

panorama

philosophies of the visible

WILHELM S WURZER



PANORAMA

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PHILOSOPHIES OF THE VISIBLE

EDITED BY

WILHELM S. WURZER

Continuum

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

BETWEEN THE VISIBLE AND THE EXPRESSIVE: AN IN-VISIBLE EXCHANGE

Wilhelm S. Wurzer

Engaged in a lively discussion on eros, Diotima tells Socrates that human life is only worthwhile if we understand the relation between the visible and the real. Far from abandoning the visible, she shows that it is not limited to the visual, recognizing that in its very expression the visible is more real than the visual. During conversation (logos), in the expressive unfolding of the difference between reality and image, the visible turns out to be more beautiful than the image and more real than everyday “reality.” Intrigued by this hermeneutic circle, and by Socrates wondering what is “real,” Diotima declares that expression forms reality. She warns Socrates of seduction by images, arguing that the charm of gilded visibilities is most acute when logos is obscured and the expressive is no longer the *daimon* that “mediates” the visible and the in-visible. Disconnected from the link of expression, the visible becomes merely imaginal. Diotima’s message still haunts us today. Without the discursive link between the visible and the in-visible, we are apt to overextend the ahistoric significance of one or the other. It is possible to avoid ocularcentrism as well as blind transcendence if the visible is not merely identified with the visual and the in-visible is not merely reduced to an absolute sovereignty. In the realm of the expressive, therefore, Hermes excels not only in sending and receiving messages, but in reading and rereading them, revealing that the in-visible *is* expressive in *visible* regions. Indeed, this collection of essays will show that the in-visible is not the essence of the visible but rather the expressive “body” of the visible, as Derrida points out, “*right on* the visible.”

Inevitably, visibility reveals the in-visible, the unseen whole, “the commerce of specters” making up our techno-electronic world. Inscribed into relations of time and capital, culture and infrastructure, the in-visible marks a new economy of visibility whose expression is in part determined by the digital revolution. This is the first time in human history that the visible and the expressive

are integrated in a most unusual and intriguing electro-technical manner. It is no longer a matter of the ocular lording it over the textual. The very nature of textuality is radically transformed beyond the book and the “text” in a general deconstructive sense. The text has become a kind of “texting,” an “archiving,” a recording. More importantly, however, it has become an instantaneous sending and receiving. This new technique of global conversing exceeds the mere production of information. In its peculiar electronic disclosure, it writes new event horizons precisely by making the informational relations themselves events. Suddenly, information is not merely the reception of knowledge but the reception of the event of receiving, arriving, archiving a radically different exchange – and this above and beyond the techniques of storing and retrieving recorded data by visibly disseminating them. A new visibility emerges – the machine that stands beyond other machines and, in some respects, even beyond human capabilities. The in-visible exchange is newly electronic and ecstatic. Paradoxically, the machine too has become a *Mitsein*. Visibly expressive, we now “belong” to it in the very event of storing, retrieving, and disseminating recorded knowledge without ever yielding to archivization. Hence, the importance of recasting the in-visible exchange by means of a certain urgent in-between the expressive and the visible, the human and the machine – a post-Gadamerian *Verstehen* regarding new modalities of communication.

Indeed, still of interest to us is a certain transformation of the visible into the expressive beyond the ecstatic encounter of human being and machine. This means arriving at an understanding not only of information content but how we relate to this content and how it may lead to a truly global conversation. More than ever, the expressive is in need of a rigorous panoramic, interpretive critique.

Proceeding from a novel archiving of vision, the essays collected here do not directly address the question of ocularcentrism and whether it has had a “positive” or “negative” import on our culture. Instead, the contemporary “hegemony” of vision is taken as a techno-economic given and attempts are made not to delimit visibilities to a dialectical contest of pros and cons. That our cultural economy is mostly visual is only a problem if the ocular is linked to a predominantly repressive system. More clearly, ocularcentrism becomes problematic if it is confined to representation in the narrow sense, i.e., to a politico-economic exploitation of perception. Since our time is much more complex than the commonly manifested, conventional critique of capitalism, the question of vision is linked to a tangible intangibility demanding rigorous expression. The essays do just that by inviting concern for a philosophy whose task it is to turn to art (painting, film, and literature) in order to provide us with *more than one* signification of our time.

Without focusing on the ocular vocabulary in the history of ideas, the chapters in this text show that the preeminence of the visible is largely related to reading not merely *what* we see but *how* we see. Thus, we encounter the visible invariably interlaced with the expressive, a silent witness, taking distance from a definite, structural content. “What remains to be thought – is that which in the presence of the present does not present itself.”¹ Accordingly, our narrative begins with a new economy of the expressive. No longer the old “what,” *how we*

see/read/write becomes the paradox of our time, the anonymous sovereignty of a new specularity of being that is neither ocularcentric nor ontological. The new relations of the visible and the expressive are too complex and diverse to sustain any centrism. An unexchangeable exchange dawns between language and world, philosophy and time. *How* can it be thought? *How* can it be read? *How* can it be written?

Without yielding to a Gadamerian nostalgia, *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible* is still inspired by a hermeneutic reading of the multiple spectralities of the in-visible. While the present inquiry does not primarily address the question of networked electronic communication, it does point to a radical transition from book to screen, exploring and illuminating various panoramic aspects of how the visible and the expressive are interrelated. Studying what Merleau-Ponty calls “the attentive meaning” of being-in-the-world, the essays collected here highlight the expressive itineraries of art and culture: notably, painting, film, photography, and literature. These essays contribute to a necessary rewriting of the liberal arts in view of their desire to choose between responsibility and carefreeness. The current state of the humanities is exposed in relation to the cultural and social demands made by such philosophers as Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Levinas, Barthes, Blanchot, Foucault, Bataille, Derrida, Lyotard, and Deleuze.

The contributors of this volume, each in their own way, undertake their rereading of these thinkers by focusing on a constellation of thematic problems, clarifying the relations between the visible and expressive in the context of our world. In an original contribution, these distinguished young scholars argue with lucidity and an interdisciplinary style. Some of the contributors such as Robert Burch, Reginald Lilly, Ludwig Nagl, James Watson, and Ladelle McWhorter are well-known continental philosophers. Lisa Zucker is a distinguished scholar in English studies. Lynne Huffer and Anne Tomiche are foremost interpreters in the area of French studies. Janet Lungstrum, Robert Leventhal, and Volker Kaiser rank among the most creative scholars in Germanic literatures and film theory, while Zsuzsa Baross, Alessandro Carrera, and Dana Hollander bring eminence to the diverse fields of cultural studies.

This volume is divided into five interrelated parts: (1) Postmodern Visions; (2) Beyond Representational Thinking; (3) Expressions and the Limits of Philosophy; (4) Filming the (In)visible; and (5) Critiques of Contemporary Image Culture. Each part explores the current crisis regarding the relation of the expressive and the visible from a rigorous panoramic context. While Part One takes a more detailed philosophical approach, Parts Two to Five remain eminently philosophical in reading the problematic of our text from a literary, historical, and aesthetic perspective. Most fruitful in this volume are the interdisciplinary strategies employed in uncovering the subject matter. Creative new insights are generated precisely because of the distinctive confluence of deconstruction, phenomenology, critical theory, history, literary criticism, film theory, feminism, and, last but not least, photography and poetry. That the essays consist in far-ranging readings and interpretations of all of these tendencies in the contemporary liberal arts indicates the current merit of a theme that continues to bind us to these disciplines. Additionally, the chapters in this

present inquiry discuss the phenomenon of the visible and the expressive in both specific and general terms, and, especially, in relation to the “conflict of interpretations” regarding the archival questions of liberal arts today.

(1) Part One explores the limits of expression out of a concern for several unique post-Kantian readings of the sublime. The essays by Tomiche, Nagl, and Hollander show the philosophic intensities of disrupting the visual in the process of archiving a multiplicity of discursive desires. Posing the riveting question of whose vision survives the disappearance of the viewer, they tend to redefine Kant’s invisible eyelashes: that is to say, the schemas that are never entirely arrested by reason. Long after Spinoza, a certain *Weltbild* emerges, indicating the archival desire to see the imaginal as freely nonimaginal. Each in their own intriguing manner points out the inevitable survival of the post-Kantian economy of imaginal free play in its current deconstructive implications. Tomiche illustrates Lyotard’s disruption of the visual in her fascinating counter-Lacanian reading of “the eye of desire.” Nagl argues that visibility is not simply a question of expression (i. e., readability) but one of an unmediated, interventionless *Weltbild* that indicates a new constellation of “imagination” and “writing” as called for by Barthes, Levinas, and Derrida. Concluding this section, “once again from the top,” Hollander takes the liberty of relating philosophy to the specular limits of representation, showing that it continues to displace itself in the very difference of the visible and the expressive.

In the second part, Carrera and Lilly take up the theme of a possible invisible exchange between seeing and illustrating, appearing and disappearing. Carrera’s postmodern hermeneutic of seeing reveals the archival power of listening to the in-visible as if it were a song. He claims that the relation between seeing and writing remains illusive inasmuch as presence is unattainable in the double realm of the visible and the expressive. Skeptical of Plato’s conclusions in the *Symposium*, namely that eros advances toward the beautiful and that the beautiful is the future, Carrera sees no future without the realization that the beautiful is only in the song. Beyond touching, archiving, an auditory *Sehnsucht*, means holding out into unattainabilities. Reginald Lilly supplements these readings by illuminating Foucault’s claim that visibility marks the end of a metaphysical phantasm of identity. His recourse to a certain absence of representation (*Vorstellung*) brings into view a radical dissimulation (*Verstellung*) of postmodern visions.

In Part Three, Burch responds to the philosophical problem of regarding beyond representing by exploring Heidegger’s deconstruction of ontotheologic visibilities. For him, Heidegger’s thought marks a turn (*Kehre*) from concern for the visible toward an economy of listening. He reads *Denken* as exposing a visible inhumanity, an ear that cannot hear others. Arguably, Burch infers that Heidegger’s rewriting of metaphysical regarding reveals philosophy ending in the monstrous. Baross addresses the loss of confidence in *Denken* by underscoring the strategies of an after-philosophy’s thinking/desiring/painting. She invites the reader to read her hand, suddenly victorious over the eye as origin of pleasure. This overturning of Cartesian perception disrupts the sovereignty of representation so that the image loses its dialectic frame altogether. By virtue of this loss, the image is neither phenomenal nor noumenal but rather the hand

that matters for thinking. While holding on to the strife of the possible (visible) and the improbable (expressive), the hand emerges as the flaming intuition of an in-visible exchange. McWhorter intensifies Baross's approach by proposing the event of an after-seeing. She seeks an archiving that is more radically visible than the eye's eros. Suddenly, what matters is the play of visibility's end. In-visibles begin to bloom in the very intimacy of the visible and the tactile. Indeed, McWhorter reads the spectralities of being beyond the eye's glance in the very dance the eye desires. Huffer turns this play into a postaesthetic troping/turning derived from an archival laughing in the joyous constellation of rubbing and kissing. Beyond Heidegger's *Denken* as "a higher doing," Huffer's turn to an erotic "practice of difference" marks another beginning for the in-visible.

(4) Supplementing these "alternative readings" of the economy of the visible, Part Four highlights scenes of architecture and film. In particular, Lungstrum reviews the Expressionist dilemma of monumentalism in Traut's architectural and Lang's cinematic endeavors. She points out that Benjamin, in his aphoristic archiving, seeks to challenge the scenographic will to power in modern culture. By focusing on the question of Wender's hypertextual filming, Kaiser and Leventhal argue that filming exceeds both the monumentalist manner of viewing our world as well as the intellectualistic (expressly Western) mode of reflection. In short, they offer a reading of the in-visible-in-filming as the novel, electronic dreaming/voyaging/thinking at the end of the film.

(5) Archiving the expressive beyond filmographic readings, Zucker and Watson, in the final section, explore intriguing spaces of history, photography, and what may lie in-between – the poetic specters of the contemporary image culture. Zucker claims that an archivally responsible discourse on the "philographic" demands that we let images be as they are and that our task as readers of our time is merely to blink or wink not once but recursively without striving to mirror the invisible. This exposure of bound transcendence is radicalized by Watson's desire to let the image speak without looking for excuses in its unconstrained expression.

In the Epilogue, the editor draws together the various threads and themes of *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible*, focusing as well on the points of view expressed throughout this volume about philosophy's future and the notable distancing on the part of thinking from the philosophical as we have come to know it.

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PART ONE

POSTMODERN VISIONS

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INTRODUCTION

TRANSGRESSING THE KANTIAN SUBLIME

Part One begins with a necessary *Durcharbeitung* of various philosophical problems relating to the economy of the visible. It explores a multiplicity of readings focusing on the tensions of an “archival” disclosure of visibility as evidenced in contemporary French and German thought. Recasting this issue beyond national lines of reflection, the contributors pose new questions about the ways in which visibility exceeds the limits of representation, in part by yielding to a perspectival “postethical” self-seeing. This brings into view a manner of thinking (not unlike that of Benjamin) that reads images as if they were about to mirror the end of philosophy’s absolute confidence.

In Chapter 1, “Rephrasing the Visible and the Expressive: Lyotard’s ‘Defense of the Eye,’” Anne Tomiche argues that Lyotard’s defense of the visible is not a model for ocularcentrism. Instead, she claims that Lyotard relates the visible to a dynamic configuration of desire, energy, and speech: “The eye is inside speech not only because there is no articulated language without the exteriorization of something ‘Visible,’ but also because there is an at least gestural, ‘visible,’ exteriority at the heart of discourse, that is its expression.” Lyotard regards the figural, as Tomiche points out, beyond the visual and the imaginal. Thus, the figural is shown to disrupt, in Freud’s sense, to “de-negate (*verneinen*) the visible by claiming, “what you see is not what I am . . .” There is always more (of the expressive) and, perhaps, even less (of the visible). Ultimately, then, the figural marks a denegation of the visible within a discursive affirmation of the in-visible.

For Tomiche, Lyotard’s disruption of the visual and its inscription into a phenomenological site of desire reveals the figural, i.e., the expressive, as “the other eye, the eye which is not the eye of phenomenology, which belongs to a radically different order than articulated discourse, something which is both inside and outside discourse, but necessary to and disruptive of signification.” This other eye is the eye of desire defined also as *force*. Here, according to Tomiche, Lyotard argues that Lacan’s assertion that “the unconscious is structured like a language” is problematic. The “other eye” is both within and beyond discourse. Hence, the figural as expressive nonvisibility makes the order of language possible. On this account, the invisible is still regarded as drawing

language into itself: "it is the effect on language of the force exerted by the figural." Focusing on distinct themes by Husserl, Freud, and Heidegger, Lyotard, as Tomiche illustrates so rigorously, redefines the figural out of a concern for the Kantian sublime. Continuously transforming the figural, he attends to "inarticulate phrasing," "a non-signifying, non-addressing and non-referenced phrase." This means that the visible is not expressible. Tomiche notes that Lyotard explores the phenomenological domain of visibility from the viewpoint of the inexpressible (and not necessarily the invisible). Visibility, therefore, demands a *Durcharbeitung*, a working-through the conflict between the visible and the in-visible. This may also be seen as a rephrasing of the figural from a "multiplicity of libidinal intensities . . . to the radical singularity of the event, . . . in both cases, (however), a listening for the ineffable and the inarticulate," opening a sight onto the unseeable.

In Chapter 2, "Visibility, 'Bild,' and 'Einbildungskraft' – Derrida, Barthes, Levinas," Ludwig Nagl provides the reader with a post-Kantian reading of visibility. Indeed, he takes the expressive to lie within a rereading/rewriting of the Kantian aesthetic. Nagl explores the relation of visibility not only from the standpoint of readability but also from the viewpoint of an intriguing text: in-between the visible and the expressive – "an unpictured, unmediated, and interventionlessly reflected reality 'in itself,'" a certain *Weltbild*. Beyond Husserl's classical dichotomy of an incomparable "inner voice" and an inferior "outer trace," textuality as in-visible visibility is regarded out of a concern for a radical displacement of Kant's theory of imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) in the thoughts of Derrida, Barthes, and Levinas. In other words, Nagl highlights the relation of the visible and the expressive by redefining the Kantian "transcendental" site between image and concept according to several deconstructive models. He unfolds Barthes's dynamic ways of regarding the visible from the imaginal expression of the fashion system. This system is inextricably linked to human discourse and "to an even higher degree upon 'imagination' (*Einbildungskraft*)." Hence, the itinerary of the visible is based on a "language-dependent practice of imaging and reimagining." The continual return to language here indicates the intangibility of the visible despite what he calls "the precarious merger of image and concept." We are therefore always operating with a linguistically shaped imagination. In turn, "the visible texture of the quasi-text of fashion, although a necessary prerequisite, and its outcome, is certainly not the whole system of fashion." For Nagl, Barthes's radical reinscription of imagination into visibility looks like a playful repetition of Husserl's "epoche" but in a very post-Husserlian manner. He claims that Levinas is critical of this postphenomenological opening of imagination into a discursive, i.e., in-visible domain of the expressive: "the play of the abstract 'imaginary' easily leads to an avoidance of the other." Nagl notes that Levinas believes "an image marks a hold over us," so that "consciousness, paralyzed in its freedom, plays, totally absorbed in playing." According to Levinas, the shadow that emerges in visibility is utterly irresponsible beyond the concept. It is not clear that such a separation is actually possible. For Levinas it appears to be possible, especially in what Nagl calls "the overprivileging of the eye's visual sphere." Critical of Levinas, Nagl argues that an image is not merely imaginal. It is always already coupled with how we

relate to it and we need not merely relate to it as marking a hold over us. Since the image is ultimately nonimaginal, it cannot have an imperious effect on us for very long as Spinoza already indicated at great length in the *Ethics*.

For Nagl, then, visibility does not mark a certain blindness but rather “a new fusion of the visual and the conceptual.” He points out that the origin of this fusion survives the historical crisis of Kant’s transcendental philosophy by its emergence in a transfigured manner in Derrida’s *différance*, in Barthes’s subversion of the imaginal, and, to some extent, paradoxically, even in Levinas’s own “practico-ethical” renunciation of an absolute imaging. Thus Nagl remarks that, contrary to one’s first impressions, Levinas links the “continuously reappearing dissatisfaction with the visibly given . . . to a (commonly shared) search for ‘a postteleological notion of the infinite.’” For deconstruction, this crucial limiting notion turns out to be *écriture*, not to be confused with “the false ‘ideal’ of a regressive *Ursprungsphilosophie* (in the sense in which Habermas criticized the modern/postmodern craving for ‘origins’”).

