closed. These two venues corresponded closely to Douglas's conceptual opposition between "material with extension in space" and "the window metaphor"; the link between them was *Overture*. Screened as a loop projection, daily from 10:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. (after which Künstlerhaus Kino film programming resumed), *Overture* was a film installation installed in a classical cinema. Programmatically tied to the art exhibition on the second floor but occupying the same space, architecture, and technology as the film program, *Overture* made for a disconcerting bridge between the cinema and the gallery: the 280 seats in the theater remained largely vacant and the emptiness contributed to the sense of the death of cinema.[38]

And yet the ensemble of a continuous, repeated short film program with

37. See Alexander Horwath and Bert Rebhandl, *Ghost Story: Nachbiler des Kinos* (Vienna: Künstlerhaus, 1998).

38. This emptiness is a necessary component of the theatrical installation of *Overture*. As Scott Watson remarked in regard to the 1992 shift from the gallery to Starlight cinema of *Overture* and *Subject to a Film: Marnie*: "Both pieces have, however, evolved so that they can be screened in cinemas, again running continuously. There they address the legendary collective. But in actuality, unable to sustain the repetitiousness (potentially unending) of the work, the audience will be small and diminishing, coming and going, making a collective response all but impossible." Scott Watson, "Stan Douglas' Uncertain Subjects," in *Stan Douglas: Monodramas and Loops* (Vancouver: UBC Fine Arts Gallery, 1992), p. 14.

intermittent audiences also recalled the birth of cinema—an association buttressed by the grainy footage and the eighteen frames per second projection rate.[39] At stake in *Overture*, therefore, is not only the remembrance of past images and texts but also the reconstruction of idioms or entire working systems for the presentation of specific audiovisual material. Alexander Horwath—co-curator of *Ghost Story* and now director of the Austrian Film Museum—recently issued the following dictum for film preservation: "In film the 'artifact' to be transmitted into the future is not just (but also) the strip, not just (but also) the apparatus [i.e., projector], not just (but also) the screening space; what needs to be transmitted into the future is *the set of relations between them while they are in performance*—the working system."[40] *Overture* is in no way a historical reconstruction of the working system tied to Edison's panoramic pictures. And yet the parameters delineated by Horwath are not dissimilar to Douglas's stated ambitions:

> I had this notion of the idioms of media at certain moments. Instead of a medium being transparent . . . the possibilities of certain mediums are used at certain moments in history for particular purposes. And those requirements change over time. I was thinking "what kinds of possibilities, of representations of time, of duration, of space and of culture we lose as these idioms become historical and then disappear, or become anachronistic to audiences?" That's something which I've always been looking at in order to find and reconstruct an historical idiom that is contemporary with the subject-matter I'm just trying to address in the particular works.[41]

In place of medium-specificity, Douglas engages the historical specificity of media. Rather than fetishize technological obsolescence, he disinters historically contingent subjectivity. Douglas's media idioms—coupled with Horwath's working systems—provide a compelling matrix in which to situate *Overture*.[42] *Overture* does not preserve the original 35mm nitrates; the 16mm safety prints are reconstructed from the Library of Congress paper film collection. Nor does the projector lay claim to historical fidelity, irrespective of its position inside or outside the gallery

39. This mode of spectatorship—punctuated by the declaration "This is where we came in"—survived in North America long enough for Douglas to attend kung fu movies in this fashion. It also dovetails with the expectations for gallery installations—expectations Douglas has thwarted in recent works like *Inconsolable Memories* (2005) and *Klatsassin* (2006). As Douglas has noted, the conceptual underpinning for these works is their variable loop structure, as first explored in *Overture*. See Stan Douglas, "Stan Douglas Talks About *Klatsassin*," *Artforum* (October 2006), p. 233.

40. Alexander Horwath, in Paolo Cherchi Usai, et al., *Film Curatorship* (Vienna: Österreichisches Filmmuseum, 2008), p. 89.

41. Robert Storr, "Stan Douglas: Alienation and Proximity," *Art Press* 262 (November 2000), p. 29.

42. See Alexander Alberro's discussion of contemporaneous works by Eija-Liisa Ahtila, similarly split between galleries and cinemas, and the negotiation of particular display apparatuses, each with "its own history, its own parameters, its own limits and its own language and grammar." Alexander Alberro, "The Gap Between Film and Installation Art," in *Art and the Moving Image*, ed. Tanya Leighton (London: Tate, 2008), p. 429.

and despite the frame rate. Nor, finally, does any installation of the work—in the Starlight Theatre, Künstlerhaus Kino, or any of the galleries and museums in which it has been exhibited—reconstruct the original working systems associated with the Edison footage. Rather than attempt archival preservations of the film, the projector, or the screening space, Douglas inscribes the working systems within the work: "I usually hide the gear in my installations—because it's already visible. . . . All these things are *in* the image."[43] In the case of *Overture*, that which is visible in the image, that which preserves—and cancels—past working systems and media idioms is articulated through darkness.

G. A. Smith. Kiss in the Tunnel. *1899.*

*

Before we can delve back into *Overture*'s darkness, however, it is imperative that the original working systems associated with Edison's panoramic pictures or phantom rides be enumerated. For it is through these systems that we can best access *Overture*'s darkness. Panoramic pictures are films that resemble the views from railway cars or, more precisely, the moving panoramas that simulated them.[44] Train travel, panoramas, early cinema, and a host of other nineteenth-century technologies of vision partook in what Wolfgang Schivelbusch has termed "panoramic perception," a form of perception that "no longer belonged to the same space of the perceived object: the traveler [or spectator] saw the objects, landscapes, etc., *through* the apparatus which moved him through the world."[45] Shown in 1900, the Trans-Siberian Railroad Panorama, for example, sat spectators in mock railway carriages and presented them with a plethora of screens moving at various speeds: faster in the foreground, slower in the dis-

43. Stan Douglas in Diana Thater, "Diana Thater in Conversation with Stan Douglas," in *Stan Douglas*, ed. Scott Watson (London: Phaidon, 1998), p. 22.
44. See Patrick Keiller, "Phantom Rides: The Railway and Early Film," in *The Railway and Modernity*, ed. Matthew Beaumont and Michael Freeman (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2007).
45. Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey*, trans. Anselm Hollo (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 64.

tance. Accompanied by sound effects and an explanatory narrative, the moving panorama simulated the experience of train travel.[46]

Overture not only references but also re-creates the experience of early panoramic pictures or, more specifically, phantom rides. Phantom rides were a subgenre of panoramic pictures shot from the front (often the cowcatcher) of a train. They construct a point of view that is at once highly subjective—the viewer assumes the perspective of the camera—and almost entirely inaccessible, even to a train conductor. As the rival components of the name suggest, phantom rides produce a sense of vision and motion at once highly corporeal and disembodied. Early reviewers of *Overture*, not unlike turn-of-the-century spectators, described the encounters as "vertiginous."[47]

In some phantom rides, the darkness of the tunnels competed with the sublimity of the landscapes and speed of the train for the attention of the viewer. The raw attraction of the darkness of tunnels was described in the following terms in 1897:

> The train was invisible and yet the landscape swept by remorselessly and far away. The bright day became a spot of darkness. That was the mouth of the tunnel and toward it the spectator was hurled as if a fate was behind him. The spot of blackness became a canopy of gloom. The darkness closed around the spectator being flung through the cavern with the demoniac energy behind him.[48]

As the novelty wore off, phantom rides generally—and tunnels in particular—were turned into vehicles for embryonic narrative structures. One such film was G. A. Smith's *Kiss in the Tunnel* (1899), which

Bamforth. Kiss in the Tunnel. *1899.*

46. Douglas previously explored the legacy of panoramas in *Panoramic Rotunda* (1985), a circular photo-panorama of a swamp, reduced in size to roughly one meter in height, splayed open, and mounted on a wall in four quarter-circular sections.

47. Peter Culley, "Dream As Dialectic: Two Works by Stan Douglas," *Vanguard* 16, no. 4 (1987), p. 10.

48. *New York Mail Express* (September 21, 1897), p. 2. Cited in Charles Musser, *Before the Nickelodeon* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), p. 262. The analyses that follow are much indebted to Musser.

Edwin S. Porter. What Happened in the Tunnel. *1903.*

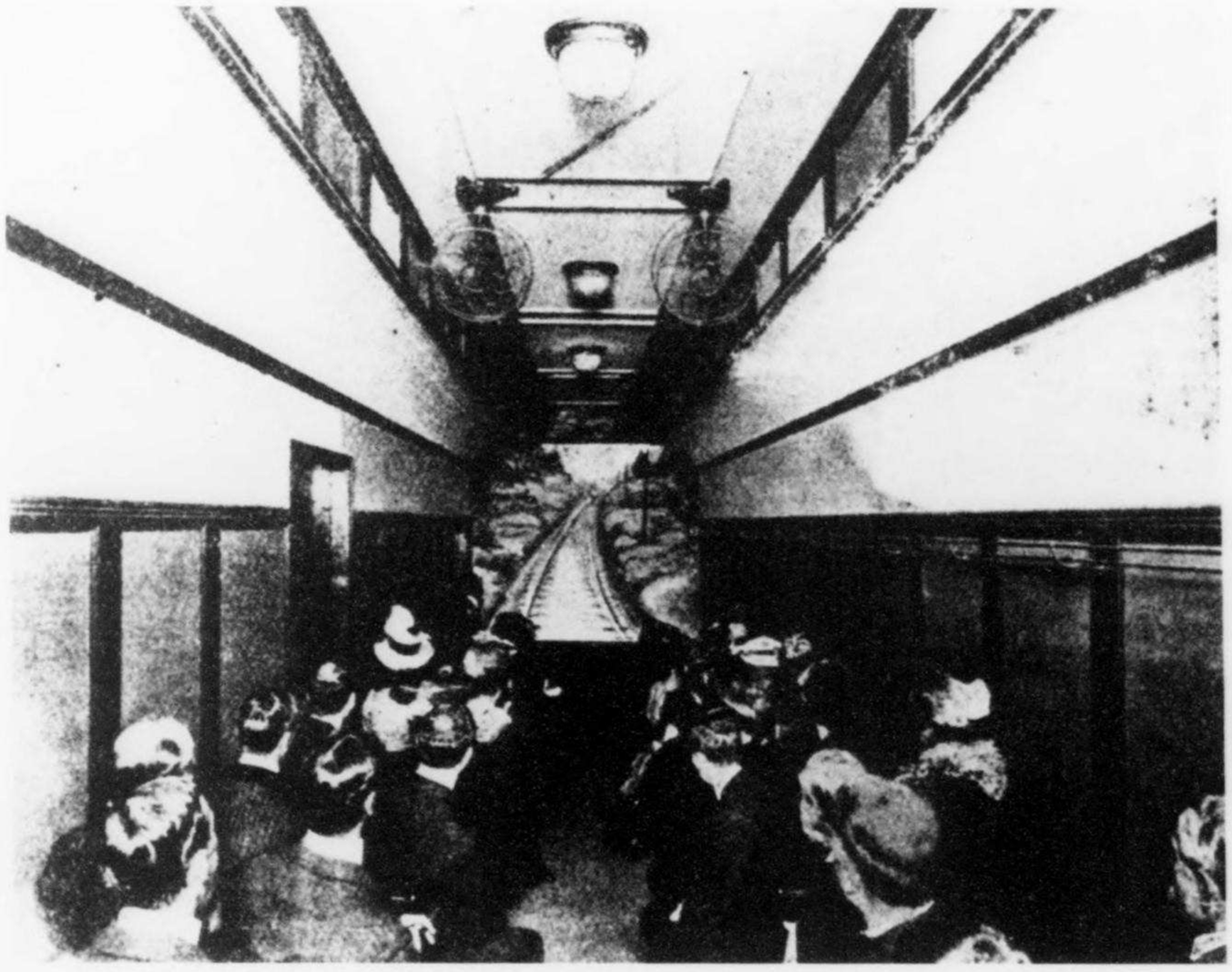
depicted a couple embracing in a railway carriage.[49] Smith recommended that exhibitors insert the film into the middle of a phantom ride, after the train entered the tunnel. (The black windows of the painted sets were thereby justified by the ostensible darkness of the tunnel.)[50] Others quickly developed the gag further. Ferdinand Zecca's *Flirt en chemin de fer* (1901) depicts the same basic scene, but with a window view of the passing landscape matted in so that the film no longer required a separate phantom ride. Sigmund Lubin's *Love in a Railroad Train* (1902) portrays a man's frustrated efforts to steal a kiss from a female passenger as the train enters a tunnel: when they emerge from the darkness, the gentleman discovers he has kissed her baby's bottom instead. Working for Edison, Edwin S. Porter combined elements from each of these films to create *What Happened in the Tunnel* (1903), the most famous exemplar of the micro-genre. The frustrated lover, played by Gilbert M. "Broncho Billy" Anderson, makes flirtatious overtures to a female passenger, who is accompanied by a maid, either black or in black-face. Extended darkness indicates that the train has entered a tunnel. "The tunnel," as Jane Gaines has argued, "is especially titillating as represented on the screen because it places us in relation to a double darkness—the theater auditorium *and* the screen—referencing the thrilling frustration of the old carnival attraction [i.e., the love tunnel] in which we are thrust into darkness and whisked out again."[51] When they emerge from the dark tunnel—and the image reappears on-screen—the man discovers that he is kissing the maid, the women having switched places and now brimming with laughter at his expense.