Supplementing Nagl’s reading of deconstruction’s relation to the economy of the visible, Dana Hollander, in Chapter 3, “Puncturing Genres: Barthes and Derrida on the Limits of Representation,” invites consideration of the question of photography in particular and representation in general. She focuses on “a fundamental invisibility” that pertains to the order of visual representation. Of particular interest is Derrida’s *Memoires d’aveugle* in which invisibility is thematized as the condition of the very possibility of the visible: “This visibility would still inhabit the visible, or, rather, it would come to haunt it to the point of being confused with it, in order to assure, from the specter of this very impossibility, its most proper resource. The visible *as such* would be invisible, not as *visibility*, the *phenomenality or essence* of the visible, but as the singular body of the visible itself, *right on the visible*.” Hollander hints at the difference of the visible and the expressive with regard to Derrida’s reading of the nonvisible. This invisible source of visibility is also brought to light by Barthes in his claim that photography transcends itself to become truly photographic.

Hollander points out that, for Barthes and Derrida, the relation between visibility and invisibility is not merely causal. The in-visible inhabits the visible in photography and in drawing insofar as the latter operations are possible by means of vision in general, “seeing itself see . . . (which) is nevertheless not reflected, cannot be ‘thought’ in the specular or speculative mode.” The very limit of representation, which makes drawing and photography possible, cannot be seen. It is the *trait*, “the law of the inter-view,” neither intelligible nor sensible. This in-between the visible and the expressive is not to be confused with the Platonic *eidos* which is unable to take into account a *trait* that is neither sensible nor intelligible. Hollander shows that on Derrida’s view, Plato misses the *trait* precisely because it can be seen.

She also illustrates that Barthes articulates the nonvisible in a manner that is phenomenologically more “cynical” than Derrida’s reading of it. The visibly invisible exists only for Barthes insofar as he sees it (as he does). This, she points out, interrupts his theorization of photography as well as “the blinking of difference” in visibility. If the in-visible point yields to a perspectival self-seeing, how can it haunt the visible? The answer Hollander proposes is that

Barthes looks at the visible, in this case the photograph, from the position of time. We may even discover the in-visible phenomenon of time in the photograph: a certain coming of death, both for the one who is photographed and the one who gazes at the photograph. What we witness, then, is not an object but time telling the story of an irreplaceable referent, death in the future – the absolutely singular. Finally, Hollander contends that Barthes's "cynical" reading of the visible marks the very condition of expressivity: "One must be able to speak of a *punctum* in all signs . . . , in any discourse, whether it be literary or not." Likewise, Derrida, too, Hollander notes, moves beyond absolute invisibility to contemplate the withdrawal of the visible in the very granting of speech.

REPHRASING THE VISIBLE AND THE EXPRESSIVE

LYOTARD'S "DEFENSE OF THE EYE" FROM FIGURE TO INARTICULATE PHRASE

Anne Tomiche

Discours, figure, Lyotard's first major book (1971), presents itself as a defense of the visible – "this book is a defense of the eye," Lyotard writes in the opening pages (11).¹ That Lyotard has, since *Discours, figure*, kept "defending the eye" is corroborated by the extent of his work on specific painters (Marcel Duchamp, Valerio Adami, Albert Ayme, Monory, Daniel Buren, Barnett Newman among others) as well as on the incommensurability of avant-garde art, in particular his elaboration of the relation between the pictorial avant-garde and the sublime (in the tradition of Burke and Kant). In fact, Lyotard has written much more extensively on the visual arts than on literature. He has collaborated on numerous artists' catalogues and he was commissioned to organize an exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou in Paris in 1985 (*Les Immatériaux*). While Lyotard's interest in the visual arts constitutes a first level at which to analyze his commitment to visibility and his "defense of the eye," the very notion of visibility and the nature of the eye that he wants to defend have undergone two important shifts in his work. The first one is to be found within *Discours, figure* in his theoretical articulation of the relation between the figural and the visible: it is a shift in the nature of the "eye" that he defends, a shift from a visibility understood in phenomenological terms as perception to a "visibility" understood in Freudian psychoanalytical terms as desire, defined as transgressive force. The second shift takes place between *Discours, figure* and Lyotard's more recent discussions of art in *Que peindre?* (1987)² and in *The Inhuman*,³ a collection of essays on art and technology written in the mid-1980s and published in 1988. Although both these texts rely heavily on Kant's *Third Critique*, they also involve a "return to Freud": indeed Lyotard suggests an analogy between what Kant articulated under the name of sublime and what Freud elaborated under that of primary repression. The pivotal moment in this

second shift is *The Differend*⁴ and the “philosophy of phrases” that it sets in place. For, while the turn to Freud in *Discours, figure* constituted an appeal to psychoanalysis in order to “defend the eye” against the hegemony of the linguistic but without appealing to phenomenology, the “return to Freud” after *The Differend* relies on an appeal to phraseology. My purpose here is to investigate the place Freud occupies in Lyotard’s “defense of the eye” from *Discours, figure* to *The Inhuman* in order to trace the movement in Lyotard’s analysis of visibility first from phenomenology to psychoanalysis (from sight to desire), and then from desire as energy (the figural as force) to the visible and the unconscious as phrase (what Lyotard calls the “inarticulate phrase” or “affect-phrase”).

Discours, figure begins with the apparently simple assertion that speaking (writing, reading) and seeing are two different phenomenological experiences. The space of a linguistic text is two-dimensional and *flat* whereas the space of sight is multidimensional and *deep*. Lyotard’s relation to phenomenology (Husserl and Merleau-Ponty) in *Discours, figure* has already been carefully analyzed.⁵ As Rodolphe Gasché and Geoffrey Bennington have shown, Lyotard’s concern is not to maintain the opposition between the two terms (writing and seeing) and between the two series associated with them (flatness, surface, signification, opposition, system, communication, “discourse” on the one hand and on the side of writing; depth, meaning, difference, instability, expressivity, “figure,” on the other hand and on the side of seeing). Rather Lyotard’s concern is to deconstruct the opposition, a gesture which takes place in two distinctive steps: “setting out from one particular conceptual dyad structuring the discourse of Judaic and Christian metaphysics – the opposition of writing and the figure” – Lyotard first reprivileges the hitherto secondary and necessarily inferior term of the dyad, that is to say, the figure. The first step is achieved by *reversing* the hierarchy of the given dyad. The second step consists of *reinscribing* the newly privileged term (*G*, 184). It is from the first step to the second one that the shift from phenomenology to psychoanalysis takes place. It is in his discussion of *negativity* that Lyotard’s movement away from phenomenological perception towards psychic processes might be best appreciated.

Indeed, Lyotard begins his critique of structural linguistics through a discussion of negativity. Lyotard’s starting point is to examine, on the basis of a phenomenology of perception, the experience of negation in language and in the visible. The negativity involved in language should not be seen only as structuralists see it, that is, as the force that creates binary oppositions and as the force that creates language as a system of oppositional differences, but should also be seen, in phenomenological terms, as the negative quality of judgment and hence as the distance between discourse and its object. However, although the negativity involved in the negative quality of judgment has to be analyzed as distanciation, the negativity involved in seeing is of a type different from the negativity which inhabits the system of *langue* because it is an experience of mobility in space:

Negativity is a position which rules over two heterogeneous experiences. There is a negation implied in the visible: distance, the constitutive

spacing of space, negation experienced in variability. The experience of this mobility which endangers extension, thickness, figure is a privileged object of description for the phenomenologist, it is the constitutive seeing that Husserl attempts to rediscover beneath its collapse into formed vision, it is the permanent genesis of objective space and body fomenting beneath them in the flesh according to Merleau-Ponty.

(*DF*, 27)

Such negativity is described as “transcendental,” that is, as having to do with the constitution of objects. Engendered through the negativity of distance, objects display only one of their faces and hide others (as Merleau-Ponty points out, it is impossible to see all six faces of a cube simultaneously, and were the perceiving eye immobile, it would be unable to constitute the cube). The eye moves, and the object is the result of a synthesis of its successive perceptions by the eye. There is nothing to be seen without distance, the separate between the eye that sees and that which is seen. Negation is at the heart of seeing as distanciation insofar as negativity is the experience of mobility.

But if the distinction between the negation implied in language and the negation implied in the visible seems at first to remain at the level of the distinction between speaking and seeing, Lyotard then problematizes the opposition by showing that even if these two orders of the negative are heterogeneous, something like a “seeing” nonetheless does inhabit language. This “seeing” involves the question of designation as opposed to signification. As is particularly clear in the case of deictics – indicators such as “I,” “here,” or “now” – their signification cannot be separated from their designation (i.e., from their referent in the spatio-temporal situation of their utterance): “the negativity involved here is not that of the linguistic or conceptual system, but that of the body in space” (*DF*, 38). Linguistic reference and designation depend on the space of the visual and sensory field, and bring “depth,” “visibility,” expressivity” into the “flat” structural space of signification: “Discourse is thick. It does not only signify, it also expresses. And if it expresses, it is because it too has mobility inscribed in it, movement and force . . . It too calls upon the eye [en appelle a l’oeil]” (*DF*, 15). There is therefore an “eye” within discourse. Discourse is thus both surrounded and undercut by the figural: “The figure is both outside and inside . . . Language is not a homogenous medium, it divides because it exteriorizes the sensible as vis-à-vis, as object, and it is divided because it interiorizes the figural in the articulated. The eye is inside speech because there is no articulated language without the exteriorization of something ‘visible,’ exteriority at the heart of discourse, that is its expression” (*DF*, 13–14). Topographically, the relation of simultaneous exteriority and interiority of the figural to discourse is thus not dialectical.

In an analysis that still relies on a phenomenology of perception, Lyotard analyzes in some works of art such as Mallarmé’s “Un coup de des jamais n’abolira le hasard” or Butor’s “Illustrations” the presence of the figural as the incursion of the order of visibility within the text. In particular, he stresses the plastic value of typographical forms which do not function only in the system of oppositions of the graphic code of writing. Their plastic value is determined

by the destiny of the characters, their size, their distribution across the page, their nature – italics, bold etc. In other words, these typographic forms do not function in the order of signification but rather in the sensory spatio-temporal order. In his analysis of Butor's text, Lyotard even notes that if one replaces the letters by different intensities of black corresponding to the density, nature, and size of the typographical letters and of the blank intervals, one would discover a figure close to Mondrian. Whereas here the figure within the text is thus associated with an image that belongs to the order of perception (an actual painting), the movement from phenomenology to psychoanalysis will allow Lyotard to radicalize the notion of the figure, in such a way that the figure will not be limited to the image, the visual, the domain of phenomenological description.

The appeal to psychoanalysis and to desire rather than sight is made necessary by the fact that the figural does not simply involve the incursion of visual or perceptual space into the space of discourse. The figural can also disrupt visual or perceptual space too: the figural works against the perceptual just as much as it works against the linguistic. As Bennington notes, "the phenomenologist's dream . . . is to reconcile language and the world, the speaking body and the perceiving body . . . Phenomenological analyses of the figure pick out a notion of 'expressivity' through which the word is supposed to place us in accord with what it designates" (*LW*, 94–5). Such an analysis makes of language a world in which the body is essentially at home as it is supposed to be at home in the world of perception. But, Lyotard argues, it would be abstract to think of perception in isolation from what he calls "*emotion*." Emotion disrupts the at-homeness of the body in the world, for emotion would be impossible "if our bodily hold on the world were not uncertain in its basis, if the possibility of a non-world were not given at the same time as its certainty" (*LW*, 137). What Lyotard calls emotion is still a loose term here. However, it names that which is radically heterogeneous to the order of perception, that which disrupts it from within and inscribes negatively within it (giving "the possibility of a non-world"). As we shall see, the loose term "emotion" will become theorized as affect-phrase.

Thus far we have seen the link that Lyotard establishes in phenomenological terms between visibility and negativity. At this point, which marks the passage from the first to the second step of the deconstruction of the opposition between the order of vision and the order of discourse as well as the passage from phenomenology to psychoanalysis, Lyotard comes back to an analysis of negativity. This time negativity is no longer approached on the basis of phenomenological perception but rather in terms of a reading of Freud's analysis of denegation in his 1925 essay "Verneinung":⁶ Lyotard's reading of Freud allows him to link negativity and the figural to desire rather than to sight. Freud's article begins with a series of anecdotes and concrete examples which lead to a generalization concerning the possibility of presenting what one is in terms of what one is not: in other words, the patient's assertion "this is what I am." To negate something is the same thing as saying "I'd rather repress this." Negation is a form of repression, once the patient has asserted "this is what I am not" and once the analyst can make the patient accept – "in a kind of intellectual

acceptance" – what was previously denied. But, Freud adds after a dash and with no further explanation, "the repressive process itself is not yet removed [*aufgehoben*]." The patient's acceptance, i.e., his negation of his original negation, does not remove repression. Such process shows how "the intellectual function [function of judgment] is separated from the affective process" (SEF, XIX, 236). While the negative judgment is a form of repression, the affirmative judgment (the negation of negation) does not lift repression and remains subtended by it: affirmation thus takes place as an intellectual function since on the affective level repression is not removed.

Freud then proceeds to analyze the function of judgment in order to show that behind such function lies the opposition between introjection ("I should like to eat that") and expulsion ("I should like to spit it out"). The operation of introjection/expulsion is at the basis of the distinction between the ego and what is alien to it – what is inside the ego and constitutes it and what is outside of it and is alien to it. Freud's point is to link the polarity in the function of judgment (affirmation and negation) to the opposition between introjection and expulsion. Affirming the possession by a thing of a particular attribute means taking it in; negating it means rejecting it: "Affirmation [*die Bejahung*] – as a substitute for uniting [*als Ersatz der Vereinigung*] – belongs to Eros [*gebort dem Eros an*]." And "negation [*die Verneinung*] – the successor to expulsion [*(Nachfolge der Ausstossung)*] – belongs to the instinct of destruction [*Destruktionstrieb*]" (SEF, XIX, 239). Freud has thus located the origin of the function of judgment – the function of *Verneinung* and *Bejahung* – in the dynamics of the primary drives (introjection versus expulsion, unification versus expulsion, Eros versus destruction).

Lyotard's reading of "Verneinung" focuses on the functioning of negation in the movement from the patient's statement "it's not my mother," to the analyst's "so it *is* his mother" and he distinguishes three kinds of "no's." First, there is the syntactic negation, manifested in the negative clause: it is the grammatical expression of a quality of judgment. Then, there is the structural negativity (*négativité structurale*) that is internal to the system of *langue* and which establishes the gaps between linguistic units, the gaps that distinguish the terms from each other so that they function by opposition. Such negativity – the discontinuity which structures language – functions on the axis of signification (signification results from this play of difference within the system). Finally, there is a negativity that does not function within language but functions externally. Such negativity stems from language's capacity to point, to refer, to designate: reference and designation introduce in the functioning of language a difference which cannot be reduced to oppositionality: "Designation or reference is the negativity which is not immanent to the fact of *langue* properly speaking but to the fact of discourse. . . The negation which underlies the relation of designation is the split which, opening itself between discourse and its object, allows us to speak" (DF, 120).

The "no" heard by the analyst when the patient says "it's *not* my mother" functions on these three levels. It is a grammatical negation, establishing a relation of exclusion between the person in the dream and the mother. It also functions on the level of the negativity of the system of signification insofar as it

allows the patient's discourse to distinguish the mother from what is not the mother. And, most importantly in order to understand the possibility of moving from "it's *not* my mother" to "so it *is* his mother," it functions to point to the negativity of designation – the fundamental and unbreachable split between discourse and its object, a split which constitutes discourse. What is important for our purpose here is that the split from the object (negativity) which constitutes discourse is no longer conceived of in terms of the distance of phenomenological sight (the negation implied in the visible as distance, "the constitutive spacing of space, negation experienced in variability" *DF*, 27) but rather in terms of the lack (the loss of the object) that structures desire: here the place of the mother as "lost object." Insofar as the dream is the fulfillment of a forbidden desire, to dream of the mother is a negation of the mother as outside desire, as forbidden. By denying having dreamt about his mother the patient thus reconstitutes the fundamental distance to the mother as lost. When the analyst states "so it *is* his mother," he is not turning a "no" into a "yes," he is moving from the "no" of syntax and signification to the "no" of designation. In Lyotard's reading, the importance of Freud's essay is that it points to the space of designation as both the other of discourse and its condition of possibility. Such a space of designation – the figural – is now opened up by desire rather than by an experience of sight.

Concluding his reading of "Verneinung," Lyotard writes: "a *figure* is settled at the heart of our speech, which operates as the matrix of these effects, and which takes hold of our words in order to put them in forms and images" (*DF*, 129). The process of *Verneinung* testifies to the "presence" within discourse of something (variously called "figure," "depth," "movement of desire," and "other eye," i.e., the eye which is not the eye of phenomenology) which belongs to a radically different order than articulated discourse, something which is both inside and outside discourse, both necessary to and disruptive of signification. It is not opposed to discourse but is the point at which the oppositions that structure discourse are opened to a radical heterogeneity by the work of desire. In his discussion of negativity, envisaged as that which opens up the order of discourse onto its radically heterogeneous other, Lyotard has thus moved from sight to desire. The original focus, throughout the first part of the book, on a phenomenological space of the visible, whose properties are assumed to be different from those of linguistic signification, has given way in the second part of the book to a focus on the psychoanalytic space of desire.

The figural cannot be limited, therefore, to the "image," the domain of phenomenological description. It cannot be reduced to a *visibility* (linked to the operation of designation) that disrupts the order of discourse. The figural is now intimately linked to the *work of desire* and psychoanalysis has become the "place" from which to analyze the "other eye," which is the eye of desire "located" in the unconscious. This eye of desire is defined in energetic terms as the transgressive work of forces: "the eye is the *force*" (*DF*, 14, my emphasis). And the unconscious must therefore be approached in energetic terms and not be reduced to discourse and language: "To turn the unconscious into a discourse is to forget energetics" (*DF*, 14). Indeed, in the chapter of *Discours*, *figure* entitled "The dream-work does not think" Lyotard opposes the Lacanian

assertion that “the unconscious is structured like a language” and analyzes each of the four operations of the dream-work (condensation, displacement, considerations of representability, and secondary revision) in order to show that they do not belong to the order of language.⁷ What is involved in each of these four operations is not discourse and the organization of signifiers but the *other* of articulated and organized discourse. Both condensation (a compression of volume) and displacement (which Freud considers to be a work preparatory to condensation) are the result of a force which transgresses the law of discourse, deconstructing it, compressing its units, giving them volume, thereby operating in the three-dimensional space of depth. And Lyotard concludes: “The dream-work is not a language; it is the effect on language of the force exerted by the figural . . . This force breaks the law. It hinders hearing but makes us see” (DF, 270).

At that point, if the work of art is associated with the figural it is spectral (as was at least in part the case in the analyses of Mallarmé and Butor) insofar as the discursive space is “disturbed by considerations of sensibility (of ‘sensuality’)” (DF, 71) but rather insofar as the discursive order is disturbed by the order of desire, that is by the operations of the primary process. The work performed by the figural within the text, a work that undoes discourse without destroying meaning, is also the work of dreams according to Freud: “at first glance the ‘language’ of the dream seems to be nothing more nor less than the language of art” (DF, 260). This does not mean that the work of art is a dream. The work of art does not interest Lyotard insofar as it would be the fulfillment of the artist’s desire – that is, in terms of its “content” – rather in terms of its work: if the “language” of the dream is the same as that of art, it is because both *work* transgressively, and their work entails energy, forces, and their conflict. While Lyotard continues to associate the figure with visibility and the eye – “the figural . . . makes us see” (DF, 270) – it is important to note the shift in the use of the terms. While we saw that the irruption of the figure in discourse was previously associated with visibility and the negativity of distancing, the presence of the figure in discourse is now associated with a “visibility” that must be put in quotation marks for this “visibility” no longer involves *visible* and *sensible* objects or referents but, rather, that “other eye” of desire. Expression and expressivity become the presence, the secondary process (in discourse and in representation) of operations belonging to the unconscious system. The figure comes from “another scene” than the linguistic or pictorial one in which it appears.

In *Discours, figure* his reading of Freud thus allows Lyotard to “defend the eye,” the visual, the sensible, the figural against the discursive and the articulated without appealing to phenomenology but by appealing to an energetic conception of the psychic apparatus (the psychic apparatus as a conflict of energies, desire as a transgressive and deconstructive force). We have therefore seen how Lyotard’s analysis of “visibility” and of the “eye” has thus far moved from a focus on phenomenological vision (the eye of phenomenological sight) to an analysis of desire (the “other eye,” the eye of desire as the *force* at work within and against discourse).

From *Discours, figure* to *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* what seems to happen,

at first sight, is a move away from psychoanalysis back to perception and the perceptible. Indeed, *Que peindre?* raises the question of an “anamnesis of the visible” in terms that explicitly call into question the emphasis placed in *Discours, figure* on the energetic operations of desire. The “anamnesis of the visible” is the title of a study on Adami first published in the catalogue for an Adami exhibition at the Centre Georges Pompidou,⁸ and which constitutes the basis of two of the essays on Adami in *Que peindre?*, “La franchise” and “L’anamnese.” Lyotard writes: “I will not be able to work on the anamnesis of the visible without doing an anamnesis of *Discours, figure*. It is a book which functions as a screen in an anamnesis of the visible. It prevents phenomenology from being radical on that matter” (QP, 60). In a gesture that seems to retract the movement in *Discours, figure* from the figural as perceptible visibility to the figural as desire, Lyotard asserts that “the visible, or rather the visual, is not at all dependent on a montage of desire, . . . it has nothing to do with the plots [*intrigues*] stemming from sexual difference” (QP, 61). While in *Discours, figure* we saw that “the lesson of Freud supplant[ed] that of Husserl,” is it now a question of coming back to the perceptible, is it a return to and a radicalization of phenomenology? In fact, it is clear that such is not the case. Instead, as we shall see, what follows is an argument supported by the “philosophy of phrases” elaborated in *The Differend*. But then, does this mean that the “anamnesis of the visible” entails a turning away from psychoanalysis and from the relation between the figural and the unconscious operations of desire? Indeed, throughout *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* the name of Kant is invoked more often than that of Freud, and the art that Lyotard discusses is associated with the Kantian sublime. However, although Freud’s name does not appear as prominently in *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* as it did in *Discours, figure*, and although the visual is said not to be “at all dependent on a montage of desire,” the term “anamnesis” evokes psychoanalysis and the patient’s effort, through language, to work through his dream, his symptom, his fantasy, or his hallucination towards their lost origin. The psychoanalytic working-through entails an anamnesis of the dream, the symptom, the fantasy, the hallucination. But what would an anamnesis of the *visible* be? Can one move back towards an “infancy” of sight? Is it more than a vague analogy? Furthermore, Lyotard links the “anamnesis of the visible” to what Lacan called “the Thing” and Freud “the unconscious affect” (IN, 33). What, then, in *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman*, is happening to the analogy between art (the figural) and the operations of desire elaborated in *Discours, figure*?

Lyotard approaches art in *Que peindre?* and in *The Inhuman* from within the framework of the philosophy of phrases developed in *The Differend*, and the shift in the relation between the unconscious and the visible must be examined similarly. The phrase interested Lyotard insofar as it is in an *event*: “a phrase ‘happens’” (D, xii). The phrase-event is not the linguists’ sentence – and the return to a terminology derived from linguistics or grammar is not a return to what *Discours, figure* had undermined. Rather, the phrase is an occurrence which presents what Lyotard calls “a universe” articulated around several poles or instances: a referent (the case), the meaning (what is signified by the case), and an addressor (that “by” which or in whose name something is signified by the

case). The “subjects” (addressors and addressees) do not preexist the phrase universe: they do not produce it and they do not exist independently from it. Similarly, referentiality and meaning do not exist outside the phrase but are positions within the universe presented by the phrase.⁹ These poles of a phrase-universe can be more or less marked: one, two, three can be implicit or implied. But insofar as these instances are implicit or implied, the phrase is *articulate*. The concept of articulation is crucial to Lyotard’s “phrastics.” It is, however, important to understand that by “articulation” Lyotard does not mean what structural linguists usually refer to as the “double articulation of language” (i.e., its organization in morphemes and phonemes). In Lyotard’s analysis a phrase is articulate inasmuch as it presents a universe. And it is through the instances which articulate the phrase-universe that the *linkage* of this phrase onto another or others is possible.

Indeed, *The Differend* reveals that phrasing entails linking and that “to link is necessary, but how to link is contingent” (D, 66). A phrase is, constitutively, linked to other phrases. After a phrase another is inevitable, even if it is a silence, which is itself a phrase. This inevitable and necessary linkage takes place because the phrase is articulate: what makes linkage both inevitable and necessary is the fact that the phrase is articulate, i.e., it presents poles which another phrase uses to hood onto the first one. On the one hand, *The Differend* asserts that there is no such thing as an absence of phrase, that it is impossible not to phrase, that even silence is a phrase, and that it is therefore necessary to make linkage – “this is not an obligation, a *Sollen*, but a necessity, a *Müssen*” (D, 66). At the same time, however, as it asserts that it is impossible that there be no phrase, *The Differend* also opens up the very possibility of this impossible, the possibility of “another kind of silence. One that does not bear upon an instance in a phrase universe, but which bears upon the occurrence of a phrase . . . the feeling that the impossible is possible. That the necessary is contingent. That linkage must be made, but that there won’t be anything upon which to link” (D, 75). This “other kind of silence” is not a phrase in abeyance but more like a nonphrase; it is not a mode of linking but the interruption of modes of linking. It is precisely the possibility of this “other silence,” which threatens with radical interruption the possibility of linkage, that *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* explore in the aesthetic field.

In the introductory essay of *Que peindre?*, entitled “Presence,” Lyotard argues that what painting, music, and writing try to render present is *presence* itself. It is not the presence of something, of a thing or an object, the presence of representation, a presence that would be lost in and through representation. Rather it is the “presence of nothing,” the “desert of space-time.” But this nothing is not the blank space of absence. It is the fact that “the caesura of space-time happens,” the “enigmatic yet frank presence of a ‘here is’ [voici]” (D, 31): it is the space-time of a pure phrase-event, a pure “it happens” – and “pure” in this context means precisely *that* it happens without determination of *what* happens. Echoing the terms according to which “presence” is articulated in *Que peindre?*, the “inhuman” is defined in the aesthetic field in *The Inhuman* as a state where the mind is “prey to ‘presence’ (a presence which is in no way present in the sense of *here and now*, i.e., like what is designated by the deictics of

presentation), a mindless state of mind, which is required of mind not for matter to be perceived or conceived, given or grasped, but so *that there be* something [*qu'il y ait* du quelque chose]" (D, 140). What is at stake in the art Lyotard discusses is obviously no longer representation. It is an interest in what he also calls "matter," both in *Que peindre?* and in *The Inhuman* (in painting – color, in music – timbre, in writing – words) insofar as matter has neither finality nor destination, as it is not addressed to the mind and cannot be approached by a pragmatics of communicational and teleological destination: "Matter expects no form; on the contrary, it expects nothing" (QP, 35). Matter is not a substance, it is not simply in opposition to form, but rather it designates the uniqueness of a nuance, a flavor, a timbre, the bursting of the forms of space-time. "Presence," the "inhuman," and "matter" therefore name the event of an *It happens* [*II arrive*], the event of a phrase that is not polarized (either on the axis of destination or on the axis of referentiality), the event of a phrase that is thus not articulate and that presents no universe, that presents nothing and no thing but the fact *that* it happens without determination of *what* happens. The paradox of art is that while it tries to bear witness to the event of the "it happens," this "it happens" always occurs in the form and determination of *what* happens. *What* is presented always hides *that* it is presented, always hides presentation. Presentation is never present.

Does such an emphasis on the phrase-event (the event of a phrase that is not articulate), the *quod* before all *quid*, presence, and matter entail a turning away from psychoanalysis and from the relation between art (the figural) and the unconscious? Throughout *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* the aesthetics of the quod is associated with the Kantian sublime – the sublime as excess of without-form, the "there is" of space-time from before phenomena, before thinking, before volume and diachrony. However, Lyotard's statement at the beginning of his reflection on the "anamnesis of the visible" that "the visual is not dependent on a *montage* of desire" and "has nothing to do with the *plots* [intrigues] stemming from sexual difference" (my emphases) does not mean a refutation of the possibility of a joint approach to art and the unconscious. Rather, it stresses the fact that desire and sexual difference, insofar as they are a *montage* and *intrigues*, operate linkages and syntheses in and through phrases. Desire may disrupt discourse and transgress its laws (such was the thesis of *Discours, figure*), but disruption and transgression remain nonetheless modes of phrasing and of linking onto that which is disrupted and transgressed. In *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* what is at stake is to move back from desire and its transgressions, back from the figural in its association with the operations of desire (and this would be the anamnesis of *Discours, figure*), that is, back from phrases and their linkage towards "nonphrases" and interruption in art and in the unconscious.

For our purpose here, which is to analyze the place of psychoanalysis in Lyotard's rephrasing of the figural, it is important to stress that the notion of phrase-event developed in *The Differend* has led Lyotard to a "rephrasing" of the unconscious: with the notion of phrase-event the unconscious as an apparatus functioning according to the rules not of articulated discourse but of a mechanics (of forces and energies) gives way to conception of the unconscious as a phrase, a conception most explicitly developed in an article published in the

Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse and entitled “Emma.”¹⁰ To the question “what about the unconscious in terms of phrases?” Lyotard answers: “The unconscious ‘happens’ in phrases, hence as phrase, but as *inarticulate phrase*” (NRP, 48–9, italics mine). That a phrase is *inarticulate* means that it does not present a universe: the inarticulate phrase “lacks the instances which articulate a phrase universe; it is therefore impossible to say that it presents a universe” (NRP, 56). The inarticulate phrase is thus a nonsignifying, nonaddressing and nonreferenced phrase. However, it points to a meaning which is only of one type: pleasure and/or pain (anxiety, fear, etc.). It is because the inarticulate phrase only points towards pleasure and/or pain and because it is close to what Freud in the essay “The Unconscious” analyzed as “unconscious affect” that Lyotard also calls the inarticulate phrase an “affect-phrase.” The affect-phrase thus does not “speak of” anything but “says” (without articulating) that there is something, “as *da*, here and now, insofar as this something is *not anything*, neither meaning, nor reference, nor address . . . the something that it [the inarticulate phrase] ‘presents’ is its own ‘presence,’ its being there now” (NRP, 56). Insofar as the inarticulate phrase is thus a pure “it happens,” a pure occurrence (“pure” in this context means *that* it happens without determination of *what* happens), the “presence” of painting and the “inhuman” discussed above are inarticulate phrases, affect-phrases.

Whereas in *Discours, figure* the analogy between the “language of the dream” (the primary processes) relied on the similarity of their work as transgressive force, *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* read in conjunction with “Emma” suggest that the analogy between art and the unconscious still underlies Lyotard’s recent work but that it now relies on the similarity of their status as pure occurrence, as inarticulate phrase (which is “more like a nonphrase”). However, while emphasizing the shift on the relation between art and the unconscious from *Discours, figure* to *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman*, I would also like to stress a certain continuity: although Lyotard’s terminology in *Discours, figure* relied on physics (energetics, the figural as force) rather than a phraseology, on transgression rather than inarticulation, the relation between designation (the space of the figural) and signification already anticipated the relation between inarticulate phrase and articulate phrase. Insofar as the figure is unrepresentable, heterogeneous to the order of discourse, insofar as it “inhabits” discourse and works upon discourse while being outside of it at the same time, the relation that the figure has to discourse anticipates the relation that “presence” has to “representation,” the “inhuman” to the “human,” and the “inarticulate” to the “articulate.” What Lyotard elaborates in *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* under the names of “presence,” “inhuman,” and “inarticulate phrase” is linked to the figural insofar as still at stake is the heterogeneous to the order of discourse and signification. Indeed, the “it happens,” the “picture as occurrence or event, is not expressible” (IN, 93). The inhuman, presence, and the affect-phrase are in-expressible – i.e., radically heterogeneous to the order of discourse and signification – insofar as they are the fact that something happens before all determination of what happens: “The inexpressible does not reside in an over there, in another world, or another time, but in this: in that it (something) happens” (93). But whereas in *Discours, figure* the figural linked “visibility” (as

the radical other of discourse) to desire as force, in *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* the presence of painting and the inhuman link “the visual” (which is the radically heterogeneous to discourse, signification, and systematicity) to the inarticulate phrase, the fact *that* it happens before any determination of *what* happened, a quod before all quid.

Such a shift from the figural and energetics to the inarticulate phrase, insofar as it is a shift from an emphasis on space (the figural as space) to an emphasis on time, reveals a linking, that is, a phrase coming *after* another one which comes *after* another one and so on, the question of linkage is a temporal one. In fact, in *Discours*, *figure* the presence of the figural within discourse already opened the question of the linkage between the two heterogeneous orders. Lyotard’s statement of purpose in the opening paragraph of his chapter on Freud’s “Verneinung” reads as follows: “to open a path towards . . . the *engrenement* of the drive’s silence onto articulated language” (DF, 117). *Engrenement* is a form of linkage: what was therefore already at stake in *Discours*, *figure* was the linkage between the silence of the drive and the articulation of discourse. But whereas the question raised by the figural was one of *engrenement*, hence of linkage, the question raised by the presence of painting, the inhuman, and the affect-phrase is one of *impossibility* of linkage, of interruption of linkages.

For, insofar as the pure “it happens” of painting and of the affect-phrase is inarticulate, it cannot be taken as the referent of other phrases – the nonsignifying, nonaddressing and nonreferenced “it happens” does not allow for any linkage. Thus, in *Que peindre?* Lyotard writes: “with presence there is no linking of events” (27). This impossibility of linkage is precisely what defines a *differend* – “a case of conflict between (at least) two parties, that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments. One side’s legitimacy does not imply the other’s lack of legitimacy” (D, xi). A *differend* thus arises from a major interruption which suspends all linkage, and the ultimate question raised by *The Differend* is that of bearing witness to the differend: is it possible to phrase the interruption of phrases, the nonlinkage of phrases? Such is precisely the function of art for Lyotard. In painting, it is a differend between color (matter) and construction (articulation) through design: “in painting, after the exploration of the constraints bearing on the chromatic organization of surfaces, only color remains” (IN, 171). What is at stake for the painter is “to make seen what makes one see, and not what is visible . . . color in its occurrence” (IN, 102). In music, it is a differend between “the color of sound,” i.e., timbre, and melodic construction (articulation): “the analysis of the regulation of pitch eventually leaves as its reminder only the material, the enigmatic presence of vibration . . . What is ‘radically unthought’ is unthought of the ear, something inaudible” (IN, 171–2). For thinking, it is a differend between words themselves in their materiality and the articulation of thinking: words themselves, “in the most secret place of thought, are its matter, its timbre, its nuance, i.e. what it cannot manage to think . . . Words are always older than thought” (IN, 142). Words are thus the *in-fans*, i.e. the unspeakable, of thinking, just as color is the *in-fans* of painting and timbre the *in-fans* of music.

Furthermore, in *The Inhuman* Lyotard suggests that this impossibility of

linkage onto the quod (onto a presence without anything being presented) is akin to the temporal paradox that Freud has elaborated under the name of *Nachträglichkeit* (*après-coup*). Such a temporal paradox lies in the fact that between the “first shock” and the “later shocks”¹¹ there is both a temporal continuity and discontinuity – a temporal paradox which “echoes” the topical paradox of the figure (both inside and outside discourse). The affect “stemming from” the first shock does not take place at the time of this first shock, but later. And at the time when it takes place, it is not recognized; it takes place as a new feeling, and then repeats itself as “new” each time that it happens. Between the first shock and the later shock there is thus a temporal discontinuity, resulting in amnesia, oblivion; and a work of anamnesis, the *Durcharbeitung*, will be required in order to work through the oblivion. At the same time, the affect repeats itself: it does not *come from* the first shock, it *comes back* from it. And it is not because it has been forgotten that it comes back: what is repeated, from the first to the second shock and then to all the deferred shocks, is precisely the oblivion – the quod in the absence of a quid – since “it is possible to know *that* a silent host has come inside the house again without knowing *what* he is, without knowing if he is the same each time” (NRP, 55). What is repeated and creates continuity is therefore oblivion, discontinuity itself. The linkage between the first shock and the deferred shocks is precisely the absence of linkage.

Thus, at stake in painting, music, and writing, as well as in the psycho-analytic treatment is this temporal paradox: the quod (color, timbre, word) designates a presence in the absence of an active mind, a presence that is both unforgettable and immediately forgotten, “a passibility for which the mind will not have been prepared, which will have unsettled it.” Art is “the remembrance of a time [the first shock, the time of this passibility] that is lost because it has not had place and time in the psychic apparatus, and it has not been inscribed” (IN, 141). If the anamnesis leads to a remembrance of time lost, it is not insofar as the time lost would be represented, nor even presented, but insofar as art insures a passage towards the “essence” of time lost, towards the quod: art abandons preestablished syntheses to let the fact that *it happens* to come through. Writing as passage or remembrance, painting as the “anamnesis of the visible” can be compared to the analytic working-through which consists in “pricking up one’s third ear,” in abandoning established syntheses to let the signifier work in a floating way: Proust, Adami, and Freud meet in this remembrance of things past which is the task of art. However, writing and painting as anamnesis cannot be identified with analytic treatment from the point of view of “content” (stakes, ends, and purpose) anymore than the figural can be identified with the dream from the point of view of “content.” Just as the figural could be compared to the dream from the point of view of their work, the comparison between writing, painting, and the analytic *Durcharbeitung* bears on the nature of the work – the working-through – which consists, in both cases, in opening a listening for the ineffable and the inarticulate, in opening a sight onto what makes one see in its occurrence.

The rephrasing of the figural as presence of painting, inhuman, or matter and the shift in emphasis from a “space of designation” to an “anamnesis of the

visible” entails neither returning to phenomenology nor abandoning the analogy between art and the unconscious upon which the elaboration of the figural as “eye of desire” relied. However, while in *Discours, figure* the figural linked “visibility” to desire as force, in *Que peindre?* and *The Inhuman* the presence of painting, the inhuman, and matter link “visibility” to a phrase-occurrence, and to the unconscious as inarticulate affect-phrase. The shift (the anamnesis) from the figural to the inarticulate phrase is a shift from energetics to phrastics, from transgressive forces to inarticulate phrases, from multiplicity (the multiplicity of libidinal intensities associated with the work of desire in *Discours, figure*) to singularity (the radical singularity of the even), from the disruption and transgression of linkages, a disruption which remains a mode of linkage, to the interruption of linkages.