In a variety of forms—during the same years in which Edison's phantom rides were shot and exhibited—the depicted darkness of tunnels figured prominently as cinematic attraction and nascent narrative. The doubled darknesses—that of the spaces of reception—varied even more profoundly: music halls, dime museums, fairgrounds, theaters, and makeshift spaces of all kinds. As institutional film historian Douglas Gomery argues, in the years immediately prior to the rise of nickelodeons (roughly 1900–1905),

49. The film was immediately remade by the Bamforth Company.

50. Several of these and other early films discussed in this essay are widely available, most easily—if not always most accurately—on YouTube.

51. Jane Gaines, *Fire and Desire: Mixed-Race Movies in the Silent Era* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), p. 55. Gaines provides an extended analysis of race in this and related films.



Hale's Tours interior. Ca. 1906.

"there was a vacuum. Motion pictures had no permanent home."[52] The doubled darknesses were similarly homeless—constituted by not one but many different sites, experiences, and subjects of cinema.

The exhibition history of *Overture* attests to working systems in the throes of radical transformation and reinvention. So too the historical working systems that animated Edison's phantom-ride footage. At the 1904 St. Louis Exposition, George C. Hale introduced the paying public to Hale's Tours, a simulated, cinematic train ride. Spectator-passengers sat in a real railroad car and felt the jolts and the sways of railroad travel (manufactured by mechanical and, eventually, electrical equipment beneath); they heard the sounds of the rail, felt wind in their hair, and saw, in place of the front wall, a screen onto which phantom rides were projected from the rear. With the help of Hale's Tours and its many imitators, spectators could travel the world—phantom rides were shot in Tokyo, Switzerland, British Columbia, Ceylon, Hanoi, Vesuvius, and countless other exotic destinations. Hale's Tours were among the first permanent, widespread, specialized motion-picture shows, and they played an essential role in establishing dedicated cinematic spaces. They served as a short-lived but significant bridge between cinematic peep shows and vaudeville presentations, dominant at the turn of the century, and the provisional moving-picture theaters that dotted progressively larger swathes of the North American landscape dur-

52. Gomery, p. 16. As home-video technology helped cement the dominance of television, the 1980s witnessed a return of cinematic homelessness (or its reluctant domestication)—a homelessness hardly conjoined with innocent openness.

ing the second half of the decade.[53] *Overture*'s marginally diegetic darkness recalls these diverse and inchoate darknesses but also hints at a more fundamental darkness whose hegemony was still to come.

As for the experience of these simulation rides, Lauren Rabinovitz argues that Hale's Tours "articulated a seemingly contradictory process for the spectator: they attempted to dematerialize the subject's body through its extension into the cinematic field while they repeatedly emphasized the corporeality of the body and the physical delirium of the senses."[54] Such embodied viewing, like the cinema of attractions more generally, would soon be relegated to specific moments in genres like pornography, adventure, horror, and melodrama.[55] But even these genres forsook the elaborate trappings of Hale's Tours in favor of what would become the classical working system of cinema. According to Noël Burch:

> Hale's Tours are above all emblematic of a tendency which marked the first decade of cinema and which consisted in interventions from outside the film, interventions in spectatorial space, destined to achieve a goal which history was to show could only be achieved, on the contrary, by blotting out spectatorial space.[56]

Nothing blotted out spectatorial space more effectively than darkness. By the time Proust published *Swann's Way* (1913), Paris and other major cities witnessed the rise of the first structures built primarily for cinematic projection and the isolation of spectators. Darkness was literally written into cinema operating manuals, and it is that darkness that still pervades major motion-picture theaters.[57]

Alongside the rise of permanent sites for the exhibition of cinema (c. 1905–1910) and the construction of theaters exclusively or primarily for the exhi-

53. See Raymond Fielding, "Hale's Tours: Ultrarealism in the Pre-1910 Motion Picture," in *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John Fell (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).

54. Lauren Rabinovitz, "From Hale's Tours to Star Tours: Virtual Voyages, Travel Ride Films, and the Delirium of the Hyper-Real," in *Virtual Voyages: Cinema and Travel*, ed. Jeffrey Ruoff (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), p. 42.

55. On the cinema of attractions, see Wanda Strauven, ed., *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007).

56. Noël Burch, "Primitivism and the Avant-Gardes: A Dialectical Approach," in *Narrative, Apparatus, Ideology*, ed. Philip Rosen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), p. 491. In a particularly telling incident, Adolph Zukor—operator of a Hale's Tours pavilion at Union Square in New York and future Hollywood impresario—inserted Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) into the middle of a phantom ride in a desperate attempt to lure back jaded audiences. A point-blank shot from the revolver of a bandit transformed the spectators into victims and inaugurated a captivating narrative no longer tied to railroad simulations. The gambit was a success. Zukor tore out the Hale's Tours accessories and established the first traditional theater in what would become a vertically integrated film empire that eventually included the Bay Theatre in Vancouver. See Adolph Zukor, *The Public Is Never Wrong* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1953), p. 48.

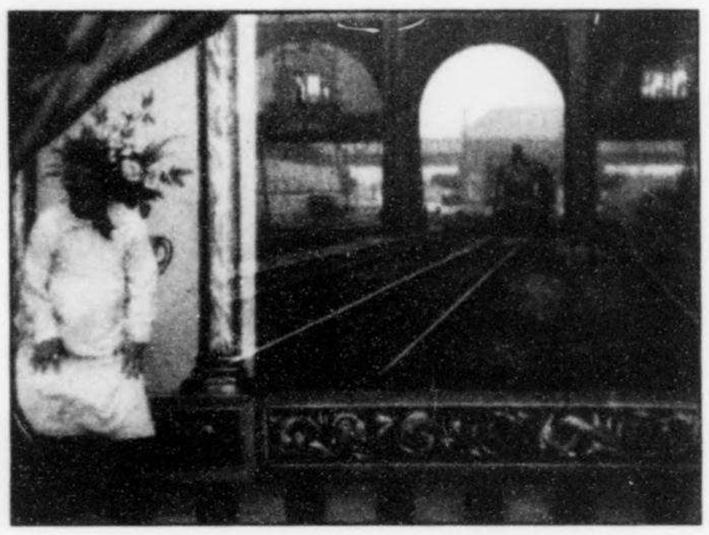
57. On the development of cinemas at this time and place, see Jean-Jacques Meusy, "Palaces and Holes in the Wall: Conditions of Exhibition in Paris on the Eve of World War I," *Velvet Light Trap* 37 (1996). On the development of American cinemas more generally, see Ina Rae Hark, *Exhibition: The Film Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002).

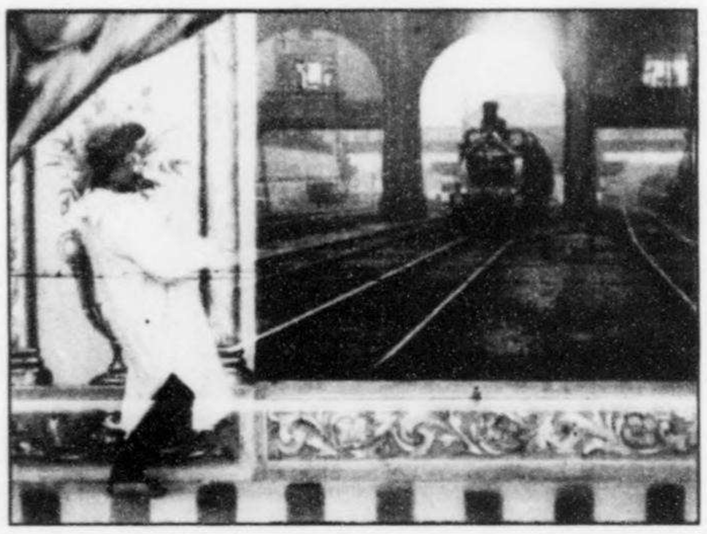
bition of film (beginning in the 1910s), the relative darkness of movie theaters gained discursive texture. According to Frank Richardson, author of a popular handbook for managers and operators of motion-picture theaters, "The amount of light to be used in the auditorium is a matter concerning which there has been a great deal of pretty hot debate."[58] Although a systematic excursus on the standardization of cinematic darkness in the early decades of the twentieth century is beyond the scope of this essay,[59] there can be little doubt that the historical period staked out by *Overture* coincides with the disciplining of cinematic darkness through legal, architectural, and technological means; that is, an effort (not always successful) to suppress the body of the spectator, dematerialize the space of reception, and prohibit the potentially salacious activities that could transpire therein. Despite the multifarious attempts to undermine it—by film-palace stage shows, drive-in teenagers, multiplex popcorn, and countless other incursions into the classical cinematic experience—this hegemonic form of darkness has solidified its reign over the theatrical reception of cinema; indeed, the cinema's decline as a primary site of film reception has coincided with an increased emphasis on cinematic darkness in the movie theaters that survive.