2

VISIBILITY, “BILD,” AND “EINBILDUNGSKRAFT”

DERRIDA, BARTHES, LEVINAS

Ludwig Nagl

1 INTRODUCTION: READERS, BLIND READERS, VISIBILITY AND IMAGINATION

In which sense is a text visible? Obviously, whenever a text is read, something must be grasped optically: letters, figures, visual traces, manifestations of thoughts. As semioticians would say, texts depend upon a material body: they consist of, for example, letters in ink or – if they transport their message secretly – perhaps letters written with onion juice. Their meaning can be retrieved by simply observing the traces (or by artfully making them visible, as in the case of onion ink by warming up the paper) and reading them.

Note carefully, texts can be seen without being read and can be read without being understood: anyone can experience this while traveling in a country where he or she does not know the language. Does readability therefore presuppose a visibility of texts (even if their visibility does not necessarily warrant their readability)? An affirmative answer to this question would be premature until the manner in which blind persons experience texts has been given adequate consideration. Blind people can read texts that they cannot see, texts which are paradoxically visible but not readable for those of us who can see them unless we too are in command of Braille. Blind people read texts, as we all know, in a tactile manner, by touching signs that consist of variations of six printed points on paper. In which way is this “reading by touching” a functional equivalent, or a *supplementum*, of seeing? And, above all, does this ability of the optical to be supplemented teach us something? For example, does that circumvention of the text’s ordinary visibility implemented by blind readers suggest that the text can be – quasi-platonically – freed from its material burden, from the visible incorporation that manifests, as well as hides, its spirit? Not quite, it seems: Braille writing does not work without providing a *substitute* for the optical. The empirical incorporation of the text, a prerequisite of any reading, can now be touched. But in which manner – if any – is this (second) *supplementum* (of the alleged first *supplementum* of the text’s “spirit,” its

empirical visibility) linked to “ordinary” reading practice? Perhaps blind readers translate their tactile impressions into inner optical “images” which – in a kind of “internal vision” – are surrogates for the outward optical impressions of seeing readers? But any explanation of this sort remains problematic, insofar as it uses the concept of “image” and “imagination” without further specifying it (i.e., insofar as it aims to universally rehabilitate empirical visibility, understood as the capacity to see and recall optical pictures, as the “schematism” of all possible forms of textual experiences). Not only does such an explanation forget that persons who were born blind (and thus never had the chance to experience visual impressions that they could later recall) are perfectly able to read texts in Braille and to understand their impact in a socially correct (spatio-temporally situated and categorically structured) manner. An explanation of this type also avoids a careful analysis of what visibility “always already” meant in so-called “regular” textual experiences. Although empirical (optical) traces are a prerequisite for any “regular” reading, we do not “see” the printed letters as isolated, atomistic “material,” i.e. as a random collection of abstract “particulars.” We thus do not read them in the manner the Latin word *legere* suggests, which compares the reading process with the act of “picking up something.” And we also do not visualize or imagine, in an explicitly optical manner, the details – the objects and relations – about which a text speaks. For example, we need not imagine the *specific* traits of a chair (of which chair, by the way? since there are so many imaginable in so many different styles) in order to understand the word “chair.” Writing and reading, it seems, cannot be conceived as complementary processes consisting of a mechanico-deterministical de-piction and reconstructive re-piction of reality. Texts imply the visible in a nondirect, withdrawn, mediated manner: they are not *Abbilder*, not mirror images of the real. The *Bilder* which they contain – always penetrated and partially restructured by concepts – are located somewhere between the (lost and illusionary) image of *Wirklichkeit an sich* – i.e. the limiting “notion,” of an unpictured, unmediated reality “in itself,” a reality reflected without any intervention – and the (utopian and illusionary) *image of perfection*, i.e. the *Grenzbegriff* of a “regained,” unambiguously stable *Welt “bild”* (of a statically fixed, ultimate “image” of the world *in toto*).

Thus, it seems, the relationship between the text, along with its (visualizable) content, on the one hand, and its material, visible trace on the other is all but clear. What can be shown, however, is that we are unable to understand their interrelation in a hierarchical manner that structures two elements without ambiguity. In the attempts (since *Of Grammatology*) to subvert the *prima vista* plausible (but, as Derrida claims, *de facto* “logocentric”) conception that writing is nothing but the outer and potentially depraved visualization and expression of an inner, subjective voice, Derrida reshapes the older discourse about textuality in a significant way. In his deconstructive account, the classical dichotomy between a consciously intended or voiced “meaning” and its imperfect manifestations in writing tends to dissolve on close inspection: no inner voice, no “présence a-soi” can exist in total separation from its materialization, from its *supplementum*, i.e., severed from the structure of a written, visible text. The voice is not self-sufficient: when speakers learn to articulate

themselves they need to grow up in socio-institutional contexts that – so says Derrida – are forms of existing, objective “writing.” This dependency of every “subjectivation” upon the “writtenness” of material institutions also holds true, by the way, for the textual experiences of blind persons. Their complex ways of self-articulation, like those of nonblind persons, rest on a symbolic (although tactilically and acoustically implemented) textuality, which – quite similar to the experience of sighted persons – gives their private impressions a public, social shape.

But Derrida’s deconstructive inversion of the classical “foundational relationship” between “meaning” and its “outer” manifestation, “writing,” is not grasped in its structural logic, if it is interpreted as the *bestimmte Negation* of, for example, Husserl’s classical dichotomy between a superior “inner voice” and an inferior “outer trace.” The “trace” does not – by a kind of direct inversion – take revenge on and subjugate the voice: Derrida’s deconstructivism is not just the upside-down mode of Husserl’s phenomenology.¹

We inscribe every new text into a series of given past texts, and we do so in a manner that implies and presupposes visibility (or one of its surrogates, such as tactility). Our inscriptions (which depend upon matter, i.e. on preformed, symbolically mediated, reshapable content) are thus not original acts: they do not have the quality of a *creatio ex nihilo* but imply and presuppose structures which cannot be grasped in their totality by those who presently re-“inscribe” the meanings of texts. The complexity of those acts by which we overlay visible (or touchable) past inscriptions is misread when it is interpreted along the line of an invasive negation of the old hierarchy between voice and material trace. The claim that the written trace dethrones and fills up the empty void of the “spirit” (the imaginary space of the text) is equally implausible, just as it was implausible to claim (as the “classical” model had a tendency to do) that the text’s “spirit” (the self-assured voice, interpreted as the master of all its meanings) could ever rid itself of its “lowly” outer manifestations.

The amazing capacity of all textual practice to “overwrite” (as well as the capacity of texts to be subjected to “inscription”) once was explored – under the heading of *Einbildungskraft* – in a discourse which in its details is forgotten today or at least has become “untimely.” Traces of what in Kant’s *Critiques* formed a theory of “productive imagination” (that capacity located somewhere between image and concept) can nevertheless still be found – in transformed and massively disguised ways – in the works of Derrida, Barthes, and Levinas. What follows sketches out some intrusions of Kant’s classical discourse into the writings of these three thinkers. In particular, some of Derrida’s deconstructive moves, such as those found in *The Truth in Painting*, as well as Barthes’s analysis of “image clothing,” “written clothing,” and “real clothing” in *The Fashion System*, and Levinas’s reflections on “image,” “criticism,” and “concept” in his essay *Reality and its Shadow*, will be considered.

2 DERRIDA, THE IMAGE AND TRUTH

The relationship between language and *Bild* – a topic that to some extent already structured Derrida’s *photo roman Recht auf Einsicht*² – pops up early in

*The Truth in Painting*³ when Derrida writes: "In the French language, if there is one that is one and *if it is not a painting* [emphasis mine] the 'truth in painting' could mean and be understood as: the truth as shown, presented or represented in the field of the pictural, properly pictural mode, even if this mode is topological with respect to truth itself" (T, 6). But according to Derrida any strict division between and hierarchization of language and picture is bound to fail. Relations between linguistic truth and image are considerably more complicated and full of inversive turns. Not only are all our languages interspersed with pictorial elements (as those philosophers already knew, who – like C. S. Peirce – thought about the "iconic" elements contained in any form of linguistic representation (and vice versa),⁴ or who, like Kant's predecessor Baumgarten, investigated the aspect of language involved in "intuition" in relation to that oriented by "concept" through distinguishing between *oberem und unterem Erkenntnisvermögen*); we also can call pictures as such – paintings, for example – "true." This might mean only in its trivial sense that a "realistic" painting depicts or "mirrors" reality "correctly" (which is a rather dubious idea, since it overlooks that *style* shapes any form of "realism"). Sometimes, however, a much more complex and interesting claim is raised by saying that there is "truth" in the sphere of images. T. W. Adorno, for example, pointed out in his *Aesthetic Theory* that all "authentic" artworks (paintings, music, and literature alike) are truth-bound, insofar as their (postreligiously "neutralized") "epiphanic quality" upsets and shocks us. The truth-related character of this *Erschütterung* – an experience which all authentic art is able to provoke – is misread if it is seen as nothing but a derivative or depraved version of the (allegedly "full") truth of theoretical propositions in which meaning is stable.⁵

Derrida shares Adorno's *rancune* when confronted with attempts to interpret aesthetic relations within a framework of isomorphy or realistic reduplication. Even in the comparably less complex epistemological field of "pure visual representation," no Wittgensteinian or, for that matter, Lacanian account of depicting conceived as mirroring (and then identity-forming) can explain what it claims to explain. There are no "nude" referents (T, 57), visible and identifiable prior to the various modes of reference – and mirrors in spite of reflecting "their" images do not see what they show. Any attempt to visualize (i.e. "stare at") "objective elements" from outside of the symbolical (in a kind of "God's Eye view," as Hilary Putnam ironically said), rests, at least implicitly, on a form of metaphysical self-aggrandizement. Only in fantasies of absolute "conceptual" usurpation (which "philosophically" dream up the absolute transparency of the world) might this supposedly infinite vantage point exist which would allow us to *see* (and thus to know) whether "our language" depicts the elements of our *Bilder* "correctly."

Thus, neither for Derrida nor for Adorno can that most complex aesthetic practice of "mimicry," the assimilatory "*Sich-anschmiegen*" that undermines the "appropriating" grip of categorical conceptualization, come close to "mirroring." There is no realistic, *isolable* truth-basis in the "visual sphere" which can be found through absolute "visio." The image-content (epistemologically, "the given"; aesthetically [in Derrida's reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment*], "the ergon" [T, 37]) is already always infested by the nonimage (epistemologically

by "writing" and "speech"; aesthetically by the "parergon" or "frame" [T, 37], which "insults" – in, as Derrida puts it, a kind of *Überfall*, in a "violent superimposition" [T, 67] – "ergon's" seemingly self-contained visual core).

Does this superimposition and violent intrusion in its move against the abstract fixation of a core of representation thus rearticulate and spell out in aesthetic terms the meaning of Derrida's famous and notorious *dictum*, "il n'y a pas de hors-texte"?⁶ Yes and no.

Derrida, it seems, is far from suggesting a total submersion (and wholesale transformation) of the visual sphere or, even more absurdly, a complete rejection of *Anschauung*, as the result of his deconstructive readings of *Bild*. Nor does he, with respect to aesthetics proper, claim the *Aufhebung* or sublation of the *ergon* (the work of art) in the *parergon* (the ornamental *Zierwerk* of its frame). Deconstruction, in Derrida's sense, never aims at a mere inversion, as in the case of an inversion of propositional realism (and its "visual" core which – without seeing this – usurps God's Eye). Neither the visible world nor our modes of looking at it can disappear *in toto* in the symbolic structures that penetrate both. Similarly, the ornamental "parergon" does not altogether drown the *Bild* in its *Zierwerk*. (Our looks, directed and finite as they are, can subvert the *chimera* of metaphysics' omnipresent, blinkless gaze.)

Deconstruction is not simply an inverse form of causalism which continues negatively to depend on the metaphysical dichotomies that it rejects: it is rather a manifestation of the – cautiously covered up but nevertheless ironically activated – *Einbildungskraft*: of the "power of imagination" of a *deconstructeur* (and, for that matter, of an *auteur*!), Derrida. This *deconstructeur's* incessant attempts to refluidify, via a creative tumult, metaphysically fixed oppositions is most visibly the outpouring of an unleashed *produktive Einbildungskraft*. Derrida's *Kantianism in disguise* which fuels his liberating practice of deconstruction (by causing amusing "disturbances" in any philosophy that displays the tendency to turn "dominant") can effortlessly target not only metaphysics, neo-metaphysics and (Husserl's) foundational "Kantianism" but also, as Derrida demonstrates in, among other works, *The Truth in Painting*, Kant's own rigidities: for instance, Kant's tendency to hierarchically order, via an "architecture of reason," *Vernunft*, *Verstand*, and *Einbildungskraft*.

Derrida, in spite of his critique inspired by Heidegger of "ocularcentrism,"⁷ is well aware of how complex the interrelations are between *Bild*, the visual sphere (including painting) on the one hand, and those limiting (or "framing") conditions involved in the "symbolic," on the other, that define the status of *Bild* (while being infested at the same time by unpurgeable traces of visibility!). Derrida shows, in rhetorical fireworks of *Einbildungskraft*, how any metaphysical attempt to focus on the "purely" visual (be it in epistemology by reenacting the myth of the "given," or in aesthetic theory by cleansing the "ergon" of its seemingly accidental, "parergonal" surroundings) turns out to be penetrated (always already!) by those entities or traits that it desperately sought to exclude. This paradox of "purity" – that it is unavoidably infested by the very pollutant it wants to avoid – reoccurs on a variety of surprising levels. For example, if we rearrange the key concepts of our analysis of the visible by substituting language for *Bild*, it turns out to be equally true that any attempt

to overprivilege or absolutize the realm of the symbolic (e.g. in the field of “deconstructive” aesthetics: the realm of the “parergon”) – and thus to rid the “written” of its visual trace – likewise collapses, thereby reproducing all the shortcomings of its rivalling conceptual counter-construction. Tumultuous *Einbildungskraft*, it seems, does not settle for any rigid “alternative” or “solution” (and, in addition, is also quick to avoid all “mediating” practices and dialectical “syntheses”): neither an absolute distancing of the symbolic, nor an absolute critique of the visual – and not even their dialectical *Aufhebung* – suffices.

Thus, for example, for Derrida – like for C. S. Peirce before him – every photograph shows how complexly intermingled the symbolic and the visual spheres really are. According to Peirce a photograph is a form of iconico-symbolic representation which necessarily depends, for its function of representing, upon the direct, “indexical” contact with the entities that it depicts. (This ambivalent double-bind between the visible – and tangible – “object” and its “framing” conditions holds true even for the pieces of every photo-montage which seems to give priority to the symbolic aspect of photographic art.) Derrida expresses this ambivalence and intermingling in one of his texts on Barthes in a manner that comes close to Peirce’s insight: “In the final analysis,” he writes, “however perverse or ingenious the [photo] ‘montage’ might be, it is unable to produce or domesticate its referent. It must presume to be given, a captive of what is captured by the apparatus.”⁸

Not only the direct manifestations of the visible and the symbolic but also the discourses which reflect upon and (playfully) rearrange them tend to intermingle: Derrida shows this when he ironically restructures the classical divisions between, as well as distributions of, truth claims and artistic experiences (and – within the pictorial itself – between “ergon and parergon”).

But some crucial questions arise here. Deconstructive rearrangements, it seems, are intellectually stimulating only as long as the “moments” (which – much to our surprise – intermingle) are spelled out in sufficient clarity. The relative autonomy of the “moments” that constitute the deconstructively restructured “play” has to be preserved – even if this “autonomy” can never be stabilized in recourse to a secure frame of reference – in order to make sure that their surprising intermingling remains intelligible *as* a form of intermingling (of well-articulated and sufficiently-separated “moments”). Yet, depraved versions of deconstruction – and Derrida himself, where he succumbs to the lure of an endlessly spiraling *Überbietungsrhetorik* and begins fluidifying the structures even of those elements (and arguments) which, by their relative autonomy, got the game of inversion started in the first place – tend to overlook the prerequisite of any intermingling and rearrangement, namely, (relative) difference.⁹

Thus, in order to – somewhat more carefully – reopen the analysis of how complexly the “written” and the “visual” intertwine, it probably makes sense to go back a few steps in the argumentative development of our contemporary discourses and to look at a text by Roland Barthes which deals, in a rather cautious manner, with some of the non-marginal aspects of our question.

3 BARTHES ON THE INTRUSION OF THE "WRITTEN" INTO THE "VISUAL"

The "truth claim" of the visible which is raised, for example, in the language-like structures of art and fashion – a claim that cannot be explained as a mere offspring or popularization of a strict (and potentially image-free) "scientific" mirroring (of which positivists like to dream) – has a rather peculiar structure, as Roland Barthes points out in *The Fashion System*.¹⁰ He suggests that we focus our attention not on language proper but on other forms of the "visual," on text-like systems that *prima vista* appear to be predominantly optical. But under closer inspection visual texts such as films or products of fashion have a rather amazing depth-structure: linguistic components intrude into the images (and the real) and thereby constitute a complex play of interpenetration between the "written" and the "visual." Barthes's *Fashion System* closely analyzes the quasi- "text" of *la mode* by distinguishing between "three garments": "image-clothing," "written clothing," and "real clothing." Barthes writes:

I open a fashion magazine; I see that two different garments are being dealt with here. The first is the one presented to me as photographed or drawn – it is image-clothing. The second is the same garment, but described, transformed into language; this dress, photographed on the right, becomes on the left: *a leather belt, with a rose stuck in it, worn above the waist, on a soft sheltland dress*; this is a written garment. In principle these two garments refer to the same reality (this dress worn on this day by this woman), and yet they do not have the same structure . . . in one the substances are forms, lines, surfaces, colors, and the relation is spatial: in the other, the substance is words, and the relation is, if not logical, at least syntactic; the first structure is plastic, the second verbal.

Barthes contrasts these two garments, the photographed/drawn and the written, with a third structure, "real clothing," that is neither "plastic" nor "verbal" but has "technological" and "social" characteristics (*F*, 3–5).