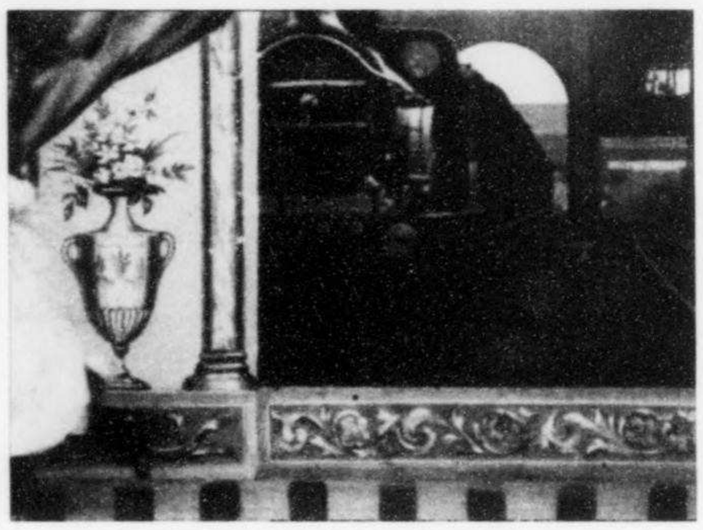
Every minute the spectator spends in *Overture* begins and ends in darkness. Landscapes change dramatically. Telegraph poles fly by punctually. Bridges and precipices and trestles come and go. But few seconds pass before a black point emerges in the distance. That point swells into the mouth of a tunnel. And that tunnel devours the spectator and gives her over to a darkness darker than any Hollywood film could bear. It is a darkness that crosses the threshold of the screen and infuses the space of reception. But even more, it is a darkness that negotiates the immediacy of the present and the radical diversity and alterity of the past. *Overture* is doubly situated at the cusp of hegemonic darkness. The first darkness is that of the standardized, late-twentieth-century black-box gallery in which, over the course of a decade, *Overture* found a stable home. The naturalness of this now familiar darkness is compromised by a second—but historically primary—one, which spans the inaugural decade of the twentieth century. In *Overture*, this darkness is figured in the vertiginous movement of Edison's phantom rides and the lugubrious prose of Proust, two seemingly irreconcilable sources. What their darknesses share is the wonderment produced by virtual travel and corporeal abandon—that is, the capacity to inhabit other bodies and other spaces. As Douglas's Proustian narrator intones: "I could not even be sure at first who I was. . . . I had lost all sense of the place." Just as Proust's narrator confuses the darkness of his bedroom with that of Combray, Tansonville, Balbec, and Paris, so too the spectator perceives not only the darkness of her surroundings but also that of fair-

58. Frank Herbert Richardson, *Motion Picture Handbook* (New York: The Moving Picture World, 1916), p. 635.

59. I am at work on such an excursus as part of a book-length art and media history of artificial darkness in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.







Robert W. Paul.
The Countryman's First Sight of the Animated Pictures. *1901.*

grounds, dime museums, Hale's Tours, and vaudeville theaters. Rather than assert corporeality, *Overture* arouses a century of sensual disembodiment. Rather than insist on material extension in space, *Overture* activates a hundred years of structured spacelessness. Rather than parade outmoded technologies, *Overture* elucidates the enduring power of choreographed darkness. In place of a pseudo-recovery of the body, an empty rehabilitation of space, or a fetishistic baring of the device, *Overture* blends the phenomenological darkness of the room with the residual darkness of cinema's inchoate first decades and a premonition of its imminent hegemonic form. Rather than answer Beckett's question, *Overture* asks it historically and with the same inexorable persistence: *Why in another dark or in the same?*

Postscript

Across bridges and trestles, through valleys and tunnels, *Overture* compels the viewer inexorably forward. The viewer "cannot help but adhere to the movement of the train as though it were his own body."[60] *Overture* demands neither the suspension nor the interrogation of disbelief. Rather, just as Douglas historicizes the darkness that envelops spectatorial bodies, so too does he marshal the cinematic train toward the dialectical synthesis of dreaming and waking, immersive pleasure and critical distance, myth and demystification. For if the train of shadows emerged from the nineteenth century as part of a distinct screen practice, it traversed the twentieth century primarily as myth.

Few topoi from the first decades of cinema are more overdetermined than trains.[61]

60. Jean-Christophe Royoux, "The Conflict of Communication," in *Stan Douglas* (Paris: Editions du Centre Pompidou, 1993), p. 59.

61. For an extensive overview, see Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997).

The Ur-image of cinematic projection is of crowds fleeing before an oncoming train at the Salon Indien du Grand Café in Paris during the first public screening of the Lumières' cinematograph on December 28, 1895. Maxim Gorky captured the sentiment best:

> Suddenly there is a click, everything vanishes and a railway train appears on the screen. It darts like an arrow straight towards you—watch out! It seems as though it is about to rush into the darkness where you are sitting and reduce you to a mangled sack of skin, full of crumpled flesh and splintered bones, and destroy this hall and this building, so full of wine, women, music and vice, and transform it into fragments and into dust.
>
> But this, too, is merely a train of shadows.[62]

As implied in Gorky's account and confirmed in recent scholarship, the image of spectatorial flight is cinema's founding myth and nothing more: no evidence supports claims that spectators literally fled from before an oncoming cinematic train.[63] The lack of historical evidence, however, hardly proved an impediment to the making of the myth. In 1901, Robert W. Paul, a pioneer of British film, shot *The Countryman's First Sight of the Animated Pictures*, which was quickly adapted by Edwin S. Porter, for Edison, as *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1902). In both films, the images onscreen are matted in, the action is framed relatively tightly, and the theatrical environment is difficult to discern. But as the extended descriptive title makes clear, the high-point of the action is impossible to miss: "a farmer viewing the approaching train on screen takes to his heels." This episode—one of three that mock the gullibility of fictive audiences—documents neither the conditions of cinematic reception at the turn of the century nor the primitive credulity of early audiences. Rather, the films promulgated a widespread myth regarding the subject formed by the cinematic apparatus.

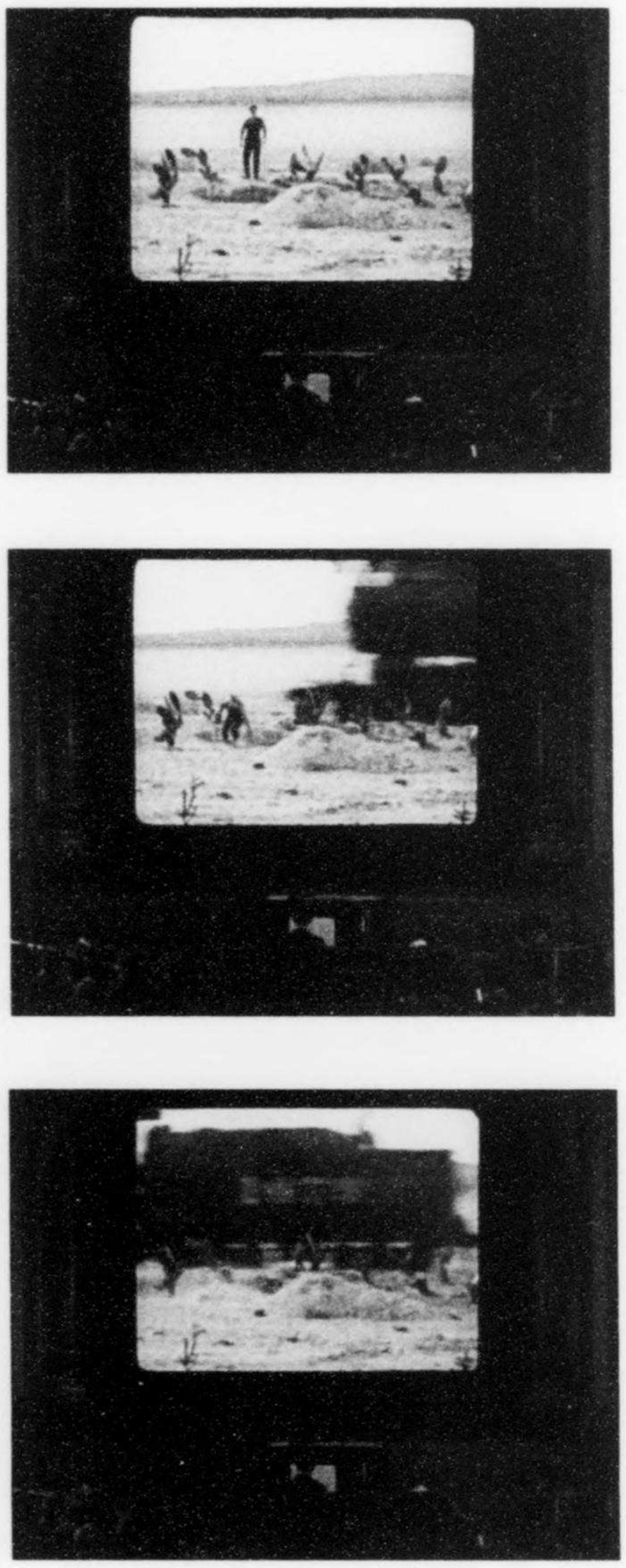
The myth of the train effect was revived with regularity in the first decades of cinema and survives as a reference point for avant-garde filmmaking to the present.[64] *Overture*'s first curator considered "Douglas'[s] use of train imagery [to be] an ironic salute to the first commercially released film [*sic*], the Lumière Brothers' *Train Arriving at the Station*."[65] The reference is real, even if the relationship between the two works is more complex. For Douglas addresses not the Lumières' film so much as the myth for which it became the primary signifier. That myth has spawned dialecti-

62. Maxim Gorky, "The Lumière Cinematograph," in *The Film Factory*, ed. Richard Taylor and Ian Christie (London: Routledge, 1994), p. 26.

63. See, esp., Martin Loiperdinger, "Lumière's Arrival of the Train: Cinema's Founding Myth," *The Moving Image* 4, no. 1 (2004).

64. On the persistence of the train motif in avant-garde filmmaking, see Christa Blümlinger, "Lumière, the Train and the Avant-Garde," in Strauven, *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded.*

65. Young, "The Mechanics of Memory," n.p.



Buster Keaton.
Sherlock Jr. *1924.*

cally twinned responses. The train has figured the collective dream consciousness of a cinematic public and, inversely (through its subversion), the waking consciousness of the revolutionized masses. In the first instance, Buster Keaton serves as paradigmatic;[66] in the second instance, it is the work of Soviet director Dziga Vertov.

In *Sherlock Jr.* (1924), Keaton plays a film projectionist who projects himself into the film as its nimble and cunning protagonist. The conceit's canonical status within the history of film was confirmed one year prior to *Overture* in Woody Allen's homage *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985).[67] In *Sherlock Jr.*, Keaton the projectionist falls asleep on the job and—through the help of double exposures and other tricks of the trade—dreams himself into the film. Keaton's first attempts to cross the threshold into the film are rebuffed as he is flung back over the orchestra and into the auditorium. The audience—utterly absorbed in its own collective dream—does not register Keaton's shenanigans. Highly orchestrated montage—theater sets followed by location shots—makes the transition from theater to film virtually imperceptible. With each subsequent montage, Keaton's brushes with danger escalate: perched at the edge of a cliff, surrounded by lions, and, most treacherous of all, nearly run over by an oncoming train. Like Paul's countryman and Porter's Uncle Josh, Keaton takes to his heels. But unlike his mythical predecessors, Keaton dives from before a real train, one that travels across the screen rather than toward the

66. As Douglas notes in relation to Beckett's *Film* (1963), in which Keaton had his last star turn: "as a *self-consciously* silent movie it couldn't hope for a better Object than Buster Keaton." Stan Douglas, "Goodbye Pork-Pie Hat 1988," in *Stan Douglas*, ed. Scott Watson (London: Phaidon, 1998), p. 15.