But can we really dissect the text-like structure of the "fashion system" in such a clearcut manner? Are we able to strictly separate the "visual" structures from structures of the "verbal" and from those of a (socio-institutional) "reality"? Barthes soon comes to doubt the viability of this analytical procedure when he writes: "I realized that a choice had to be made between the analysis of the real (or visual) system and that of the written system" (*F*, x). He then decides to concentrate on the "written (or more exactly) described fashion." But this choice does not rest on an arbitrary decision – it is no real choice! – since it is motivated by the insight that, as Barthes explains in the "Foreword" of his book, "the unavoidable presence of human speech," at least in the long run, interpenetrates all segments, both the visual and the real, of the fashion system. Barthes therefore asks (now no longer innocently, but in a rhetorical mood):

Is there any system of objects, a system of some magnitude, which can dispense with articulated language? Is not speech the inevitable relay of

any signifying order? If we go beyond a few rudimentary signs (eccentricity, classicism, dandyism, sport, ceremony), can clothing signify without recourse to the speech that describes it, comments upon it, and provides it with signifiers and signifieds abundant enough to constitute a system of meaning? (F, xi)

The answer is simply no, since

man is doomed to articulated language, and no semiological undertaking can ignore this fact. . . . Discourse, human language, is not only the model of meaning but its very foundation. Thus, as soon as we observe fashion, we discover that writing appears constitutive . . . without discourse there is not total fashion, no essential fashion. It thus seems unreasonable to place the reality of clothing *before* the discourse of fashion: true reason would in fact have us proceed from the institution discourse to the reality which it constitutes. (F, xi)

This language-centered (and “quasi-transcendental”) institution which constitutes, shapes, and reshapes the “visual garment,” as well as the “reality structures” of the “fashion system,” depends on the prerequisite of visible, material, socially mediated textures (on the “real garment,” as Barthes says) but to an even higher degree upon “imagination,” or *Einbildungskraft*. At the very heart of the – unavoidably discursive – “language use” of fashion the (produced and productive) image, i.e. the language-dependent practice of imagining and reimagining, keeps reoccurring. This activity, although stimulated by the visual traces of past “visual garments,” is at the same time not their mere reflex. Even if all imagining “vision” depends upon visible traces and remnants from the past, “fashion systems” are – as Barthes explains – fueled by the “luxury of words (not to mention images)” (F, xi). Such “luxury” makes possible an ever-new “creation of a simulacrum of the real object” and thus enables the “annual potlatch” of fashion consumption (F, xii). Verbally mediated imagination, the precarious merger of image and concept that characterizes *Einbildungskraft*, seemingly penetrates into every corner of the quasi-textuality of fashion: “What is remarkable about fashion,” so says Barthes, about “this image system constituted with desire as its goal . . . is that its substance is essentially intelligible: it is not the object but *the name* [emphasis mine] that creates desire” (F, xii). Linguistically shaped imagination (or “the textual garment”) thus turns the “empty” viscosity of the abstract “visual garment,” as well as the borderline reality of an unwritten, material “garment in itself,” into “written clothing.”

The train of Barthes’s thoughts sounds not un-Kantian, once Kant’s “transcendental subject” is crossed out and replaced by “the (anonymous) structure” of *la langue*. Images without conceptual backing are seemingly bound to fall prey to an unintelligible “emptiness.” Texts or text-*similes*, like the products of fashion, only appear to turn predominantly around “the visual”: the “visible texture” of the quasi-text of fashion, although being its necessary prerequisite and material outcome, is certainly not the system of fashion in its completeness. The annually induced, *potlatch*-like reshaping of the visual – its restructuring

rather than re-collecting – depends upon the vivid *Einbildungskraft* of “writing writers” (and thus upon concepts and language). But where can we situate this innovative force that appears to be a precondition of the ever shifting status of the “simulacrum” of fashion, once the writer of the written garment has been rendered anonymous in the ways structuralism (and deconstruction) suggest? Is this *Einklammerung* of both the “author” and the “writer” (moves which repeat Husserl’s methodology in a post-Husserlian mode, thus encouraging the playful pluralism of, for example, Derrida’s “disseminations”) indeed convincing? How and above all by whom are *Einbildungskraft*, image, and concept connected (or, for that matter, disconnected) in the multifaceted “practices” of our social and individual “texts”?

4 LEVINAS AND THE “PROSCRIPTION OF THE IMAGE”

In his early essay *Reality and Its Shadow*,¹¹ one of the French thinkers who is commonly regarded as a precursor to deconstruction impressively warns us against “poetically” disentangling “the visual” – in an irresponsibly “playful” mood – from the strictures of philosophical reason and criticism. Any “absolutized” form of art that organizes itself around a visual sphere thought to be free of conceptual constraints is, according to Levinas (in a very Kierkegaardian mood), “immoral inasmuch as it liberates the artist from his duties as a man and assures him of a pretentious and facile nobility” (*LR*, 131). The play with an abstract “imaginary” easily leads to a thorough avoidance of the other. For Levinas, the shifting between the real and the image (a shifting which in its auto-sufficient mode stays away from argumentative conceptualization and from critical use of language) is constitutive for art at least in what he terms its “inhumane” form (*LR*, 142). Levinas writes:

The most elementary procedure of art consists in substituting for the object its image. Its image, and not its concept. A concept is the object *grasped*, the intelligible object. Already by action we maintain a living relationship with a real object; we grasp it, we conceive it. The image neutralizes this real relationship, this primary conceiving through action. The well-known disinterestedness of artistic vision, which the current aesthetic analysis stops with, signifies above all a blindness to concepts. But the disinterestedness of the artist scarcely deserves this name. For it excludes freedom . . . An image marks a hold over us¹² . . . Art thus becomes a fundamental passivity . . . such is a waking dream . . . , where consciousness, paralyzed in its freedom, plays, totally absorbed in playing.
(*LR*, 133)

The realm of the imaginary is for Levinas in its absolutized form “an idol” that threatens to consume the potential of art altogether: “Every artwork is in the end a statue, a stoppage of time” (*LR*, 137), making real “the paradox of an instant that endures without a future: it is present, impotent to force the future, is fate itself” (*LR*, 138). Even if, seemingly, temporal structures are introduced into the images of “non-plastic arts such as music, literature, theatre and

cinema," this, says Levinas, "does not shatter [their] fixity": the characters in a book, for example, "can be narrated because their being *resembles* itself, doubles itself and immobilizes" (LR, 138). This fixity occurring within all absolutized images "is wholly different from that of concepts, which initiate life, offer reality to our powers, to truth, open a dialectic" (LR, 139). Levinas thus concludes that "the proscription of images is truly the supreme command of monotheism" (LR, 141) because art, "in a world of initiative and responsibility, constitutes a dimension of evasion" (LR, 141). The avoidance of the other which art encourages, "charms as a lightness and grace" (LR, 141). But "it frees," (LR, 141) in a very dubious manner:

To appreciate [the "play" of the "images"] is to no longer have to conceive, is to renounce the effort of science, philosophy, and action . . . Myth takes the place of mystery. The world to be built is replaced by the essential completion of its shadow. This is not the disinterestedness of contemplation but of irresponsibility. The poet exiles himself from the city . . . There is something wicked and egoist and cowardly in artistic enjoyment. There are times when one can be ashamed of it, as of feasting during a plague.

(LR, 141f.)

Levinas impressively argues that – for radically *ethical* reasons – we cannot dissolve the argumentative force of a "responsible" textuality into the play of its "images." Art is neither the sole survivor of nor the universal successor to the shattered metaphysical pretenses of the past: it is *just one* out of many realms of life, raising one important but certainly not all-inclusive, "validity claim" (as Habermas later pointed out).¹³ Or as Levinas writes in a very clear statement: "Art is not the supreme value of civilization" (LR, 142): it certainly has its place, "but only a place, in man's happiness" (LR, 142).

In sharp contrast to the upsurging fetishization of the "visual" and "imaginary" per se, Levinas opts for a newly intensified interpenetration of "image" and "concept." Like Barthes he points out – though for very different reasons – that "intuitions" without "notions" are "empty." But the vain and self-complacent "artistic idolatry" (LR, 143) that Levinas finds dangerous due to its seductive avoidance of the other is characteristic of depraved forms of aesthetic experience. His warning counts only "for art *separated* from the criticism that integrates the inhuman work of the artist into the human world. Criticism already detaches it from its irresponsibility by envisaging its technique. It treats the artist as a man at work . . . and thus links the proud man to real history" (LR, 142).

Only a new, and newly deepened, encounter between the realm of the visual and that of philosophical reflection can "put the immobile statue in movement" and try "to make it speak" (LR, 142). This happens in an intersubjectively relevant manner and not merely by uttering or writing linguistically formulated image-sequences of ever-new, ever-shifting poetic quality (LR, 142). Philosophy can retreat into the closed, self-contained world of the image. Levinas emphasizes in sharp, even harsh, remarks that only an imagination which stays linked to concepts – and not a charmingly irresponsible, extra-

argumentative "visual" play – makes possible the "philosophical exegesis of art" (LR, 143). Or, as the poet Paul Celan put it in his *Meridian Rede*, what counts is "eine all unserer Daten eingedenk bleibende Konzentration"¹⁴ ("a thoughtful focussing on *all* our data") in lieu of the mere overprivileging of the visual sphere. Thus, for Levinas only the "critical" reading of our aesthetic "images" can further the process of exploring our primordial, ethically charged relations with other(s).

5 A KANTIAN FINALE: "PRODUCTIVE IMAGINATION," "CONCEPT," AND "IMAGE"

Stepping back for a moment from Levinas's stern intervention, we ask ourselves whether a certain degree of interpenetration between "image" and "concept" is not, almost unavoidably, part of any inscriptive textual process. Is the "visible" – once we carefully scrutinize its depth-structure – ever absolute or concept-free in the Levinasian sense? (Or, to reformulate this question in a different mode: is the absolutization of "images" primarily a broadly popular *ideology* of art but not its philosophical articulation?)

It might seem plausible that something like *produktive Einbildungskraft* – a capacity which (in Kantian terms) is "neither mere reason nor mere sensual impression but rather the bridge between these two"¹⁵ – serves as a prerequisite for all occurrences of pictorial elements within texts. Textual images are not merely depictions of reality but visual structures which are overdetermined by codes internal to the text.

Einbildungskraft, the power of imagination, "is a deeply ambiguous capacity" according to Kant. In one way it belongs to receptivity, to the "lower," the "outward," or the "passive" scheme, to the "image" in Levinas's sense. Not altogether though, since *Einbildungskraft* does not exhaust itself in the ability to "mirror" an external given but rather is the *movens* for – in Barthes's terms – the "creation of a simulacrum." *Einbildungskraft* is a precondition that involves not merely a reproduction of an image but the practice of "imagining," in which new fusions of the visual and the conceptual are elaborated.¹⁶ The capacity to re-collect and reproduce past experiences (as *reproduktive Einbildungskraft*) is a mere derivative of the *original* potential to produce *structured Bilder*, a capacity which is dependent (in an indirect way) upon *Verstand* or conceptually mediated interpretation. Its results are therefore *textualized* images, *Bilder within human language*, images which are never simply *Abbilder*. Thus in Kant's architectonic of reason, "apperception" (as distinguished from reactive, mirroring "perception") is at work whenever we reproduce an experience which was textualized previously. *Produktive Einbildungskraft* (which according to Kant depends for its functioning on "*visio* and *phantasma*"¹⁷) is, one might say, the well-hidden secret of all our nonmirroring textual imagination. Texts or conceptual structures are not only – as readable – visible (or touchable or audible): they also contain images, or at least their form. But these images, although empirically triggered off, are not the mirror images of an external, pre-given reality: on the contrary, they constantly subvert and belie the ideological spell of a naive realism of "duplication." Kant's insight – that the "self" of

"transcendental apperception" exerts its "synthetic" (*IK*, 89) functions through "productive imagination" on all levels of empirical textuality (in theoretical, practical, and aesthetical judgments) – survives the historical crisis of his "transcendental philosophy." It keeps popping up, although in transfigured ways, in Barthes's (quasi-transcendental, i.e. "structuralist") insistence on the primacy of the "written," as well as in Levinas's (practico-ethical) rejection of all absolutified "images" in the name of a "human" reconceptualization of art. Even if "synthesis" can no longer be read as a transhistorical form of "aprioricity," and fragile, deconstructible *syntheses* disperse the dominance of the one, stable and absolutely unifying *locus* of experience, imagination – which has its core in practical (and Levinas would add: in practico-ethical) *productivity* – remains of crucial importance. It is at work in all textual processes that enable us, "responsibly," to bring our reimaginable past(s) into forms of "revision," forms that still entail a future and are thus, in Levinas's words, more than a "cowardly" game.¹⁸ *Einbildungskraft*, in Kant, has two aspects: on the one hand it is laden with sensual, empirical impressions, partly from the past (optical, acoustical, tactile, olfactorical traces); on the other hand it is pure, spontaneous construction. Even where imagination – as in the realm of art proper – "schematizes without concepts,"¹⁹ taste still "contains," as Kant says, "a *principle* of subsumption under the faculty of concepts, i.e. the understanding" (*CJ*, 35).

Einbildungskraft operates inside writing without being a mere reflex or function of writing. All texts, scientific texts as well as literary ones, are penetrated by the fictive element of "productive imagining": reality, real as it is, is at the same time constituted by our paradigm-producing fantasies (as Thomas S. Kuhn and, long before him, Charles Sanders Peirce²⁰ convincingly demonstrated). The processes of reimagining, destroying, rereading and deconstructing our (many) texts about the world (scientific texts, legal texts, ethical texts, aesthetical texts) are acts of re-vision which – although not arbitrarily structured but relationally interlinked – remain unfinished or, some even claim, unfinishable. This open-endedness is a manifestation of our capacity to break free from those past pictures which lock us up in their prison (Wittgenstein mentions them: "Ein Bild hielt uns gefangen"). This capacity would become unintelligible, however, were we not able to project the continuously reappearing dissatisfactions with any texts given "visibly" to us onto the idea of a (widely, if not commonly shared) search for the – ever-retreating – "archewriting" (to use Derrida's opaque, postmetaphysical *Grenzbegriff*). This crucial limiting notion – a notion/non-notion which we can only imagine as occurring (and withdrawing) within the multilayered processes of textualization itself and therefore can never envisage as an event at the beginning of our attempts to textualize the world – is thus not to be confused with the false "ideal" of a regressive *Ursprungsphilosophie* (in the sense in which Adorno and Habermas²¹ criticized the premodern and postmodern craving for "origins" that nourishes dubious forms of neo-metaphysics). *Einbildungskraft* is rather the (risky and empirico-historically ill-warranted but not altogether impossible) gesture that points at the unimaginable end of textual de-con-struction (without envisaging this end as an "end to come"), a stage where the *constructive* side of all the labor to destroy the texts of the past (by means of reinterpretation) is supposed to

appear. Thus both *Bilderverbot* (the unyielding dissatisfaction with any given *Bild* or the sense for the inappropriateness of all absolutified visuality of which Levinas so convincingly speaks) and the (formal) postulate of a *penetration*, although not subjugation, of the sphere *of images by concepts* are thought together. At no point in our *finite* experience do these two "moments" enter into a comfortable (and lasting) synthesis: they reoccur separately and manifest themselves in patterns of tension that reshape themselves over and over. This certainly is an uncomfortable state of affairs which, however, we cannot leave behind us unless we are willing to pay the – all too high – price of either a regressive glorification of the *visual* or a megalomaniac inflation of the *conceptual* components of the text. Both ways out are impossible: neither can images swallow up or fluidify concepts, nor can concepts dissolve or sublimate the sphere of the visual. It thus looks as if – even after the fall of "transcendental philosophy" proper – one of its nonmarginal claims holds true for all forms of textuality, namely that "intuitions without concepts are blind," while "concepts without intuitions are empty."

PUNCTURING GENRES

BARTHES AND DERRIDA ON THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION

Dana Hollander

This essay discusses several of Derrida's writings on the visual arts which can be read as engaging, directly or indirectly, with issues raised by Barthes's essay on photography *La Chambre claire*. Derrida's texts serve to illuminate Barthes's views in this work, to bring out some of their most interesting implications. In particular, a reading of these texts makes clear that whether "the text is visible" is not only a question of genre or medium, or a question of the distinction between image and text. It also invites consideration of the relationships between visibility and invisibility, discourse and silence.

1 THE QUESTION OF GENRE

Some of the boundaries most frequently attended to by Derrida are those between disciplines, genres, or media, and these are of special interest in his reading of *La Chambre claire*, whose central task is "to learn at all costs what photography [is] 'in itself,' by what essential feature it [is] to be distinguished from the community of images" (§1).¹

Barthes's procedure in isolating photography from other media can be described as an exercise in methodological skepticism. His first move is to suspend all that he regards as received knowledge, all culturally or scientifically mediated truths about photography, by a quasi-phenomenological operation of bracketing. Most importantly, Barthes is not interested in the *technical*, scientifically founded, differences between photography and other media, but in what is essential to photography in a *phenomenological* sense. That is, he recognizes that the question 'What is photography?' cannot be answered purely as a question of medium – i.e., by considering the material aspects of production common to a class of objects. Rather, such a question of medium necessarily gives way to a question of genre – of how photography is determined "beyond the evidence provided by technology and usage," of whether it has a self-sufficient existence, or, as Barthes puts it, "a 'genius' of its own."

Barthes's insights about photography can be seen as organizing the field of all photographs into three sets or levels, forming what can be characterized as an inverted pyramid: the top level consisting of all photographs, the middle level containing the photographs with a *punctum*, and the structure's base consisting of only one photograph, the photograph showing his mother as a child standing in a "Winter Garden." What is significant about this three-part structure, and the reason that I propose to see it as an inverted pyramid, is that what appears to be most particular and most subjective – the author's personal, incommunicable experience of a single photograph – is actually what constitutes his conceptualization of photography in general. Thus, the "point" of the pyramid – the single, unimpartable photograph – is also its base, or ground. Whatever Barthes learns about photographs as such is founded first by his conceptualization of the *punctum* based on a series of experiences with photographs (the middle level of the pyramid) and, ultimately, by his singular experience of the Winter Garden Photograph. The Winter Garden Photograph and the photographs with a *punctum* are thus not mere examples of what photography can achieve – they are exemplary for photography as a whole.

Unlike Barthes's *La Chambre claire*, which primarily seeks to determine what is particular to photography – or, rather, to the spectator's experience of photographs – Derrida does not aim to offer his own specification. Rather, he continually interrogates those acts of delimitation that consist of medium and genre distinctions. A central text in this connection is Derrida's "reading" (*lecture*) included in Marie-Françoise Plissart's and Benoît Peeters's photographic work *Droit de regards*.² Derrida's exploration of the work's transcendence of ordinary generic categories – the categories of photography, film, and the photo-novel – may be read on the one hand as putting some of Barthes's distinctions into play in an illuminating way and, on the other, as characteristic of the inquiry into the question of the limit, which is one of the dominant themes of Derrida's *oeuvre* as a whole.

With regard to discussion in *Droit de regards* of the role of spoken or written discourse in Plissart/Peeters's work, one might ask: Is this work an injunction to silence, or does it engender discourse in the form of narrative? How does the role of discourse bear on its possible genre classification, or reflect on the distinctions made in *La Chambre claire*? In particular, how does the "parergonal" status of Derrida's "reading" – the fact that it is both a commentary on the work and a part of it (in that both work and commentary appear together under a single title) – affect its status as a "silent" work?

In considering these questions with respect to *Droit de regards*, we see that questions of genre and medium are intertwined with the question of what constitutes a work, of its isolatability from the discourse it produces.

2 VISIBILITY/INVISIBILITY

Derrida does not confine his "reading" of *Droits de regards* to the question of what defines or delimits the photographic medium, the genre of the photo-novel, or the individual work. He also looks at what *Droit de regards* tells us

about other boundaries, those between discourse and silence and between the visible and the invisible, which he terms the “limit of representation.”

Thus, he notes that one of the most frequent themes of the work can be described by the phrase “*elles se regardent*.” This phrase has several meanings, one of which cannot be unequivocally represented: the photograph cannot show two gazes intersecting or being interchanged, it “cannot assure us of that fact.” Thus, a series of glances, a series of scenes which deal with visibility, with the right to look (*droit de regards*), also contain a fundamental invisibility, or rather, a *general* limit of representation, an “abyss of the unrepresentable” that pertains not only to the order of visual representation but also to the relationship between discourse on the one hand, and silence as its “non-verbal frame/framing [*encadrement*],”³ (*DR*, XXVII–XXIX/80–1; translation slightly modified).

Though this issue is not pursued in depth in the *Droit de regards* essay, it is raised by Derrida in other texts. In particular, the 1990 catalog essay *Mémoires d'aveugle* thematizes invisibility as the condition of possibility of the visible. In this study Derrida comes closest to doing what Barthes attempts in *La Chambre claire*: focusing on one visual medium or genre, and seeking to determine what is particular to it. The object of his study is drawing, and the central proposition it explores is that “every draftsman is blind,” that drawing is constituted by a fundamental “transcendental” blindness.⁴ Derrida describes this blindness in terms of the *trait* of drawing (a word familiar from *La vérité en peinture* that has several meanings, including “trait”/“feature” and a line or a stroke in drawing). He locates it first of all in the “aperspective of the graphic act,” in the *trait*’s “originary pathbreaking [*frayage*] moment,” its “tracing potency” which “escapes the field of vision.”

[A]t the instant when the point at the point of the hand . . . moves forward upon making contact with the surface, the inscription of the inscribable is not seen. Whether it be improvised or not, the invention of the *trait* does not follow, it does not conform to what is presently visible, to what would be set in front of me as a theme. (MA, 48–50/45)

This aperspective has two sources; it “can be interpreted in two different ways.” On the one hand, the *trait* is “*not yet* visible,” it is “a reserve of visibility.” Here, Derrida refers to a chapter of Baudelaire’s *Le Peintre de la vie moderne* (The Painter of Modern Life), entitled “L’Art mnémonique” (Mnemonic Art), which praises the draftsman who draws from memory rather than from perception, thus relying on “memory as a natural reserve” (MA, 51/47). On the other hand, the *trait*, in its “originary *frayage*,” is “radically and definitively foreign” to phenomenality and visibility. In this sense, it is aligned not with memory proper, with memory as anamnesis, but with the amnesia that is also “in anamnesis itself.”

The visible *as such* would be invisible, not as *visibility*, the *phenomenality* or *essence* of the visible, but as the singular body of the visible itself, *right on* the visible – so that, by emanation, and as if it were secreting its own *medium*, the visible would produce blindness. (MA, 56/51–2)

Recalling Maurice Merleau-Ponty's notes in his final, uncompleted work *Le Visible et l'invisible*, Derrida adds:

This nonvisible does not describe a phenomenon that is present elsewhere, that is latent, imaginary, unconscious, hidden, or past; it is a "phenomenon" whose inappearance is of another kind; and what we have here seen fit to call transcendental [i.e., in connection with "transcendental blindness" – D. H.] is not unrelated to what Merleau-Ponty speaks of as "pure transcendence, without an ontic mask." (MA, 57/52)

Thus it is by way of Merleau-Ponty's text that the apparent contradiction of Derrida's pronouncement that "every draftsman is blind" is "resolved":

[May 1960]. When I say that every visible is invisible, that perception is imperception, that consciousness has a "*punctum caecum*," that to see is always to see more than one sees – this must not be understood in the sense of a *contradiction* – it must not be imagined that I add to the visible . . . a nonvisible . . . One has to understand that it is visibility itself that involves a nonvisibility.⁵

This notion of the *punctum caecum* is drawn from the anatomy of the eye: it corresponds to the blind spot on the retina that "prepares the vision of the rest" (MA, 57/53). And it is no coincidence that this invisible source of visibility, with its "emanation," recalls Barthes's *punctum* in *La Chambre claire*. Barthes's *punctum* is the invisible feature, inaccessible to analysis, by which photography transcends itself to become truly photographic. By analogy, in "Les Morts de Roland Barthes," a tribute to Barthes which appeared shortly after Barthes's death and which focuses on *La Chambre claire*, Derrida appropriately remarks that the unimpartable Winter Garden Photograph is itself the "invisible *punctum*" of Barthes's book. "It doesn't belong to the corpus of photographs he exhibits, to the series of examples he displays and analyzes. Yet it irradiates the entire book."⁶

But though invisibility figures first as a condition of the possibility of visibility, a source-point that corresponds to the originary *frayage* of drawing, Derrida makes clear that the relation between visibility and invisibility is not merely causal. Asking himself, "but what about afterwards, once the line has been traced?"⁷ he pursues the effect of this constitutive blindness even on the already existing *trait*, an effect which he calls the "withdrawal [*retrait*] or the eclipse, the differential inappearance of the *trait*." For "a tracing, an outline, cannot be seen. One should in fact not see it . . ." As a "contour: between the inside and the outside of a figure," it exemplifies Derrida's central concern with the limit of representation (which we saw raised in the reading of *Droit de regards*):

Once this limit is reached, there is nothing more to see, not even black and white, not even figure/form, and this is the *trait*, this is the line itself: which is thus no longer what it is, because from then on it never relates to itself without dividing itself just as soon, the divisibility of the *trait* here

interrupting all pure identification . . . This limit is never presently reached, but drawing always signals toward this inaccessibility . . . *Nothing belongs to the trait*, and thus, to drawing and to the thought of drawing, not even its own "trace." Nothing even participates in it. The *trait* joins and adjoins only in separating. (MA, 58/53–4)

As in many other texts, Derrida here acknowledges the theological, even negative theological, overtones of his analysis (MA, 58/54). But like his essay on negative theology, "Comment ne pas parler," both *Mémoires d'aveugle* and "Les Morts de Roland Barthes" go on to problematize the very notion of a negative theology, or of an absolute invisibility or unrepresentability.

3 REALISM, REFERENCE, TEMPORALITY

In *La Chambre claire*, Barthes reflects on his use of phenomenological terminology (such as his talk of a *noeme* of photography) for ends that deviate from any "classical" (i.e., Husserlian) phenomenological project, saying that the phenomenology he employs is "vague, casual, even cynical" (§8). What makes it so is, above all, its refusal to abide by Husserl's rejection of psychological themes such as desire or mourning. Clearly, Barthes's "pyramid," in that it rests on the Winter Garden Photograph, is structured around the necessity and impossibility of mourning the death of the mother who is pictured in that photograph.

But what is more interesting in this connection than Barthes's "cynical phenomenology" is what one might call his "cynical idealism": his refusal to *display* the Winter Garden Photograph is based on his insistence not only that no one could see it as he does, but also that it *exists* only for *himself*, only *insofar as* he sees it as he does (§30).

The Winter Garden Photograph, the invisible point on which Barthes's taxonomy of photographs rests, seems retroactively to invalidate all that he has said about the possibility of analyzing what is effective about photographs. For some commentators on *La Chambre claire*, the Winter Garden Photograph figures as the permanent interruption of Barthes's attempted theorization of photography by the traumatic experience of mourning. But having thus traveled the levels of the pyramid to its bottom point, it would be a mistake to regard that point as a simple culmination. Since it is not a simple point, but a *punctum*, one ought to be able to trace its emanations back up to the top level, to its implications for photography and beyond.

The missing link is to be found, I believe, in Barthes's account of the temporality of the photograph:

1. Barthes finds, both before his exercise in bracketing (§2) and later on, in the course of his inquiry (§§32 ff.), that whatever is essential to photography, its so-called *noeme*, lies in the photograph's unique relation to its referent, as something which is, or was at the time of exposure, indisputably and necessarily r/Real.⁸ But Barthes is careful to qualify his "realism" as one which is not naive, since he is not so much concerned with the photograph as the

representation of a past reality as he is with the *pastness* of what is represented: "its testimony bears not on the object but on time" (§36).

2. Barthes specifies how this works in the section entitled "Time as *Punctum*," taking a particular photograph as paradigmatic for photographic temporality: this is Alexander Gardner's 1865 portrait of Lewis Payne as he awaits execution for his assassination attempt on Secretary of State W. H. Seward. Of this photograph, Barthes writes,

the *punctum* is: *he is going to die*. I read at the same time: *This will be* and *This has been*; I observe with horror an anterior future of which death is the stake. By giving me the absolute past of the pose (aorist), the photograph tells me death in the future. What pricks me is the discovery of this equivalence. (§39)

Thus, Barthes locates the *punctum* in the simultaneity of the spectator's relationships to four temporal points: (1) the time of the photograph's exposure; (2) the time of the photographed subject's death; (3) the time of the spectator's viewing of the photograph; and finally, (4) the time of the spectator's own death. ("Each photograph always contains this imperious sign of my future death"; §40). And Barthes makes clear through a number of further examples that it is irrelevant for this structure what the "objective" temporal relationships are between the four time-points. In particular, "Whether or not the subject is already dead [at the time when the photograph is viewed], every photograph is this catastrophe" (§39). The temporality of the photograph is thus akin to what Heidegger calls an "ecstatic temporality," in that the times involved stand "outside-of-themselves." The paradoxical tense known as anterior future cannot be accounted for by a "vulgar" concept of time, according to which time consists of "a pure sequence of 'nows'"; rather, it results from the "unity," albeit tenuous, of past perfect ("This has been") and future ("This will be").⁹

3. In his discussion of this passage, Derrida links this account of the *punctum* as a temporal structure to Barthes's account, elsewhere in the book, of the *punctum* as a "partial feature" which, by its "power [force] of expansion," "fills the whole picture" (§19). Barthes hardly needs to add that this force of expansion is "often metonymic." Thus, if the Winter Garden Photograph is the *punctum* of *La Chambre claire*, it is, argues Derrida, this "metonymic force" that makes it possible for Barthes to base his theory of photography on the incommunicable experience of that photograph.

[O]nly a metonymic force can still assure a certain generality to the discourse and offer it to analysis by submitting its concepts to a quasi-instrumental employment. How else could we, without knowing her, be so deeply moved by what he said about *his* mother, who was not only the Mother, or a mother, but the only one she was and of whom such a photo was taken "that day" . . . ? (LM, 286/286)

And Derrida goes on to analyze this metonymic force as time itself, "the ultimate resource for the substitution of one absolute instance by another, for the replacement of the irreplaceable, the replacement of this unique

referent by another which is yet another instant, completely other and yet the same” (LM, 288/288).

Thus, we return to the broadest level, the top of the pyramid, and beyond: *La Chambre claire* is exemplary for any discourse which depends on a negotiation between the absolutely singular and the generality which is the very condition of discourse. For as was apparent in Derrida’s reading of *Droit de regards* and as he makes explicit in “Les Morts,” Barthes’s insights about photography – about the primacy of reference and the workings of the *punctum* – cannot be contained within the realm of photography (despite his suggestions to the contrary):

[O]ne must be able to speak of a *punctum* in all signs . . . in any discourse, whether it be literary or not. Provided that we do not hold to some naïve and “realist” referentialism, the relation to some unique and irreplaceable referent *interests* us and animates our most sound and studied [*studiense*] readings. (LM, 288/289–90)¹⁰

Likewise, Derrida in *Mémoires d’aveugle* does not stay either with the *aperture* of the graphic act or with the *retrait* of the *trait*. Rather, he moves beyond absolute invisibility or transcendental blindness to contemplate a “rhetoric of the *trait*”:

For is not the withdrawal [*retrait*] of the line – that which draws the line back, draws it again [*retire*], at the very moment when the *trait* is drawn, when it draws away [*se tire*] – that which grants speech? (MA, 60/56)¹¹

Just as the *Droit de regards* essay makes clear that photography, at least when it involves the human figure, is constituted also by the discourse that interrupts it, drawing, in particular “the drawing of men,”¹²

never goes without being articulated with articulation, without the order being given with words . . . without some order, without the order of narrative, and thus of memory, without the order to bury, the order of prayer, the order of names to be given or blessed. (MA, 60/56–57)¹³

This order of narrative, the “metonymic force” of the *punctum*, calls for a discourse which does not fall silent before the absolutely singular, but which leaves alterity “almost intact” – for, as Derrida writes, “one can still remain silent by speaking” (LM, 287/287).

PART TWO

**BEYOND
REPRESENTATIONAL
THINKING**

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INTRODUCTION

WHILE ILLUSTRATING

The following two chapters regard the spectralities of expression beyond narratives of origin and subjectivity within the context of certain ideas of Blanchot and Foucault. They introduce the reader more succinctly to a deconstructive hermeneutics of expression in extended literary and philosophical meditations on the current infomatic phenomenon of gazing/writing and appearing/disappearing. Beyond representation, thinking is explored in accordance with a play-oriented, “post-aesthetic” site between the seeable and the sayable. This site is not regarded as inexhaustible or originary but rather as illustrating philosophy’s other beginnings without encouraging ultimate detachment.

Alessandro Carrera’s essay, “Blanchot’s Gaze and Orpheus’s Singing,” in Chapter 4, illustrates Blanchot’s reading of the preeminence of the unattainable event of expression in Orpheus’s desire for the visible. The in-visible exchange is death. And the broken and illusive relation between the visible and the expressive draws Orpheus into the silent work of mortality. Carrera suggests that modernity replicates Orpheus’s desire by disclosing world as desire-structure for the delightfully visible. The tragic irony is that world cannot attain worldliness without fading into oblivion. In short, presence is unattainable except in the space of desire. And there, on Carrera’s view, visibilities fail to reach “the event *tout court*” of literary expression. In turn, we engage in a *gazing/writing*, no longer a *singing/thinking*. More precisely, Carrera interprets Blanchot’s reading of our epoch as time without regard for the song (*sans souci du chant*). Desiring the visible as visual, we forget the expressive, and leap into sublime narcissism. “Orpheus’s error seems then to lie in the desire which moves him to see and possess Eurydice, he whose destiny is only to sing of her.” While our destiny, for Carrera, too, is merely to sing the in-visible, we are infinitely lost in desiring to see and appropriate it.

In Chapter 5, “Foucault and the Disappearance of the Visible Subject,” Reginald Lilly intensifies Carrera’s reflections by elaborating in greater philosophical detail the very ambivalence of visibility. He notes that, for Foucault, visibility involves a critique of perception, expressly because it “is a dimension that is, in part, produced through freeing the surface of things from every residue of substance, interiority, and inherency – from all *Dinglichkeit*.” Exploring the difference between saying and seeing, Lilly shows how Foucault views the visible as a schematic moment in presentation. He indicates that it is a

“schema [which] necessarily [involves] a privileging of the *present* perspective over perspectives which are, in one way or another, conceived of as *not present*.” Visibility is therefore a space lacking any center, or privileged perspective, viewing subject, or moment. Lilly questions the validity of the claim regarding the hegemony of vision in contemporary philosophical discourse. His intriguing reading of our theme unseals an “ontotopology” which shows that the prevailing system of the seeable and sayable is itself exposed to fortune and chance, to a play of subjects and things that has no origin nor any final cause. He shows that every visibility undergoes its own “constitutive ek-centricity” in accordance with the end of the metaphysical phantasm of identity. Foucault’s reading of visibility is seen by Lilly in the wake of the collapse of Hegel’s system, marking the difference between the visible and the expressive beyond origin and subject. In view of this ontotopology, Lilly poses the riveting question: “Whose vision is it that survives the disappearance of the perceiving subject?”

**BLANCHOT'S GAZE AND
ORPHEUS'S SINGING**

**SEEING AND LISTENING IN
POETIC INSPIRATION**

Alessandro Carrera

When he [Orpheus] looks back . . . he betrays the work, and Eurydice, and the night. But not to turn toward Eurydice would be no less untrue. Not to look would be infidelity to the measureless, imprudent force of his movement, which does not want Eurydice in her daytime truth and her everyday appeal, but wants her in her nocturnal obscurity, in her distance, with her closed body and sealed face [dans son éloignement, avec son corps fermé et son visage scellé] – wants to see her not when she is visible, but when she is invisible . . .¹

This is how Blanchot, in the well-known pages of *L'Éspace littéraire* which are dedicated to Orpheus's gaze, alludes to the question of distance (*éloignement*) that separates Orpheus from Eurydice. Through the act of gazing at Eurydice Orpheus realizes that a space, which until that moment was invisible and imperceptible, is present between them. Prior to the acknowledgment that there is a distance separating them, both float in an indefinite dimension, an engulfing nonspace which is defined neither by a measure of distance nor by a measure of proximity. What kind of dimension is this? Who and where was Orpheus before the gaze that separated him from Eurydice?

To answer these questions one must reconstruct the sequence of events which, in Blanchot's interpretation, bring the Orphean myth to its climax. Orpheus's gaze is preceded by the song. Blanchot calls it "a trace of pure night," – the infernal night which, long before Orpheus decides to turn around and look at Eurydice, in some way is a space, albeit a closed and inaccessible one. And insofar as the space of the song contains both Eurydice and the singing addressed to her, Orpheus's song announces the future realization of any poetic work. Until the song is over, however, neither Eurydice nor the poem can be

turned into recognizable objects: no distinction can be made between what contains and what is contained since there is as of yet no conceivable distance between the two poles of the opening. Prior to Orpheus's gaze, poetic inspiration and the poem are united in the song (in the nocturnal space) in such a way that they cannot be distinguished, not even in theory. As for the gaze, it does not emanate from the vault of the night but rather it descends into what Blanchot calls the *other* night – that is, the night announced by the day and *within* the day, and camouflaged by the actual nights that cross the sky. What those nights camouflage is that no night opens up the *event* of the night, just as in the completed literary work the *event* of the work itself will always elude its creator (Heidegger would say that in language used as a communicative tool, the event of language remains undisclosed). Far from illuminating the other night, the event of night, the gaze merely hints at its absence. But if the absence of the night is the day, the absence of the other night is the night itself, as much as the *langue* is concealed in the *parole* and the “absence of the work” is absent-present in the work itself.