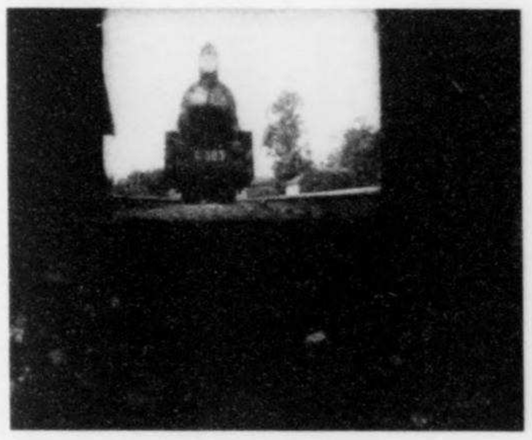
67. Symptomatically, see Dan Georgakas, "The Purple Rose of Keaton," in *Buster Keaton's Sherlock Jr.*, ed. Andrew Horton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

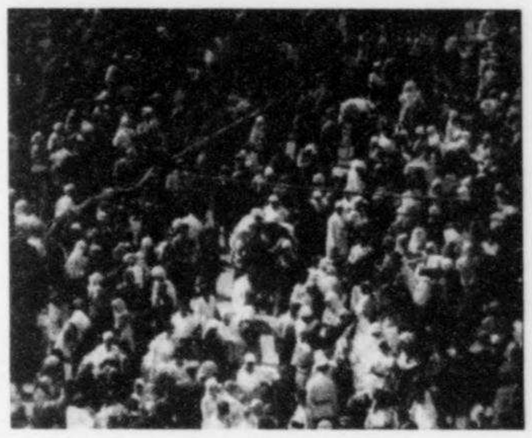
audience. Thus, *Sherlock Jr.* represents classical dream consciousness as it abandons the theater to enter the world of film.[68]

Despite the complexity of the montage sequence, however, Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* retains strong ties to early comedic shorts: most of the gags in the film derive directly from the vaudeville stage and have little by way of trick cinematography. Keaton—that paragon of silent cinema unable (or unwilling) to translate his talents into the sound era—is the perfect proxy for the unfulfilled dreams and dreaming of classical cinema. Film critic Robert Aron went so far as to praise Keaton at the expense of Man Ray and Luis Buñuel, whose films he considered the only ones of merit made in France. In Keaton's films

> the passage from the real to the unreal occurs without rupture; and in the American films adventure, love, and the supernatural are all tangled up with the material, the social, and the rational—the better to defy them and best them on the grounds which are most familiar to them. The revenge of individuals in the very space of their suffering.[69]

Finally, Keaton—along with other American slapstick eccentrics such as Charlie Chaplin and Mickey Mouse—established, for Walter Benjamin, the central bridge between cinema and dreaming: "less by depicting the dream world itself than by creating figures of collective dream . . . the eccentric . . . was the first to inhabit the new fields of action opened up by film—the first occupant of the newly built house."[70]



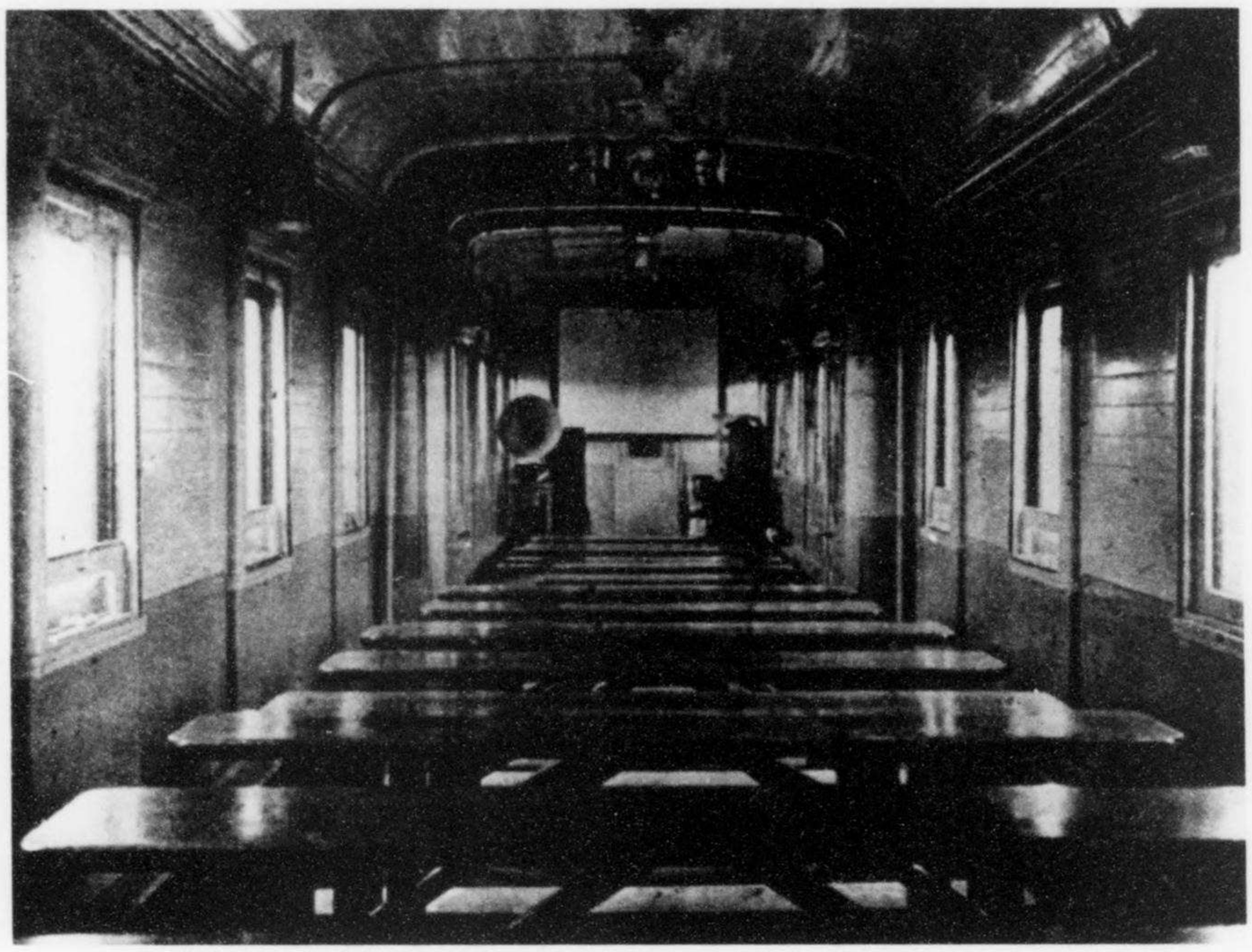


Dziga Vertov. Man with a Movie Camera. *1929.*

68. This point is elaborated in Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), p. 23.

69. Robert Aron, "Films of Revolt," in *French Film Theory and Criticism: 1907–1929*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

70. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings Volume 3, 1935–1938*, ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2002), p. 118. An extensive literature has addressed Benjamin's treatment of Chaplin, Mickey Mouse, etc. See especially the work of Miriam Hansen.



Interior of Vertov's cinema-wagon, early 1920s.

The dream house of cinema is precisely what Dziga Vertov sought to destroy:

> [T]he movie camera was unfortunate. It was invented at a time when there was no country in which Capital did not reign. The hellish idea of the *bourgeoisie* was to use the new toy for entertaining popular masses, or more precisely for diverting the workers' attention from their basic aim of struggling against their bosses. The starving and semi-starving proletarians, the unemployed, unclenched their iron fists in the electric fog of the movie theaters and succumbed without noticing it to the corrupting influence of the Bosses' cinema.[71]

If the electric fog of movie theaters attracted the masses in order to divert and placate them, Vertov would bring the cinema of truth, *Kinopravda*, directly to the masses in order to enlighten and revolutionize them. Early in his career, the primary vehicle for his propagandistic efforts was the agit-train.[72] The superficial similarities

71. Dziga Vertov, "An introductory speech before a showing of the first part of *Kino-Eye*" (October 13, 1924), in Dziga Vertov, *Lines of Resistance*, ed. Yuri Tsivian, trans. Julian Graffy (Sacile: Le Giornate del Cinema Muto, 2004), p. 102.

72. See Thomas Tode, "Agit-trains, Agit-steamers, Cinema Trucks: Dziga Vertov and Travelling Cinema in the early 1920s in the Soviet Union," in *Travelling Cinema in Europe*, ed. Martin Loiperdinger (Frankfurt a.M.: Stroemfeld Verlag, 2008).

between Hale's Tours and the interior of Vertov's cinema-wagons are betrayed by the following story, which Vertov published in 1929:

> The village of Pavlovskoe near Moscow. A screening. The small place is filled with peasant men and women and workers from a nearby factory. *Kinopravda* is being shown, without musical accompaniment. The noise of the projector can be heard. On screen a train speeds past. A young girl appears, walking straight toward the camera. Suddenly a scream is heard in the hall. A woman runs toward the girl on the screen. She's weeping, with her arms stretched out before her. She calls the girl by name. But the girl disappears. On the screen the train rushes by once more. The lights are turned on. The woman is carried out, unconscious. "What's going on?" a worker-correspondent asks. One of the viewers answers: "It's kino-eye. They filmed the girl while she was still alive. Not long ago she fell ill and died. The woman running toward the screen was her mother."[73]

This is Vertov's most brazen attempt to construct a myth for cinema that would replace illusion and deception with reality and truth. In Vertov's myth, an onscreen train speeds past—twice!—in order to highlight its impotence: Vertov's enlightened audience will not be fooled by trains of shadows. Instead, the scream in the hall is the cry of true recognition, a woman mourning her lost child fortuitously caught by Vertov and his kino-eye comrades.

Vertov inculcated the story's basic tenets in audiences through purely cinematographic means. The finale of *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929) is staged within a movie theater and is an overt attempt to disperse its electric fog—specifically, the Lumière myth. Vertov meticulously inoculates his real audience by way of the depicted audience: before he presents an image of an oncoming train (shot from beneath the tracks and thus much more violent and direct than turn-of-the-century forerunners), Vertov depicts an oncoming train in the film-within-a-film. The lack of fright—let alone flight—on the part of the depicted audience serves as a model for real audiences. The debunked train sequences are interspersed with images of the masses such that the personal, familial truth described in the village of Pavlovskoe is transformed into the public, social truth of the masses, now awakened to their revolutionary role. Famously, Vertov sets *Man with a Movie Camera* in motion through the parallel editing of a woman opening her eyes, a window opening its blinds, and a camera opening its iris. *Man with a Movie Camera* is the very image of waking consciousness.

At certain moments, Walter Benjamin appears to stake the entirety of his unfinished Arcades Project—an archaeology of nineteenth-century Paris cata-

73. Vertov, "From Kino-Eye to Radio-Eye" (1929), in Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), p. 85.

logued through its iron and glass shopping passages—on the dialectical resolution of dream consciousness and waking consciousness in the image of awakening. The twentieth century must awaken from the nightmare of nineteenth-century modernity but retain the utopian dreams it failed to formulate fully, let alone fulfill. In his notes for the 1935 exposé of the project, Benjamin schematically identified the flowering of the arcades under Louis Philippe as thesis (dream consciousness), their decline at the end of the century as antithesis (waking consciousness), and their (Surrealist) rediscovery as synthesis (awakening).[74] The seminal model for this awakening—perched at the threshold of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries but named in neither of Benjamin's Arcades Project exposés—was none other than Proust:

> Is awakening perhaps the synthesis of dream consciousness (as thesis) and waking consciousness (as antithesis)? Then the moment of awakening would be identical with the "now of recognizability," in which things put on their true—surrealist—face. Thus, in Proust, the importance of staking an entire life on life's supremely dialectical point of rupture: awakening. Proust begins with an evocation of the space of someone waking up.[75]

By way of Proust, Douglas, too, begins with the space of someone waking up. The nightmare from which he has awoken is the classical cinema as a regime of disciplinary spectatorship and subject formation—in other words, the electric fog of movie theaters. The dream that he still dreams is left more ambiguous, even inchoate. Indeed, the dream may be of an inchoate space, a space between—if not completely outside—regimes of discipline. *Overture* cannot be reduced either to dream consciousness or to waking consciousness; its absent train belongs neither to Keaton nor to Vertov. But inasmuch as it recalls the inchoate darknesses of early cinema and their eventual standardization, *Overture* affords the viewer the "now of recognizability" promoted by Benjamin and the Surrealists. That recognizability is preserved in the exhibition history of *Overture*—a history that traverses nascent black-box galleries and aging movie theaters. More immediately and importantly, the "now of recognizability" is materially and sensually manifest in the few feet of black leader inserted by Douglas between turn-of-the-century phantom rides. These strips of black leader—and the darknesses they produce and summon—bind *Overture* to the still unspent promise of cinematic darkness. If the cinema is our arcades, *Overture* is a moment of awakening.

74. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 910.
75. Ibid., pp. 463–64.

Mike Kelley: Death and Transfiguration

GEORGE BAKER

I had a standing date with Mike Kelley to visit him at his studio. "Just to talk," he reassured me. An essay on his work had taken me most of the last two years to research and compose, and I had kept my distance, wanting not to come under the artist's sway. But now it was done. Kelley's reactions to the essay arrived in a string of emails, and he asserted little desire to control or influence anything I had to say; encouraging notes, full of minor moments of disagreement ("you can ignore my comments if you wish," he clarified). There were also details, now precious, of process or context: I described a glistening color used in one of Kelley's *Missing Time* paintings (1974–75) as "nail-polish red," and the response arrived: "I actually painted with nail polish in some of these early works. Usually black." Proto-punk, the artist was also, it seemed, pre-Goth (one of these early paintings was in fact entitled *Gothicism*, and another *Gothic Lift*). The last time I saw Mike was at his opening for the gallery exhibition *Destroy All Monsters* in Los Angeles in late November. He was in uniform, big black combat boots, trench coat, leather vest, his hands covered in writing, ink from a ballpoint pen, like something I haven't seen since the self-adornments of some of my punk-leaning peers in high school. He was surrounded by old friends, but also by many strangers, photographers, Los Angeles celebrities, by people claiming his time. "We are going to get together," he reiterated, smiling. "Just to talk." His smile seemed ironic, at least to me, as if he were saying, "What had you been worried about?" But our standing date has been left standing. It was not to be.

*

At times like this, in the wake of the premature loss of a great or important artist, retrospective thoughts do abound, claims for uniqueness or singularity that might never have otherwise occurred. Admittedly random questions spark ideas for potential essays, ones I will probably never write. But I hope someone will.

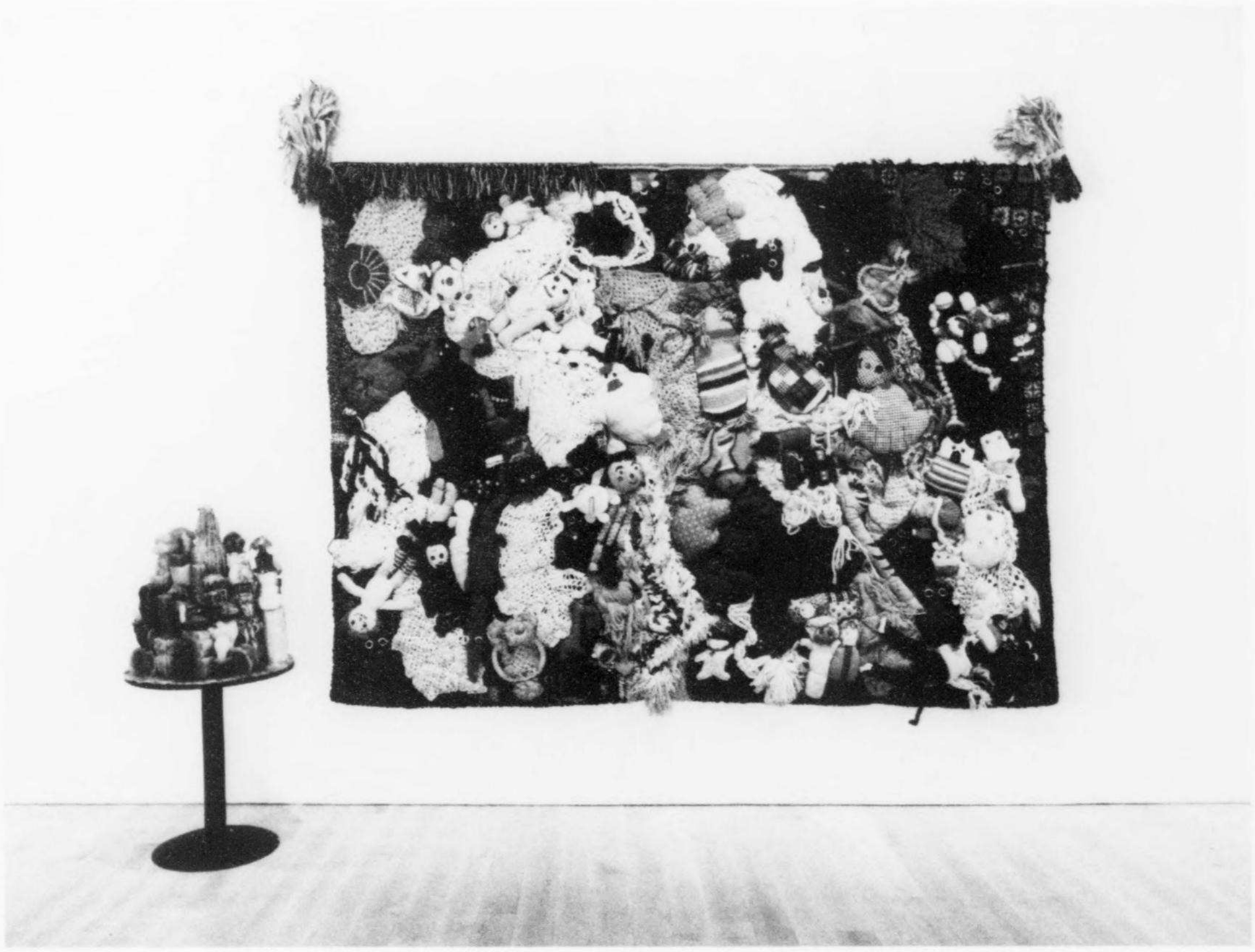
Question one (categorize under the politics of postmodernism): Was there an artist in recent memory who impressed upon his audience such an enduring, visceral attachment to the place from which he came? Gramsci's notion of the "organic intellectual" seems wildly wrong and anachronistic when thinking of

OCTOBER 139, Winter 2012, pp. 183–191. *© 2012 October Magazine, Ltd. and Massachusetts Institute of Technology.*

Kelley's practice, and yet not entirely inappropriate to his strangely aggressive fidelity to the place and circumstance of his youth. Not only would his working-class origins be endlessly interrogated and placed on display, but an entire seething cosmology of youthful enthusiasms structured Kelley's art, returning endlessly in the work, the writing, the interviews. In ways we do not yet fully comprehend, Kelley definitively revised the very notions of a working-class or "popular" art, resurrecting these paradigms from the grave of their late-twentieth-century obliteration, transforming them beyond recognition.[1] Though he hated site-specific art, Kelley's last work will have been, it seems, a full-scale model of his childhood home, a mobile site-specific sculpture for Detroit, things brought full circle long before their time.

Question two (categorize under formalism and postmodernism): Was there a better colorist to emerge since the moment of late modernist painting, Abstract Expressionist or Color Field? Kelley *redefined* color endlessly in his projects, though few seem to have noticed, perhaps bowing to the reputation of the black-and-white severity of his canonical, early 'zine-inspired drawings. With Kelley, we have racist colors (monochromes based on skin types), psychedelic colors, missing colors, black-light colors, tie-dye colors, sex-shop colors, Pepto-Bismol or medicament colors. He really loved yellow, the color of bananas, the color of piss. He really loved green, the color of the Irish, the color of frogs. Color was always already a stereotype of color for Kelley—the cliché as the origin of color, or color as appropriated, named, and categorized. He painted the *Rainbow Coalition*, 1985 ("Oh Glorious Sun," the work exclaimed, "of Rainbow Afro Wigs!"). He worked with ketchup. His titles cried out, *More Tragic! More Plangent . . . More Purple!* But color could also be heartfelt, sentimental, even with (because of) its unrelenting abasement at the hands of culture, the commodity, or kitsch. Nostalgia would be wedded to consumption, literally, in Kelley's photograph *Butter Colored Vision of the Land O' Lakes Girl, Peche Island*, 2001. The work *More Love Hours Than Can Ever Be Repaid*, 1987, with its variegated field of layered afghans and stuffed animals, is among other things one of the great reflections upon color in the entire history of art, local color becoming tied down here—almost sadistically—to drawing-room colors and bedroom colors, to color as emergent from an achingly specific time and place. My "large afghan works were color coded," Kelley wrote to me. "*Lumpenprole* was knitted in fall colors to evoke aging, and *Riddle of the Sphinx* used 'dusk' colors in keeping with the Sphinx's riddle—which also concerns aging. Some of these colors were chosen based on the names of the yarns used." Color increasingly signaled all that Kelley valued in art, standing against all he wished to turn on its head. Color might now be inevitably and unavoidably readymade, but that meant that it was also always hybrid, always open to being mixed. Color was supplemental, excessive,

1. The great essay on this topic is John Miller, "The Poet as Janitor," in *Mike Kelley: Catholic Tastes* (Harry Abrams, New York: 1993), pp. 149–59.



Mike Kelley. More Love Hours Than Can Ever Be Repaid, *right, and* The Wages of Sin, *left. 1987. Courtesy the Whitney Museum of American Art.*

gendered, material—it was social, historical, and class-based—and this is why Kelley devoted himself to it like almost nothing else.[2] Look again.

Question three (uncategorizable): Has any artist painted the anus more frequently, more lovingly, more ludicrously, than he? Picasso, perhaps, but Kelley's fundaments were of a different kind.