It is not easy to follow Blanchot along these meanderings, and our references to Heidegger or to De Saussurian linguistics may be helpful, but they ultimately trivialize Blanchot's approach, whose main point is to play with the elusiveness of signifiers. Let us say for now that the experience of the gaze-distance realizes the loss of inspiration (the song) and of the work (Eurydice). The work comes into reality only by means of a schism: the gaze *and* Eurydice, the inspiration *and* the work. They are now two identifiable moments albeit distant from each other. Nonetheless, the gaze-distance leaps beyond the work itself. It is both a step towards an inspiration untouched by the already created literary work (let us hazard a guess: the *other* Eurydice, whom the present Eurydice never discloses) and towards the origin of the *other* work, the absence of work. Again, the work which is never realized and which remains impossible even after its creation is the event of the work, just as the event of the night, the other night, cannot be heralded by any sunset. Yet, although Blanchot speaks of gaze and distance, in *L'Éspace littéraire* he does not insist upon the latter. He lingers rather on the occurrence of Orpheus's gaze towards Eurydice as the visual representation of the ultimate unattainability of the work. However, it would not be possible to have either unattainability or the gaze if, originally, there were no distance. Our discussion will therefore proceed with this category firmly in mind.

Since daylight is in no position to comprehend the enchantment of the infernal night, from the perspective of Hades, Orpheus's sin is that of impatience. His leap of inspiration and towards inspiration, which at the same time both creates and condemns the work of art, coincides for Blanchot with the disappearance of the song: “To look at Eurydice, without regard for the song [*sans souci du chant*], in the impatience and imprudence of desire which forgets the law: *that is inspiration*” (SL, 173).

In Blanchot, inspiration acts both as the *terminus a quo* and the *terminus ad quem* of the literary work. From an amorphous prefiguration incapable of being represented, the literary work first elevates itself to the dignity of the form (which is both its goal and its failure) only to fall, once again, into a second

amorphous state, another indistinct form which is at the same time its end and its salvation. Blanchot speaks of the "song," but in so doing he only aims at reaching the written work. He has little or no interest in the acoustic dimension of the song itself (we will discuss further the implications of his selectiveness). He wants to prove that the gaze which marks the end of the song constitutes the first occurrence of *writing* [*Écrire commence avec le regard d'Orphée*].

To a certain extent, such writing reminds one of Derrida's *archi-trace*. Orpheus's gaze is an *archi-writing* insofar as it makes unthinkable any *causa prima* from which the written work generates (Blanchot's conclusion, to which we shall later return, is that "to write one must already write.") On the other hand, Orpheus's gaze is not an *archi-writing* because Blanchot admits that something does indeed precede writing, and this something is the song. Blanchot's statement, however, does not account for all the consequences. It is true that the writing of Orpheus cannot be delivered from the song nor can it be its transcription: Orpheus's song is not the voice of the Socratic *daimon* and there is no Plato who will eventually transcribe it. Orpheus's song, in fact, like any other song, cannot be confined to the sung word; a song is a system of resonance embracing melody and words, thus forming a *tertium*, a *Gestalt* that is more than the sum of its parts. To quote a definition used with reference to poetry, and even more suitable for an oscillating environment which fluctuates between written poetry and sung poetry, we are dealing here with a "hesitation between meaning and sound."² Writing is preceded by something (the song) which in reality does not precede anything: there is "nothing" before writing as well as there is nothing "after" the song. As a matter of fact, what Blanchot calls inspiration is in sharp conflict with the song. More precisely, Blanchot pits seeing (the gaze) against singing (the song):

Orpheus' error seems then to lie in the desire which moves him to see and to possess Eurydice, he whose destiny is only to sing of her [*de la chanter*]. He is Orpheus only in the song; he cannot have any relation to Eurydice except within the hymn [*qu'au sein de l'hymne*]. He has life and truth only after the poem [*après le poème*] and because of it, and Eurydice represents nothing other than his magic dependence which outside the song makes him a shade . . . Yes, this is true: only in the song does Orpheus have power over Eurydice. But in the song too, Eurydice is already lost, and Orpheus himself is the dispersed Orpheus: the song immediately makes him "infinitely dead". (SL, 172–3)

It is important to notice how the terms "hymn" and "poem" are used. This allows us to detect a pivotal point in Blanchot's argument of which we shall make use shortly in order to discuss the widening gap between gaze and the song. According to Blanchot, Orpheus's gaze, which both touches the origin of the work and surpasses it (and in that yearning makes the work impossible), actually performs a *sacrifice without a ceremony*; a sacrifice in which the work is betrayed in favour of "shadow." In Orpheus's gaze the work is deliberately lost as Eurydice is lost. Eurydice does not remain the same once she has been looked at, and the gaze, while giving her life in the distance truly sacrifices her

(remember that before the gaze there is “nothing,” there is just the song, where neither Orpheus nor Eurydice are distinguishable). Furthermore, such a sacrifice takes place with unconcern (*insouciance*) on the part of Orpheus. This surprising remark has ambiguously modern connotations. It seems more in tune with the contemporary desecrated artistic process than with a legend dating back to the times when there was no such a thing as “art” but a vast array of ceremonies aiming at passing on wisdom. And yet Blanchot has no intention of secularizing the artistic process. He insists that Orpheus’s gaze “frees the sacred contained in the work, *gives* the sacred to itself, to the freedom of its essence, to its essence which is freedom” (*SL*, 175). Yes, but all of this occurs in an “essential futility” which is intrinsic to the gaze. *Futilité* is another term which cannot be easily applied to the pathos of the original myth. One could probably find unconcern and futility in the fact that Orpheus’s gaze, instead of fulfilling the duty of telling the tragedy of distance, takes pleasure, and will always do so, in expressing its own desire (its egoism, its narcissism) and its own authority (being an *auctor*, Blanchot himself proposes the unique relationship between unconcern and authority). The work of art as expression (expression of the author’s narcissism) begins with Orpheus, but it is subsequently extolled by the unconcern of his descendants, who are ultimately very close to us. The modern age is the embodiment of this unconcern; it is the age in which the work of art has lost its status of sacredness to become with blissful fortuity (*hasard heureux* is the expression used by Blanchot) a mutually accepted simulation, an epiphany of reciprocal absence or an “aphany” (nonmanifestation) of presence. Once both the song and Eurydice are lost what remains is writing (the poem, the work) which by its own means will rebuild what has collapsed. “The act of writing begins with Orpheus’s gaze.” This is the well-known conclusion, the rest of which is as follows:

And the gaze is the movement of desire that shatters the song’s destiny, that disrupts concern for it, and in this inspired and careless decision reaches the origin, consecrates the song. (*SL*, 176)

This is a consecration which is also a burial because the song, consecrated in this manner, simply ceases to exist. The gaze, which is described as “inspired” and “heedless,” and which overturns the destiny of the song, must do so only in silence, the only dimension acceptable beyond the song. Blanchot poses light and the silence (and therefore writing and the poem) against night and the song (a juxtaposition whose implication could go very far). But before the gaze (writing) spoils the inspiration (the song) with its unconcern, the night has been kept “within the limits and within the measured space of the song.” Blanchot also points out that Orpheus loses Eurydice because he desires her beyond the *measured* limits of the song (*SL*, 173). Surprisingly, together with the song we are also given boundaries and measures. But not too surprisingly, if we remember that the infernal night was after all a limited and defined space. We do not know, however, nor will we know from Blanchot, exactly what and where these boundaries are. Once the song has been consecrated, it disappears. Orpheus’s gaze has become, without further mediation, the written work.

Light and silence are the harbingers of writing. But how can it be that the song has no part in the making of the poem? What has happened to the *medium* that was about to free Eurydice from Hades?

It would be better to avoid any confusion between the singing and the song. Blanchot himself, as we have already seen, has improperly used the words "hymn" and "poem" as synonyms for song. He is not alone in such confusion. Many modern poets have attempted to resanctify poetry (Rilke and Heidegger as well as in Hölderlin and in Leopardi), giving the term "song" (*canto*, *Gesang*) the meaning of something akin to the fulfillment of the poetic undertaking – the domain where Heaven and Earth join within the rhythmical measure of the poem. It is an absolutely legitimate use because the song is at work even in the most silent poetic practice. But *singing* (understood as *melisma* – that which Orpheus modulated so well) is not necessarily present. Blanchot's *insouciance* toward the difference between song and the singing leads us to believe that in Orpheus's gaze the only dimension which is heedlessly sacrificed is music. Blanchot's undeniable writing skills make us forget that Orpheus is first of all a musical myth. In Blanchot's analysis there is such a radical loss of the acoustic experience that any interpretation of his interpretation has to struggle to bring music back from exile. According to Blanchot, Orpheus is himself "only in the song"; yet he acquires life and truth only "through the poem." Blanchot, however, does not take into account the fact that this poem has or is music. Even in *L'Entretien infini*, where he goes back once again to Orpheus's myth, he characterizes the song as a "movement" which is not yet a "gaze," as a "word" that no one "speaks" and yet itself "speaks" without paying heed to any representation. The song is a language that does not refuse Hades but dips down into it, "speaking" at the level of the abyss and thereby "giving word" to the abyss itself ("*qui ne repousse pas l'enfer, mais y pénètre, parle au niveau de l'abîme et ainsi lui donne parole*").³

On one hand Blanchot specifies that such language or word coincides with the gaze. The movement-gaze-word-language is a *regard*, but "without light, different from any vision." On the other hand he claims that the word *precedes* the gaze and in so doing reveals the essential nudity of Eurydice's face (the nudity which the world had always veiled). The experience of Eurydice's face is akin (albeit not identical) to the experience of the *visage* in Lévinas. Before death and darkness take her away, Eurydice has shown, in the baredness of her face, the nontransparency of the *otherness* that resists ontology and the power of Being. But there is a high price to pay: the power of Being is defeated only within the proximity of "absolute power, the power of death" (*IC*, 184).

But if Orpheus's song is nothing more than "a word-gaze," then there has been no song at all. It seems that Blanchot is unable, or unwilling, to look for other metaphors than the ones permitted by the "word-gaze" alliance. Visual, linear, and most of all *alphabetic* paradigms have taken over the acoustic dimension of the song. Blanchot is conscious that the Western tendency to emphasize optics at the expense of other realms of experience forces us to think under the surveillance of the light or under the menace of light's absence ("*sous la garantie de la lumière ou sous la menace de l'absence de la lumière*") (*IC*, 23).⁴ According to Blanchot, what liberates us from the optical constriction is the act of speaking,

the utterance of the “word” that allows the “neuter” to exist in its infinite distance. We won’t delve into the swamp of Blanchot’s concept of neuter; for our purpose it is enough to say that the word that hints at the neuter neither anticipates nor represses the event of the language but allows it to exist as an event. What remains of the song (chant) and of its en-chantment is its absolute absence. But how would the written word, which after all is a visual, linear, and alphabetic process that cannot take place in the dark, rebel against the empire of the light (remember the connection between light, silence, gaze, and writing)? By learning how to “speak”? By uttering the spoken word that recalls the neuter? Yes, this is what poetry does. Poetry breaks the silence. Poetry gives back a voice to the written word. But it is not the voice of the song, it is not Orpheus’s voice. It is a voice that the song never possessed in the first place. If the experience of the song was of total participation, in its event there was no “voice” and not even a “song.” Objects such as these are conceivable (visible, and *readable*) only after the written word (the light) has established its rule. Neuter is just the name of what is left after we realize that nothing, absolutely nothing, will replace Orpheus’s song, and that Orpheus’s song was not even something, because we cannot turn it into any describable object. We are reminded once again of Marcel Proust’s remark, that the only paradise a sane person may conceive is paradise lost. And the voice that poetry gives back to the written word is the voice of writing, the true sound of one hand clapping.

It is not easy to decide to what extent Blanchot is aware of the distance (the *différence*) between the voice of the spoken word and the voice of the written word. On the other hand, and before going any further, we must be reminded that the voice of the spoken word is by no means more primordial than the voice of the written word. Before writing takes place there can be no such a thing as a “spoken word.” The prealphabetic voice (but we may call it the song) is an event that encompasses the vocal utterance as well as the body’s posturing and the resounding environment (in Blanchot’s terms, the night). In the *other* voice, the prealphabetic voice, these elements are not separated; together they form a signifying unit. It is only by means of the abstractive power of alphabetic writing that we can separate “the night” from “the song,” or “the body” from “the voice,” just as we separate the words on the page with a blank space. All this considered, Blanchot claims nonetheless that the power of speech makes us oblivious to its allegiance with the visual pattern of knowledge (the light). As he says at the very beginning of *L’Entretien infini*, speaking is not seeing (IC, 25). Seeing means to see a horizon, and the seer is held within the limits of that horizon. Sight is always inclusive and never singles out a single object. But language is “perverse” to the extent that it wants us to believe that we may actually single something out, and even look at a single object from every side at the same time, freeing us from the prison of optics. “Speech no longer presents itself as speech, but as sight freed from the limitation of sight” (IC, 29). Seeing is to forget to speak, while speaking means to reach the inexhaustible oblivion that is hidden in the essence of the word.

If it were only so easy! In order to bestow upon the speech the power of singling out its object one has to assume that the act of speaking is already a separate object, a true signified of the signifying “speech.” But speech as a pure

and detached entity is not a product of speaking itself. It is a product of *alphabetic writing*, the only activity that truly "separates" the *Gestalten* of experience into "things." Contrary to what Blanchot claims, speaking is indeed seeing.⁵ And even if we admit that speaking, since it involves sound, pertains to the night (the song) more than silent writing, nonetheless speaking is not singing. It may look into the abyss of oblivion, but it will never enter it as the song does.

Visual and alphabetic metaphors are so ingrained with our writing and speaking processes that it is extremely difficult to retain the degree of linguistic awareness which would enable us to account for the nonlinear and nonalphabetic features of other sensorial experiences. When writing about "song" and "voice," the imagery and rhetorical devices inherent to the writing process come in very handy. Blanchot may be thrilled at the suggestion that speech brushes occasionally the border of the night (the oblivion, the nonorigin, the unretrievable past which is not even a past), but he actually puts aside the all-encompassing experience of the song. While Orpheus, Don Juan and Tristan, his heroes in *L'Entretien infini*, revel in the night with their lovers, he is like Brangäne who from the battlements cries her *Habet acht, bald entweicht die Nacht!* (be aware, soon the night will pass). Instead of listening to Orpheus's song, he is comfortable with its surrogate: the written work, and the *secondary orality* that springs from it. But we are not accusing Blanchot of any sleight of hand. First of all, he could not listen to Orpheus's song any more than we can, since that song is lost always and forever. Furthermore, his dismissal of the acoustic dimension of the Orphean myth allows him to reveal the fundamental correlation between the writing process and the experience of distance.

If writing begins with a distance which echoes the distance between Orpheus and Eurydice, and if every written word which depends on the experience of distance invokes Eurydice in the act of departing, then a real and deadly distance separates the writer, the writing, and the written word. The name of this dispersed space is hell, but it is a hell that Orpheus brings with himself. Orpheus is not followed by Eurydice but by Absolut distance, "the interval that is always facing the other way" (*l'absolu de la distance, l'intervalle toujours détourné*) (IC, 187).

By crossing this distance one may risk losing the work altogether, and to calculate the distance by means of the gaze is to render it hopelessly insurmountable. And yet the gaze also frees the work of art from its preoccupation, from its sacred destiny. The gaze that silences the song, and makes Eurydice vanish, also makes the work mundanely possible. Perhaps this is, after all, what the "productive unconcern" is about. Looking at Eurydice is a *duty*. It is the endless duty of measuring the distance that separates the inspired one from the completion of his or her work, and writing down this duty is poetry. Still unborn in the acoustic space, the distance is suddenly created and revealed by the gaze. It is, finally, the space that writing needs to display itself. This gaze-writing measures a finite yet boundless dimension which needs to be measured again and again. To look at Eurydice and to write "Eurydice" is tantamount to losing her. However, had Eurydice not been looked at, written and lost, the literary work as fulfillment of the experience of distance would not be possible.

The appeal to distance and within distance is therefore what defines the origin and the boundary of the work, while at the same time naming him or her who are asked to respond from such a distance. Such response springs from desire. It is his unbound desire that makes Orpheus “infinitely dead,” dismembered and dispersed. Orpheus’s desire is like a reversed gravity. The more the distance widens, the more the desire grows. And because of the nature of his desire, Orpheus, as Don Juan and Tristan, enters into the space where the remote (the *amor de lohn*, we may say), is the essence of proximity (“*entre dans l’espace où le lointain est l’essence de la proximité*”) (IC, 188).

Of course, this is just what happens *after* the gaze. Since the eternal return of writing to its origin comes back only to a nonorigin (the gaze, which was preceded by “something,” – the song, that is, which is neither “something” nor “nothing”), anything that occurs prior to the gaze appears irrelevant or just too difficult to investigate. As Nietzsche put it, the knowledge of the origins only makes us aware of how meaningless the origins are. Otherwise said: “*Pour écrire, il faut déjà écrire.*” In this circular distortion of time the categories of *déjà* and *après* do not appear in chronological order. And yet we know, because Blanchot himself insisted on it, that the song manages to *measure* the boundless acoustic space. What measure, what boundaries, what measurements (metrical, rhythmic) does the song allow for?

As we have already mentioned, Blanchot parallels the moment that precedes the gaze with the “absolute power of death.” More than assimilating song and death, the remark reminds us that at the moment in which Orpheus turns around and looks at Eurydice the song has already ended. The act of turning around occurs in the silence that follows the end of the song. But the song itself has nothing to do with death. The song celebrates only its oblivious completeness, totally unaware that silence or the gaze might follow its conclusion. The song knows nothing of its aftermath. The power of death which Blanchot evokes concerns only the future – the dismemberment which is Orpheus’s destiny – and which is not retroactive. Prior to the end of the song Orpheus is not “the dispersed one” because he has never been united in the first place. If the experience of the song is of total participation, or oblivious completeness, any awareness of one’s subjectivity is yet to come. Blanchot’s reference to the power of death may be taken too literally, and even sound perversely charming to our modern ears, all too well attuned to such nihilistic drone. Orpheus will certainly yield to the power of death, but his song was never “born.” How will it die?

Let us refer to a classical source. According to Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* Orpheus, after having lost Eurydice, although not abandoning singing, began to hold the female gender in contempt and to prefer the company of male youths. When the women of the Cycons, spurred on by Bacchus, captured Orpheus to take revenge for his misogyny, his beseeching gaze and his imploring voice, for the first time, did not move anyone. His song could have rendered any weapon ineffective, but Orpheus on his own could not brave the flutes, the horns, the kettledrums, the clapping of the hands, and the screams of the entire Bacchic orchestra. After the Menads tore his body to shreds with hoes, rakes, and mattocks, Orpheus’s vital spirit rose and disappeared in the wind; but his head and his lyre fell into the Hebrus river:

The poet's limbs lay scattered
 Where they were flung in cruelty and madness,
 But Hebrus river took the head and lyre
 And as they floated down the gentle current

The lyre made mournful sounds, and the tongue murmured
 In mournful harmony, and the banks echoed
 The strains of mourning.⁶

His head had just been washed up on the shore of Metymna, on the island of Lesbos, when a serpent rose to devour it. Apollo appeared, turned the serpent to stone and allowed Orpheus's shadow to descend into Hades – this time forever, free to follow or precede Eurydice, free to look at her without fear.