*

"Dead things are art, basically."[3] I have to admit that I always read the myriad statements Kelley made about art and death—his project on the Uncanny, his meditation on Paul Thek's meat pieces or the body-cast sculpture from the latter's installation *The Tomb* known as the "Dead Hippie," his stuffed-animal works' evocation of corpses, evisceration, and mutilation—as ironic, even funny. I heard these claims declaimed in Kelley's performance voice, in other words, followed by his cackling, maniacal laughter or his masochistic wailing, even when he was being serious and professorial, direct and workaday: "I'm proposing that art basically addresses death. . . . And death strikes me as an important issue relative to postmodernism."[4]

If I begin these scattered reflections on Kelley's import by borrowing the title of Kelley's groundbreaking text on Paul Thek, perhaps his most luminous essay, it is simply because of course "death" is one of the things in the artist's work transfigured now in relation to his own death.[5] I remain somewhat paralyzed in the face of what has occurred, but at the same time the event brings clarification: one can only be terrifyingly aware now of how central death was to the artist's entire project. Its centrality to his tactics can hardly any longer be ignored. From the beginning—whether we look to the Minimalist-inspired *Birdhouses*, 1978–79, the Conceptualist parodic archives, the stuffed animal accumulations, the false Catholic felt banners, the theatrical props or the masochistic personas of early performances—the notion of the work of art as an *effigy* was the central, defining trope of Kelley's practice. Like Allan McCollum's notion of art as a "surrogate," Kelley's thinking of art as an effigy positioned the work of art not as presence, but

2. One of Kelley's most important statements on color occurs in his essay for the exhibition he curated in 1993, *The Uncanny*. "Along with material itself, color is one of the most loaded signs of the quotidian. The literal use of material is a non sequitur in art. No one would seriously consider the idea of sculpting a body out of actual flesh, or carving a rock out of stone. What would be the purpose of such a redundant exercise? Color is thus set at a difficult conjunction between sign and signified, a problem that is negated in painting because it operates in two-dimensional mental space—which is why painting has been king of Western art history, with sculpture relegated to the role of idiot cousin. Naturalistically colored dolls, mannequins, automata, and wax portrait figures are not included in the generally accepted version of Western art history, and polychrome religious statuary is on the lowest rung of the art hierarchy." Kelley, "Playing with Dead Things: On the Uncanny," in Mike Kelley, *Foul Perfection: Essays and Criticism*, ed. John Welchman (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), pp. 78–79.

3. John Miller, "Mike Kelley Interviewed by John Miller in Los Angeles on March 21, 1991," in *Mike Kelley*, ed. William S. Bartman and Miyoshi Barosh (New York: Art Resources Transfer, 1992), p. 18.

4. "From the Sublime to the Uncanny: Mike Kelley in Conversation with Thomas McEvilley," reprinted in Kelley, *Foul Perfection*, p. 60.

5. Mike Kelley, "Death and Transfiguration: A Letter from America," in *Paul Thek* (Turin: Castello di Rivara, 1992), reprinted in *Foul Perfection*, pp. 138–49.

as an inevitable substitute, a stand-in—one usually under the threat of violence, however, or as a memorial to that which is gone, a product of decimation.

In several works of the early 1990s, Kelley replicated an old college leaflet advertising an "Effigy Hanging Contest" to take place at a sorority house, a contest the artist then claimed he had in fact attended (and won), bringing along his effigy to be hung, a blank, vaguely human form made from old clothes stuffed with newspapers. In my recent essay, I suggest in writing up this event that it must have been a screen memory invented by the artist, an effigy in psychic form, similar to the mostly fabricated *Extracurricular Activity Projective Reconstructions* that have recently made up the monumental video cycle *Day is Done*, 2005. But Kelley insisted to me that the appropriated Effigy Hanging Contest poster was "actual," the event a real one he had in fact attended during college, one that he remembered and endlessly recalled within his projects, as he thought of this "performative intrusion" as one of his first or originary works of art. To see the work of art as an effigy—to see how Kelley twisted the existence of the artwork into that of the effigy—became the standard of my own reading of Kelley's larger project, of his relation to modernism and postmodernism both.

It was a way to begin to comprehend the epochal turn that Kelley's work had taken since the 1990s, the work that followed the varied appropriations of subcultural styles and personas that characterized his emergence in the 1980s, or the stuffed animal sculptures of a project like *Half a Man* that closed that crucial decade, the works for which the artist is perhaps best known. Leading up to and then away from the key piece *Educational Complex*, 1995—the functional equivalent, within the artist's oeuvre, of something like Marcel Duchamp's *Large Glass*, the engine from which a larger host of projects will stem—Kelley had seemingly shifted his attention to an endless recycling of modernist forms, modernist histories, modernist guises. The turn was surprising, given the hostility to modernism evinced by Kelley's earlier subcultural investments, his interest in kitsch as well as the persistence of an almost pre-modernist, underclass practice of craft (knitting, model-building, youthful doodling, homespun carpentry, the endless toils of the amateur hobbyist). The heyday of postmodernism had come and gone, but if it had once been interpreted as implying the death of modernism, Kelley seemed increasingly to want to take this critical idea literally (typically), as something like a provocation. His notion of the aesthetic as a "playing with dead things"—the title of the essay he composed for his exhibition *The Uncanny*—now would be extended to the vast panorama of modernism's critical history.[6] If Kelley's stuffed-animal accumulations had addressed the viewer as literal effigies, the *Educational Complex* continued this address, a collection of architectural memories or ghosts; but it seemed to provide access simultaneously to another modality of the effigy, the notion of form as a cover-up, a stand-in, a surface signaling absence, a chain of substitutions. Hardly sincere, and not exactly simple parody,

6. Kelley, "Playing with Dead Things: On the Uncanny," in *Foul Perfection*, pp. 70–99.

Kelley's work in the last twenty years presented an endless exploration in this sense of modernism as an effigy.

The treatment of modernism as an effigy might look like this: In 1989, Kelley produced a video with Erika Beckman entitled *Blind Country*. In one of its central scenes, Kelley evoked an ur-site of modernist history, the utopian formal explorations of the Bauhaus. Pointing to Wassily Kandinsky's notorious Bauhaus questionnaire where the painter attempted through a statistical survey of his students to assign one primary color to each of the basic geometric shapes—arriving at a yellow triangle, a red square, and a blue circle—Kelley inserted his viewers into a classroom where a priggish teacher confronted an audience of orally-fixated, candy-licking students with similar "primal configurations." Each colored shape was able to be removed from a background of the same primary color—revealing a black void beneath it—and then replaced, in a repeated action that could only evoke Freud's "fort-da" game, associating abstract form not with logic and transcendence, but with absence, trauma, and loss. These would always be the engines of Kelley's sense of form. "HERE," the teacher called out, demonstrating the resplendent fullness of his three primal shapes. "GONE," he lamented, uprooting the geometric form from its ground, revealing the dark chasm hiding beneath.

In a subsequent scene, Kelley suddenly emerged in the role of the "teacher," ranting and raving while displaying his primal configurations in a classroom now itself gone dark and smoke-filled like a stinking nightclub, with the infantile students devolved one step further into pig-faced, snorting animals. "What [do] they remind you of?" the teacher raged, while facing the shapes drawn upon a blackboard, bending over and presenting his backside to the students. A blue square suddenly emerged, superimposed over Kelley's anus. "OK," he fumed, "well, what *do* you see?" A red circle appeared, to punctuate Kelley's crotch as he turned back around. This was followed by a yellow triangle, floating over the artist's armpit as he raised his arms. Here then were a series of aesthetic "fig leaves," modernist forms not just attached to the lowly genitals or to the body, but configured as direct displacements from them: abstract form as an effigy or a covering, laid over a gaping void, or on top of the body, linked to base, instinctual desires.[7]

Looking back over his production, Kelley's work might seem at first to propose an overwhelming archaeology of modernist or avant-garde forms. The signs of this history are everywhere. From minimalist-derived object formats to conceptualist-seeming archives and arrangements, we move in rapid succession to

7. Throughout these scenes in *Blind Country*, Kelley's "primal configurations" deviated slightly from Kandinsky's conclusions, altering the Bauhaus yellow triangle, red square, and blue circle into a yellow triangle, red circle, and blue square. This deviation called up another, more recent deployment and alteration of the Bauhaus questionnaire's forms, the early logo devised for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Los Angeles, spelling out the abbreviation MOCA with a blue square, green circle, and red triangle.

works that consider the history of agit-prop aesthetics (*From My Institution to Yours*, 1987), socialist realism (*Pay for Your Pleasure*, 1988), readymades and accumulations, assemblage, and even sculptural mobiles. In terms of painting, Kelley early on referenced key Abstract Expressionist "masters"—Pollock, Rothko, Still—and would go on to explore the forms of the monochrome and the relational composition, the grid and the shaped canvas, geometric abstraction and biomorphic abstraction, simultaneously, persistently, and illogically. Abstraction became an unending obsession, figured first through Kelley's notion in *Educational Complex* of the "blank," the open form of modernist negation recoded as abuse, as oblivion and repression, in all his play with the idea of "repressed memory syndrome" during these years.

Hardly systematic or coherently archaeological, Kelley's modernist tropes were instead presented as a spiraling series of effigies, displaced dead things, an unceasing parade of high culture in the necrophilic space of the corpse. Turning to modernism as a way of "using an artistic form that itself is dead," Kelley's tactics could be seen as an ultimate anti-idealism, almost a realism: "Death forces one to confront materiality," as he would clarify.[8] This, Kelley seemed to say, was the only way we could relate to the formerly resistant claims of high culture today—through (their) death, through what death means, through what he also sometimes called, with sardonic laughter, "critical joy, a negative joy." In the realm of culture, we are all playing with dead things, Kelley's work seemed to imply. We are all, aesthetes, lovers of death, devotees of that which is gone.

The question we are left with in facing Kelley's work, however, is what the effigy hides, what—as a replacement and displacement—it could be a stand in for. Suddenly, in Kelley's hands, modernism had a secret, having become a hiding place for other forms. The effigy was a *double* strategy, an excessive hybrid, a "complex" form, in the expanded sense that Kelley gave this crucial term. For if the effigy presents the products of high culture in a deathly guise, the tactic also opens up these forms to substitution, to their being occupied by other dynamics, other drives, other "cultures." If modernism is presented by Kelley as an effigy, what entity thrives beneath this surface, what heart, if any, beats beneath the façade?

"Let's go down into the chapel of my basement—the shadowed domain of the tinkering genius," Kelley proclaimed at the conclusion of his very first published essay.[9] The invitation might be understood as a call to consider what lies behind or beneath the appearance of Kelley's forms. It is an invitation that still stands today. It too has been left standing.

8. "From the Sublime to the Uncanny," in *Foul Perfection*, pp. 62 and 66.
9. Kelley, "Urban Gothic," *Spectacle* 3 (1985), reprinted in *Foul Perfection*, p. 9. The essay concludes: "[T]hat which lies on the surface is often not of the same material as that which lies below it."

*

At the moment that I write these words, a "spontaneous" memorial to Kelley has sprung up near his home in Highland Park. Not coincidentally, the memorial presents itself as a sprawling, open-ended effigy of Kelley's *More Love Hours Than Can Ever Be Repaid*. Like the shrines to public figures that emerge from time to time in the wake of tragic deaths (Princess Diana), or like the recent high-art versions of the same associated with the work of someone like Thomas Hirschhorn, friends and admirers have been contributing old afghans and a menagerie of stuffed animals in ever-increasing profusion, accompanying their effigies of Kelley's effigies—like so many testaments to love—with graffiti inscriptions and hand-lettered signs: "WE MISS YOU MIKE," "we needed you," "FREAKDOM IS LOVE."[10] The outpouring of emotion testifies to one thing at least: Kelley's engagement with form as an effigy surely carries along with it not only its negative, critical ambition—a modality of anti-art, a strike against the dominant culture—it also participates in a deep way with the cultural or popular forms of acknowledging loss and bereavement. Kelley has left us with this dual legacy at least.

Equally immediate and spontaneous, another recent Los Angeles memorial to Kelley points in similar directions. A previously-planned concert at the gallery The Box focusing on the Los Angeles Free Music Society, with which Kelley had been involved, was transformed into a memorial concert for the artist. I arrived just as one of Kelley's oldest friends, the artist Jim Shaw, began to sing, accompanied by younger musicians like Eddie Ruscha (who as a boy had a starring, unforgettable role in Kelley's film made with the Yonemoto brothers entitled *Kappa*, 1986). In dissonant, wavering tones, but beautifully sung, Shaw performed a rendition of Kurt Weill's "It Never Was You." This was followed by the jazz standard "Nature Boy," the old songs reoccupied and spoken as if directly to Shaw's lost friend, after which the audience wandered about in stunned silence, with much weeping. Shaw was followed by a performance of Extended Organ, a band with which Kelley used to play. He had once recorded some sounds for the band to use in a concert he had been unable to attend, and so Kelley was made to "accompany" his friends in this form, in sonic effigy, from beyond the pale. And at the front of the stage, Paul McCarthy sat, his mouth held so tightly against his cupped hands that you could barely see his face, his hands themselves hugging an altered microphone, reminiscent of the photographs of Kelley's early performances where the artist utilized sculptural props as megaphones to generate noise. As the band began to play, Kelley's old friend and collaborator could be heard vocalizing, words sometimes struggling through the guttural sounds like

10. Hirschhorn's shrines, of course, would hardly be conceivable without Kelley's example, and the same could be said for most forms of contemporary sculptural language, such as the deep reflection on Kelley's tactics attested to by Rachel Harrison's recent projects. One could—and should—write an entire book on how Kelley was involved in reformulating the project of sculpture for our times, definitively passing through and beyond the minimalist endgame to a series of new dynamics.

"Oh, No," or "what the matter was." But then McCarthy descended into completely wordless vocalization, a spiraling series of mourning sounds, wailing sounds, wounded sounds, sea sounds like the cries of dolphins—an almost animal grief, rhythmic and spreading out across the audience in waves, a despair that seemed to emerge from a space before or after the human, before or after the subject. A grief that was too early, too late. Pure trauma. It hollowed you out—like an effigy—and the noises continued. After thirty minutes, I could take no more, and made my way quickly, shaken, from the scene.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Looking for Bruce Conner

Kevin Hatch

"Kevin Hatch's study is an overdue corrective to the near absence of Bruce Conner from the major chronicles of contemporary art. The book captures the singularity of each aspect of the artist's heterogeneous oeuvre and convincingly situates it at the very forefront of transformative practices in postwar art."

— Bruce Jenkins, School of the Art Institute of Chicago

An October Book • 352 pp., 53 color illus., 51 b&w illus., $29.95 cloth

Adversarial Design

Carl DiSalvo

"There's a new HCI in town, and Carl DiSalvo is one of its most thoughtful proponents. Lively, timely, provocative and inspiring, *Adversarial Design* sets out a manifesto for engaged design practice that moves beyond usability and sees interactive technology as an active site of civic and political discourse."

— Paul Dourish, University of California, Irvine; Author of *Divining a Digital Future: Mess and Mythology in Ubiquitous Computing*

Design Thinking, Design Theory series • 168 pp., 25 illus., $28 cloth

Living as Form

Socially Engaged Art from 1991–2011

edited by Nato Thompson

"Adapt or perish! This is the best of the anthologies arguing that humans ought to adapt to climate change, which they can no longer entirely prevent. At best they can only partially restore what has already been lost. There is sad truth: biodiversity that cannot adapt, or be adapted, is in jeopardy. But here is good news: a vision of human flourishing in a brave new world."

— Holmes Rolston, III, Colorado State University

Copublished with Creative Time, New York City
300 pp., 250 color illus., 50 b&w illus., $39.95 cloth

"Our Kind of Movie"

The Films of Andy Warhol

Douglas Crimp

"Douglas Crimp's *Our Kind of Movie* is a deeply felt and provocative reading of Andy Warhol's great achievement as a filmmaker. Crimp's writings on *Blow Job* and Paul Swan are exemplary examples of the kind of insightful criticism that Warhol's films demand. This book offers some of the best writing on the making and reception of Warhol's films and their uncanny power."

— John G. Hanhardt, General Editor, *The Andy Warhol Film Catalogue Raisonne*, Vol. II, Whitney Museum of American Art

184 pp., 7 color illus., 45 b&w illus., $27.95 cloth

The Last Art College

Nova Scotia College of Art and Design, 1968–1978

Garry Neill Kennedy

"*The Last Art College* is an astonishing document. Without retreating into obscure theories of pedagogy, it demonstrates how a small college in a remote location in Canada rewrote the textbook on how to teach contemporary art in a college setting. Every art school—and every art student—in North America owes a debt to Garry Neill Kennedy for brilliantly turning the academic norms upside down. Page by page, we see the process by which the great minds and talents of a generation—Lucy Lippard, Joseph Beuys, Daniel Buren, Lawrence Weiner, and many more—were brought into the center of the educational experience. Sadly, forty years later, there is nothing like it."

— AA Bronson, artist

Copublished with the Art Gallery of Nova Scotia, Halifax
480 pp., 191 color illus., 410 b&w illus., $60 cloth

The MIT Press

To order call 800-405-1619 • **http://mitpress.mit.edu**
Visit our e-books store: **http://mitpress-ebooks.mit.edu**

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Nature
edited by Jeffrey Kastner

Contemporary artists' radical investigations of nature, juxtaposed with the eclectic scientific and philosophical sources that inform their art.

Documents of Contemporary Art series • Copublished with Whitechapel Gallery, London • Not for sale in the UK or Europe
240 pp., $24.95 paper

The Studio
edited by Jens Hoffmann

The evolution of studio—and "post-studio"—practice over the last half century.

Documents of Contemporary Art series • Copublished with Whitechapel Gallery, London • Not for sale in the UK or Europe
240 pp., $24.95 paper

Claes Oldenburg
edited by Nadja Rottner

Contemporary criticism, interviews, scholarly reassessments, and texts by the artist focusing on Claes Oldenburg's sculptures, installations, and multimedia performances between 1960 and 1965.

October Files series • 224 pp., 50 illus., $18.95 paper

Martha Rosler
The Bowery in two inadequate descriptive systems

Steve Edwards

The first sustained critical examination of a work by Martha Rosler that bridged the concerns of conceptual art with those of political documentary.

One Work series • Distributed for Afterall books
112 pp., 32 color illus., $16 paper

Dan Graham
Rock My Religion

Kodwo Eshun

An illustrated exploration of a groundbreaking work and its connections to New York's art and music scenes of the 1980s.

One Work series • Distributed for Afterall Books
112 pp., 32 color illus., $16 paper

Now in Paper

I Am a Beautiful Monster
Poetry, Prose, and Provocation

Francis Picabia

translated by Marc Lowenthal

"In Marc Lowenthal's masterful translations and commentary, the footnotes are wildly informative and the plays of typography delightfully rampant."

— Mary Ann Caws, *London Review of Books*

488 pp., 20 illus., $21.95 paper

Now in Paper

The Museological Unconscious
Victor Tupitsyn

introduction by Susan Buck-Morss and Victor Tupitsyn

"An ambitious, important attempt to read Russian alternative art of (especially) the late 1960s to 1980s as a series of efforts to react to the Soviet artist's schizophrenic situation."

— Sven Spieker, *Slavic Review*

352 pp., 90 illus., $17.95 paper

Now in Paper

Green Light
Toward an Art of Evolution

George Gessert

"*Green Light* illuminates that we can continue to re-imagine our relationship with other living things—and, through bio art, 'imagine ourselves into the future.'"

— Natalie Jeremijenko, xClinic, New York University

A Leonardo Book • 264 pp., 30 illus., $12.95 paper

The MIT Press

To order call 800-405-1619 • **http://mitpress.mit.edu**
Visit our e-books store: **http://mitpress-ebooks.mit.edu**

art, architecture, & animal studies

Surface Encounters
Thinking with Animals and Art
Ron Broglio

Developing a phenomenology of the animal other through contemporary art.

$25.00 paper · $75.00 cloth · 192 pages
Posthumanities Series, volume 17

Replacing Home
From Primordial Hut to Digital Network in Contemporary Art
Jennifer Johung

How constructions of home in contemporary art reveal new ways of staying in place.

$25.00 paper · $75.00 cloth · 248 pages

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA PRESS
www.upress.umn.edu • 800-621-2736

MINNESOTA

NEW from the **MIT Press**

ARTMARGINS

SVEN SPIEKER, EDITOR

ARTMargins will foster awareness and conversation about contemporary art in an expanded field of practices that engage current global socio-political transformations.

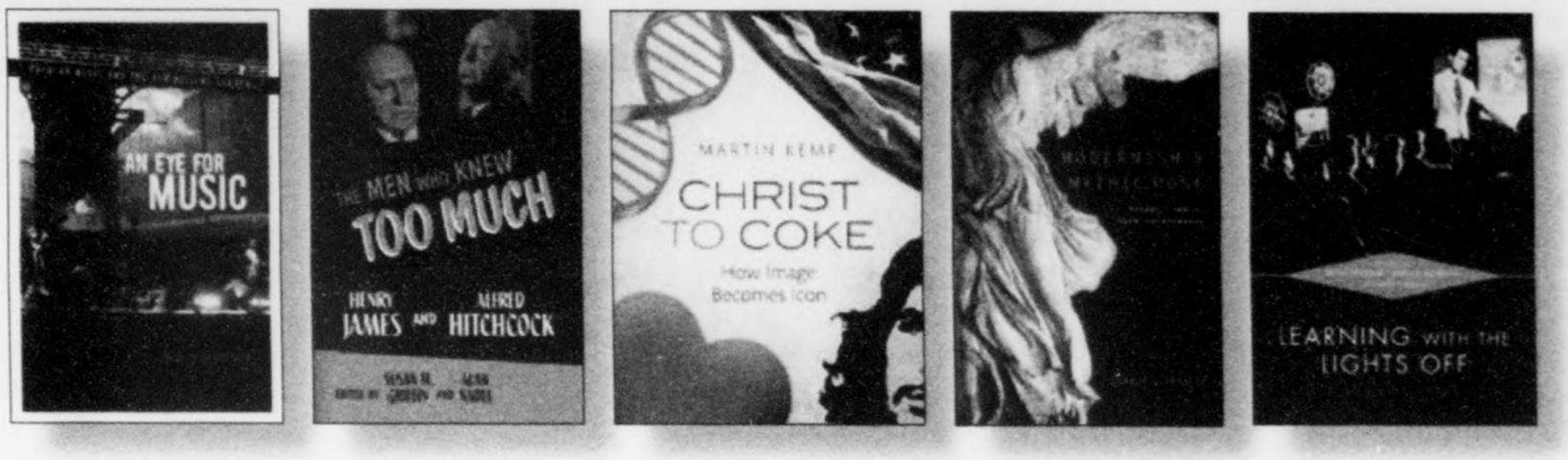
Within the fabric of a present moment characterized by different, and often incompatible, temporalities and agendas, *ARTMargins* wants to locate transnational commonalities and trajectories that connect, or divide, different regions of the world, bringing together artistic practices from (post-) transitional zones, while at the same time questioning the logic of transition itself.

Today, the entire world is a margin in transition.

ISSN: 2162-2574 | e-ISSN: 2162-2582

http://www.mitpressjournals.org/artmargins

New from Oxford



New in Paperback

Defining Art, Creating the Canon
Artistic Value in an Era of Doubt

PAUL CROWTHER

Paul Crowther uses a philosophical approach to argue that there is such a thing as distinctively artistic value based on aesthetic criteria.

2012 274 pp. Paperback $35.00

An Eye for Music
Popular Music and the Audiovisual Surreal

JOHN RICHARDSON

"A breathtakingly interdisciplinary study of contemporary media-music forms."
—Caryl Flinn, author of *Strains of Utopia*

(Oxford Music/Media Series)

2011 336 pp. 22 illus. Hardback $99.00 Paperback $35.00

Learning with the Lights Off
Educational Film in the United States

EDITED BY DEVIN ORGERON, MARSHA ORGERON, AND DAN STREIBLE

The first collection of essays to address the phenomenon of film's educational uses in twentieth-century America.

2012 416 pp. 90 illus. Hardback $99.00 Paperback $34.95

Christ to Coke
How Image Becomes Icon

MARTIN KEMP

[F]ascinating...exploring how and why we like things, how we subliminally come to recognize them, and why an image or object or idea achieves longevity."—ARTnews

2011 352 pp. 165 color illus. Hardback $34.95

Modernism's Mythic Pose
Gender, Genre, Solo Performance

CARRIE J. PRESTON

"Lucidly written and solidly argued, *Modernism's Mythic Pose* excavates a fascinating classicist-antimodernist genealogy of modernism."
—Laura Winkiel, author of *Modernism, Race, and Manifestos*

(Modernist Literature and Culture)

2011 384 pp. 28 illus. Hardback $49.95

The Men Who Knew Too Much
Henry James and Alfred Hitchcock

EDITED BY SUSAN M. GRIFFIN AND ALAN NADEL

"An original and highly readable contribution to literary and cultural studies."—Leo Bersani, UC Berkeley

2012 272 pp. 40 illus. Hardback $99.00 Paperback $27.95

Modernism's Other Work
The Art Object's Political Life

LISA SIRAGANIAN

"Lisa Siraganian's brilliant book makes a huge contribution to our understanding of 20th-century literary and artistic modernism."
—Michael Fried, author of *Art and Objecthood*

2012 272 pp. 19 illus. Hardback $65.00

Oxford Art Online

An innovative gateway that offers access to the vast content of Grove Art Online, the *Benezit Dictionary of Artists*, and other Oxford art reference resources.

www.oxfordartonline.com

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Prices are subject to change and apply only in the US.
To order or for more information, visit our website at **www.oup.com/us.**

One Year MA Program

School of VISUAL ARTS

CRITICAL THEORY and the ARTS

Inaugural Year, **2012–2013**
Robert Hullot-Kentor, chair

A one-year, three-semester MA program in critical social theory focused on the arts, including the study of art theory and aesthetics, social history, social theory and the history of art. Focal points of the program in 2012 – 2013 are the **Proseminar** on the **"Convergence of the Arts in the 21st Century,"** and the **Serious Times Lecture Series**, which will pose the question, **"Why doesn't the United States make social progress?"** Graduates of the MA in Critical Theory and the Arts become ongoing members of the Serious Time Lecture Series and the program's intellectual community. **Fourteen students are selected** annually by the Committee on Graduate Admissions.

Participating visitors in the program will include:
Paul Chan
Jessica Stockholder
McKenzie Wark
Martin Jay
Mowry Baden
Dani Leventhal
Eliot Weinberger
Molly Nesbit
Gedi Sibony
Frances Fox Piven
Stefan Litwin
Cory Arcangel
Shierry Weber Nicholsen
Benj DeMott
Spyros Papapetros
Robert Paul Wolff
Jay Sanders
Moishe Postone
Adolph Reed Jr.
Barry C. Lynn
Paul Mattick Jr.
Anke Finger

ART KNOWS US BETTER THAN WE KNOW OURSELVES.
– T.W. ADORNO

Inquiries: Meghan Roe, Assistant to the Chair
209 East 23 St., New York NY 10010-3994
212.592.2172 theoryart@sva.edu
Applications for 2012–2013 now being accepted

cta.sva.edu

Give yourself or a colleague the gift of critical insight.

A serious journal of theoretical inquiry, OCTOBER brings you a full year of innovative and provocative articles on the arts. To get the next four issues of the best contemporary aesthetic criticism, send in your subscription today!

The full text of OCTOBER is available online from the MIT Press. For an additional $25 annual fee, individual subscribers can access *October* back issues 1 to 118 online from JSTOR.

OCTOBER

___ This is a new subscription.
(Your subscription will begin with the next available issue)
___ This is a renewal. My account number is (see label) _____
___ This is a gift. (Please attach recipient's name/address as well as your own.)

2012 RATES (check one)	— *Print and Electronic* —			— *Electronic Only* —	
	U.S.	*Canada**	*All Other Countries*	*U.S. & Foreign*	*Canada**
Individual	____ $55	____ $57.75	____ $78	___ $50	___ $52.50
Institution	____ $234	____ $245.70	____ $257	___ $204	___ $214.20
Student**/Retired	____ $28	____ $29.40	____ $51	___ $24	___ $25.20
Access fee to JSTOR	____ $25				

*Price reflects 5% GST. **Copy of current ID required

Prepayment required

____ Check or money order enclosed, payable to *October* (check must be drawn against a U.S. bank in U.S. funds)

If paying with credit card, please visit our secure website: http://mitpressjournals.org/october and click the red Order button on right.

Send the subscription to: *(please print clearly)*

Name _____ Daytime phone _____

Company/Dept. _____ E-mail _____

Address _____

City/State/Province/Zip/Country _____ OCBC12

OCTOBER Change of Address Form

As soon as you know your new address, please mail this card. If possible, tape an old address label over name and old address sections and complete new address section. Please print clearly.

Name _____ Acct. # _____

Old address:

Company/Dept. _____

Address _____

City/State/Province/Zip/Country _____

Daytime phone _____ E-mail _____

New address:

Company/Dept. _____

Address _____

City/State/Province/Zip/Country _____

Daytime phone _____ E-mail _____ OCBC12

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 309 CAMBRIDGE MA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

MIT PRESS JOURNALS
55 HAYWARD ST
CAMBRIDGE MA 02142-9923

NO POSTAGE
NECESSARY
IF MAILED
IN THE
UNITED STATES

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL
FIRST-CLASS MAIL PERMIT NO. 309 CAMBRIDGE MA

POSTAGE WILL BE PAID BY ADDRESSEE

MIT PRESS JOURNALS
55 HAYWARD ST
CAMBRIDGE MA 02142-9923

The editors would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following individuals and foundations:

Benefactors:

Marian Goodman Gallery
Richard Serra and Clara Weyergraf Serra
The Strypemonde Foundation

Patrons:

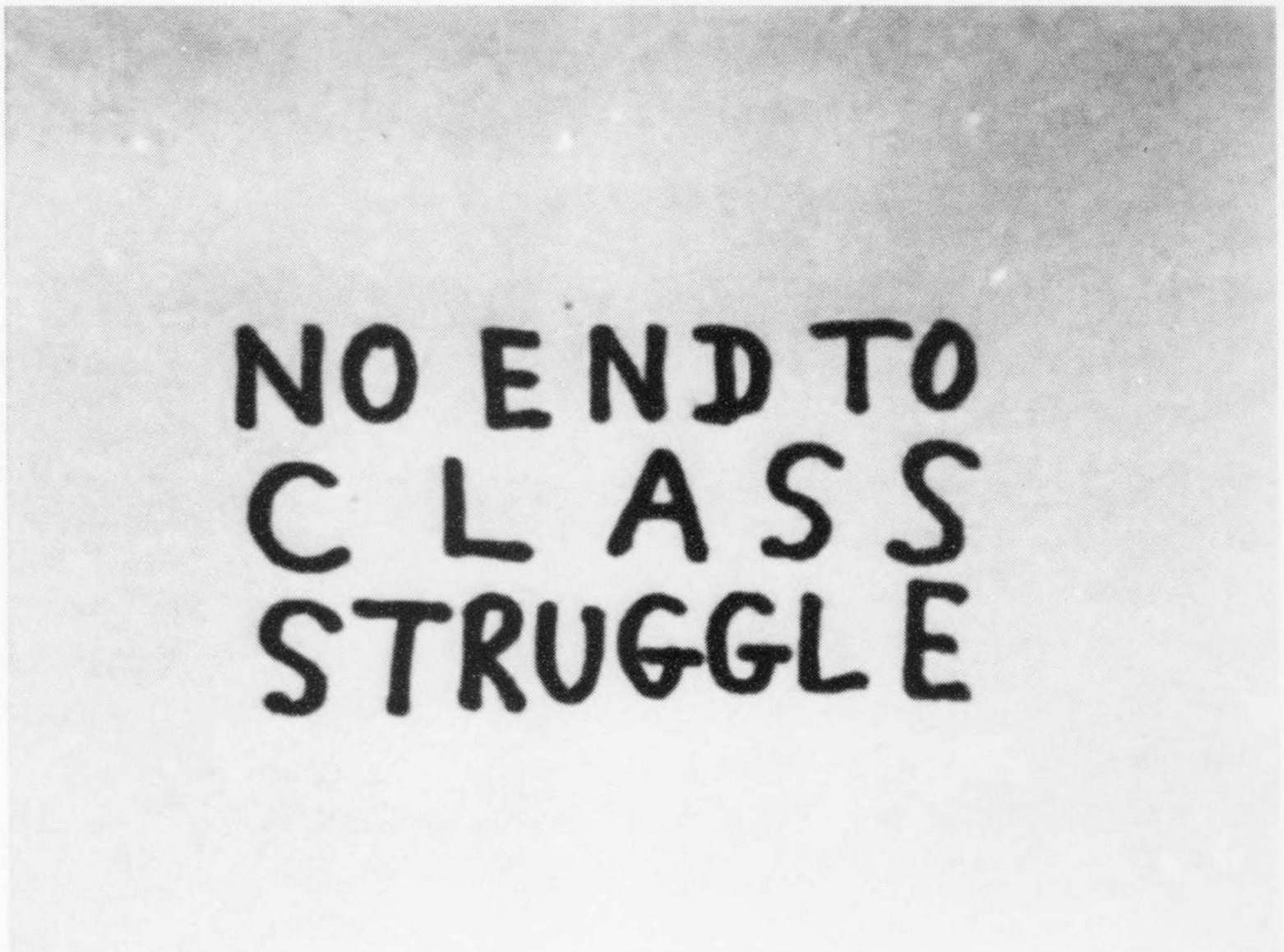
Phoebe Cohen
Dorothy Lichtenstein

Sponsors:

Anonymous
Constance R. Caplan
Fundación Almine y Bernard Ruiz-Picasso para el Arte

Contributors:

Paula Cooper Gallery
Peter Freeman
Phyllis Lambert



OCTOBER 140

Robert Bailey	*Unknown Knowns*
Claire Bishop	*Delegated Performance*
Trisha Brown	*From the Archives*
Julia Bryan-Wilson	*Practicing* Trio A
Anthony Grudin	*Defectiveness, Accuracy, and Class in Early Warhol*
André Lepecki	*Choreographic Critiques of the Object*
Babette Mangolte	*A Portfolio*
Julian Rose	*Claes Oldenburg's Proposed Monuments*
Susan Rosenberg	*Trisha Brown: Choreography as Visual Art*