In his *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* Ihab Hassan refers to the Ovidian episode on the Hebrus river when he affirms that "vanishing Orpheus leaves behind a lyre without strings; the moderns inherit it. Their song of silence responds to an ancient sentence with intimations of transcendence, upward or downward."⁷

Once again silence (absence of song) and modernity (the productive unconcern embedded in Eurydice's sacrifice) are closely linked. According to Hassan, the voice of the modern poet "denies sound" and offers only different tonalities of silence as if the "speech" of literature (in which Blanchot still put his hopes) had weakened to the point of becoming voiceless. Certainly, in Hassan's analysis silence is neither understood in its specific connotation anti-/post musical nor as the silence which is linked to the *techné* of writing. Hassan's silence points at the condition of general solipsistic nihilism which emerges from contemporary Western literature, particularly of the first half of the twentieth century. Hassan's mythical comparison, however, rushes too quickly to the conclusion. First of all, if we read Ovid's passage carefully, we realize that Orpheus's lyre did not remain without strings. Ovid specifies instead that the strings continued to play on their own, without anyone touching them. Moreover, Orpheus's "dying voice" continued to sing and the banks of the river, even if only faintly, continued to respond. The Orphean covenant between word and music, between the song and the night, has not been completely lost. In other words: since Orpheus's song never really began (it did not take place in the linear, alphabetic-like time-frame), it never really ended. It takes much more than modernity to suppress Orpheus's song. Although the experience of the silence closely linked to writing and reading has acquired predominance in Western culture (remember St. Augustine's bewilderment at St. Ambrose's silent reading) such silence cannot replace the song because it does not belong to the same order. It is true that the covenant between word and music is always threatened by its impossibility. The happier the union, the stronger is the feeling that the true goal will remain unreachable. This goal is the underworld night inhabited and measured by the magical Orphean song, where there were neither "words" nor "music." And yet, going back to the myth, we understand that Orpheus's death was caused not by his gaze towards Eurydice but by his decision to resign from his specific duty as a poet. The song that Orpheus no longer wants to sing is the male's song to the woman. He resigns from endlessly

measuring the distance that separates him from Eurydice, as well as from any other woman. Orpheus has his reasons – mythical reasons – for not wanting to replace Eurydice with any other woman. But the Menads have their own good reasons to be furious with Orpheus; his deathbound faithfulness to Eurydice and his refusal to sing to other women break that “natural” harmony of life, death, and regeneration which his song helped to maintain. Turning away from women, Orpheus breaks the sexual covenant and refuses to assume his masculine role. Orpheus’s silence equals sterility.

Blanchot, and Hassan to some extent, have sensed that Orpheus’s misfortunes have begotten a considerable amount of modern desperation. If we follow Blanchot in his revealing reticence on the musical aspects of the myth, and Hassan in his significant oversight on the persistence of Orpheus’s music, we may conclude that there was a secret *hybris* hidden in Orpheus’s sterility, the same *hybris* that once outraged the Menads and that only the desecrated, silent, and sterile modernity would have eulogized. Blanchot has called that *hybris* the senseless game of writing; Hassan has called it silence. A significant distortion is at work here, since Orpheus’s myth, more than being a parable of *hybris*, speaks powerfully in favor of the natural equilibrium of life and death and the necessity not to tamper with it. Like Perseus, who looking at Medusa’s face saw the depth of Night and Death, Orpheus, having seen the dead Eurydice, is no longer capable of singing of the union with life. Moreover, the redemptive grace that had been granted to his song loses its effectiveness. This conclusion was already part of the myth. The moderns have done nothing but glorify it while building an empty Orphean temple in honor of their absence of equilibrium.

FOUCAULT AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE VISIBLE SUBJECT¹

Reginald Lilly

The difference between saying and seeing, between word and vision is central to the work of Michel Foucault. *Madness and Civilization*, *Raymond Roussel*, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, *The Order of Things*, and, perhaps most famously, *This is Not a Pipe* are, among other things, tracings of the twistings and turnings of the difference between something sayable and not sayable; these texts organize themselves along this critical fissure. However, such a liminal project formed along this fault line harbors a peculiar difficulty, if not a paradox: how is one to present this difference? And more basically, given the ostensible disjunction between the seeable and sayable, what is the conception of language that is at work in Foucault's own presentation that enables him to accomplish this? It would seem Foucault's and all philosophical works are texts, and hence primarily "sayings"; if "the seeable is not sayable" is a philosophical thesis which may be applied as a limiting condition to Foucault's and every other philosophical, i.e., linguistic, presentation, one may wonder how a presentation presents the unsayable; one may wonder if it is indeed possible and what sort of critical presentation this would entail. But perhaps to problematize the issue in such a simplistic way follows a caviling logic; certainly there is an ample and fruitful literary and artistic tradition in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries which has had the aspiration of rendering the invisible visible in its invisibility, the ineffable in articulate silence. If these literary or artistic traditions have some import for the philosophical conception of presentation, it would be of some importance to understand if there is a "difference" in the very nature of the textual, philosophical presentation that might be either an analogue to or simulacrum of this difference between the seeable and sayable that has been at issue in these traditions.

Philosophy tends to be skeptical of paradoxical intentions such as "the invisible in the visible"; the self-confidence of the traditional philosophical presentation avers that the seeable *is* sayable, that perception *is*, despite first appearances, logical and linguistic. Indeed, the traditional philosophical presentation presumes to be able to render *in verbum* all thoughts and perceptions. Metaphysically speaking this amounts to the project of "transposing," as it

were, what is given in perception into a linguistic presentation – into discourse. One could say, then, that the philosophical tradition has been optimistic, for while it affirms a difference between being or perception and language (granting the many ways these may be conceived), it avers that this difference can be effectively effaced, sublated, overcome – which is to say, it proposes to be able to represent in discourse what is seen, perceived, and is given “prior to” or “apart from” discourse. In doing so, metaphysics *reduces* or transposes in principle and *en masse* the seeable to the sayable, the signified to its signifier, being to *logos*. However, the philosophy of representation not only has always been troubled by doubts as to whether it has in fact accomplished what it hopes to have accomplished – the (true) re-presentation of the seeable in the sayable, the logical in the verbal – but these nagging doubts, which are hardly extrinsic to the modern philosophical project, have served as the engine of the (self) critical posture of modern philosophy.

That these doubts about the metaphysical enterprise are pernicious should be no surprise if one recalls the conception of language at the basis of the metaphysics of representation: language – words – are conceived to be essentially nonmaterial, metaphysical entities while being only inessentially but necessarily physical. The physical, perceptible aspect of words is thought to be only the husk for a spiritual, invisible essence: meaning; yet this physical aspect is the “first part” with which the philosopher must contend. Though essentially related but irreducible to the difference between sign and meaning, the opposition of the seeable and sayable which metaphysics hopes to overcome is complicated, to say the least, by this difference that cleaves each and every word or its presentation.

Therefore, any presentiment that philosophy might have of dire problems in representing the seeable in words, any inkling it might have of the exorbitancy of being to language must of necessity only be approached indirectly. And indeed the rising skepticism and problematizations of technical vocabulary, thetic structures, etc. that striate the texts of modern philosophy are autochthonous to the modern philosophy of reflection and compel it to engage in its peculiar sort of indirection regarding the linguistic, terminological, conceptual, and presentational elements of modern philosophy – an indirection whose crowning moment would be Hegel’s phenomenological system, one of whose genial discoveries, one might say, would be a system of presentation. I would suggest that the history of metaphysics, and especially the modern philosophy of reflection, may in large part be effectively understood as a series of strategies devised for grappling with the problem of achieving the manifestly true philosophical presentation *qua* representation of the seeable in the sayable. To be stressed here is that the metaphysical maelstrom at the center of this philosophy of reflection is the ontological determination of the beings as having both seeable and sayable aspects that are certainly different and presumably, but not unproblematically, related.

Readers of Derrida (and others) will immediately recognize the problem bound up in the philosophical presentation and its limits. Having abandoned the project of reworking the theme of correspondence or noncorrespondence between word and thing, Derrida, for one, shows the unstable, fractal character

of signification and the concomitant, irrevocable deferral of the signified. Without having to produce (nor could it) the signified in its full presence so as to show that the signifier "misrepresents" the signified (as the tortured logic of representation would have it), his deconstructive strategy effectively brings to light in the verbal flesh of the philosophical presentation an insufficiency or indeterminacy that is, as it were, the trace of that which has been called into question, and erased: namely, the presence of the signified that supposedly lies "outside" of or "beyond" the philosophical presentation. If Derrida can, and does, speak of something that is not simply swept up and away into the play of signifiers, it is only as a certain irreducible singularity experienced within this play. These "singularities," as Derrida sometimes speaks of them, may only be approached obliquely, indirectly.²

Though Foucault does not think of the relation of language and being in a Derridean or deconstructive manner, Foucault obviously understood quite well that presentation was an issue of primary philosophical importance, and, inasmuch as it revolves around a doctrine of signification, a particularly troubled one.³ Indeed, it seems to me that Foucault's struggle with the issue of presentation was a driving force in the various "stages" of his career: archaeology, genealogy, ethics, etc., all of which involve not simply thematic developments, but developments in his notion of exactly what goes on in a philosophical presentation. In this regard, rather than precipitously subsuming the question of presentation under a general analysis of power, knowledge, or the subject (the principle thematics of his thought), I find it helpful to approach the question of presentation via Foucault's reflections on language and literature – reflections whose touchstone was Blanchot; language and literature are foundational concerns for Foucault in that their nature determines what, in his view, a philosophical presentation can possibly be, and though one rarely finds Foucault spoken of in these terms,⁴ Foucault's problem was as much one of writing as one of thematics and concepts. More specifically, I would like to suggest that Foucault's development of the concept of *visibility* (not to be conflated *tout court* with the seeable!) is central to his long struggle with a basic problem of writing, which itself is wound around the core relation of the seeable to the sayable. Inasmuch as Foucault develops a concept of presentation that essentially involves a determination of the beings it presents, I call the philosophical presentation whose core concept is visibility "*ontotopology*," a term that of course needs clarification.

As a presentation Foucault's ontotopology is a departure from traditional metaphysical presentations that vainly seek adequation of signifier and signified, that try to represent the relation of the seeable to the sayable. This departure is evident in that his ontotopology addresses the difference between the seeable and sayable without presuming, as do both metaphysical empiricism and idealism which also posit a similar difference, that either the seeable or sayable is an original datum. Rather, the visibility at the core of Foucault's ontotopology offers a dimension more fundamental than the opposed dimensions of the seeable and sayable and indeed it constitutes a critical intervention in this problematic and the tradition formed around it. Appreciating ontotopology and its central concept of visibility therefore will be enhanced if we

understand it as a response to the classical notion of (re)presentation, but before more closely examining Foucault's notion of visibility it will serve to briefly bring forward the traditional concept of philosophical presentation and the problematic relation of being and presentation that it has posed for itself, so as to be clear about the context of Foucault's philosophical intervention.

Though it cannot be limited simply to any one historical period, I take as a particularly suitable example of the classical presentation the one characteristic of modern philosophy from Descartes to Hegel.⁵ This is an epoch for which doubt and skepticism is an essential moment in the pursuit of absolute certainty and truth – modern philosophy is as much a skepticism regarding representation as it is a commitment to the representations of being. It is an epoch which recognizes that to err is an easy thing and unsurprisingly is a tradition whose members each hold that their forerunners have, to a larger or lesser degree, failed to “get it right.” Moreover, these failures are typically diagnosed as being due to a methodological lassitude that causes one to erroneously present something as a bit of certain knowledge (a true representation) when in fact it is rife with prejudices, unexamined opinions, and baseless presupposition. And, inasmuch as the modern philosophical method as detailed by Descartes (or Hegel) can be characterized as the scrupulous application of skepticism to the materials under consideration, it is no surprise to find modern thinkers fault their forebears as having committed a *critical* failure, a failure to adequately and properly doubt. Hence, for instance, Leibniz writes of Descartes that “he failed in a twofold manner, by his doubting too much and by too easily desisting from doubting.”⁶

Given this, Kant's arrival seems almost inevitable: namely, a figure who explicitly thematizes the relation between a skeptical method and the presentation of truth. For Kant, the simple and immediate presentation of an averred truth is the general nature of *dogmatism* and belies a comportment towards the world based not on evidence and knowledge but on prestige and faith – precisely what modernity in its quest for certainty definitively rejects; dogmatism asserts principles, and categories whose ground and necessity are not evident and which ostensibly stem from historical and contingent sources.⁷ Opposed to this and born from the demand for certainty is a method for rendering all objects, principles and categories fully present and hence certain (or lacking this, to at least clearly establish certain limits of their presence). This is, broadly speaking, the method of *critique*. Critique reverses the Aristotelian and Thomist prescription: precisely what is *not* to be taken as the beginning in philosophical knowledge is the familiar. What cannot be unquestioningly assumed is the received philosophical tradition and its use of categories; in other words, no historical, determinate content can immediately serve as a basis or principle of knowledge but must first undergo what Kant calls “the fiery ordeal of critical investigation”⁸ to see if, and to what extent, this content is actually true. If the legitimacy of the traditional, dogmatic employment of categories indeed has rested on their familiarity, then philosophy as critique, aiming for secure knowledge, seeks to base the employment of categories not on habit or longstanding practice but on a theoretical, transparent, and certain foundation. Seeking to purify knowledge of contingency, critique is directed against the (mere)

appearance (*Schein*) of knowledge so as to clear the way for the presentation (*Darstellung*) of the true appearing of knowledge (*Erscheinung des Wissens*).⁹

In Kant,¹⁰ these two moments – critical method and the presentation of a determinate (and true) content – are sharply separated: for him the critique of pure speculative reason “is a treatise on method, not a system of the science itself” (*CR*, B xxii). Kant specifies this opposition: critique is opposed “to *dogmatism*, that is, to the presumption that it is possible to make progress with pure knowledge, according to principles, from concepts alone . . . as reason has long been in the habit of doing; and that it is possible to do this without having first investigated in what way and by what right reason has come into possession of these concepts” (*CR*, B xxxv). Thus critique is the methodological project of securing a result: namely, a certain and transparent foundation for the presentation of a claim to knowledge (science), and this methodological project proceeds along the path of doubt by eliminating the familiar as such – namely, all that propositionally presents itself dogmatically as true without having undergone methodical verification.¹¹ Critique “turns against” what presents itself as a truth “finished and done with.” Conceiving of critique as a turning-against-appearances so as to achieve certainty is central not only to Kant, but of course also to Descartes’s *Discourse on Method* and *Meditations on First Philosophy*, and is reiterated by Hegel when he says, “The familiar is, generally, not known precisely because it is familiar” (*PS*, 18). Hence for Hegel and modernity, the path of philosophy is necessarily a “path of doubt,” a “self-fulfilling skepticism” (*PS*, 49–50).

However, in Kant the relation between the critique of reason or of dogmatism and the presentation of truth presents a dilemma. Kant conceives of the critique of philosophy as a “*propaedeutic* to the system of pure reason” (*CR*, B 25) which is the presentation of the truth, “entitled *metaphysics*” (*CR*, B 869). But if indeed critique and truth are related, they must, in Kant’s eyes, be held strictly apart and rigorously ordered, for critique is a pure method characterized by a *negative* posture towards appearances and only subsequently *leads* to science, that is, to the (positive) presentation of the truth. Critique prepares for the day that it will be left behind, obsolete. The pure method of critique is not itself taken up into this presentation nor does it have, as pure negativity, a content to present – critique is purely parasitic. In fact, in a certain respect the procedure of presenting the true even runs against the grain of critique inasmuch as the former is the “*dogmatic procedure* of reason in its pure knowledge, as science . . . [which] must always be dogmatic, that is, yield strict proof from sure principles *a priori*” (*CR*, B xxxv). This dogmatic procedure, in which the true is presented, is acceptable in Kant’s view only because it is a *result* of a critically secured and delimited faculty. Thus one must more circumspectly say for Kant that critique is opposed only to those presentations one can refer to as *dogmatisms* and *not* to this presentational dogmatic procedure, inasmuch as the dogmatic procedure is the presentation of the true (science) prepared for by critique. Rather than being simply opposed to the latter, Kant envisioned critique as “passing over into” the presentation of science and its dogmatic procedure. So one might better say critique both is and is not opposed to presentation; it is different from presentation, it is the defining limit of presentation.

The peculiar character of this “opposition” of critique and presentation underscores what happens should critique in one respect fail to be sharply separated from presentation: critique may forsake its neutrality towards presentation and itself become a type of dogmatic assertion – such is the nature of *skepticism* for Kant (CR, 22–3). Skepticism is at root a dogmatic, truth-denying nihilism. However, since critique cannot be absolutely or dogmatically opposed to presentation, the issue for Kant is to establish the true or proper relation between critique and presentation. The inauguration of scientific knowledge on the basis of a propaedeutic critique, or, to put it differently, the establishing of the transition from critical method to the systematic, philosophical presentation of the true is precisely what Kant hoped to effect through an *architectonic* which, as we know, he failed to produce.¹² Insofar as Kant’s critique of pure reason finds its essential determination as a propaedeutic to a future metaphysics, then the failure to produce the architectonic delimiting this relation must be seen as the failure to think through a certain difference essential to and definitive of his own critical, scientific presentation – that of appearance and reality as well as the intuitive and the discursive.

For Hegel this failure is endemic to Kant’s project and is instructive. He points out that Kant’s conception of critique as the reflection on method *preliminary* to the philosophical presentation of science is based upon an unquestioned division between the process of cognition and the object of cognition,¹³ between method and content, which is to say that despite his critical impulse to question the naive employment of traditional categories, the very formulation of method as a philosophical problem that can and must be considered *apart from* and *prior to* the examination of the objects of cognition implicitly and uncritically employs the traditional distinction between the categories of subject and substance. Moreover, Hegel pinpoints this confusion at the very heart of Kant’s method in the form of a residue¹⁴ – critique is, paradoxically, itself a kind of *knowledge beyond (re)presentation*. Such a residual knowledge is presupposed by and remains unapproachable to critique so long as critique and presentation remain opposed. Hence Kant’s thinking inevitably founders precisely at that limit which it has posited *a priori*. Or to put this differently, that Kant’s project limits reason and, along with it, certainty (thereby opening up that space for the reintroduction of faith), necessarily follows from the distinctly *uncritical* opposition of critique and presentation, of thought and substance. This limit or lapse between critique and presentation finds its trace in the figure of the *Ding an sich* (CR, B 756), which Hegel finds absolutely senseless: the *concept* of the thing consciousness cannot know.

Hegel no less than Kant strove for certainty and, like every good modern thinker, conceived of this as requiring a critique. Hence, insofar as the *a priori* opposition between method and content, critique and presentation leads to a Kantian affirmation of uncertainty, we can see why the absolutely critical Hegel was above all concerned to wed method and content, critique and presentation.¹⁵ (As we will see, Foucault’s concept of visibility accomplishes such a wedding.) In conceiving of a content which is self-critical and self-expositive or “autopoietic” Hegel conceives of presentation *as* critique. This means that to the extent one can distinguish critique from presentation, the relation between

them is, for Hegel, not a matter of passing from one to the other as Kant thought but of their appearing on the scene together from the very beginning.

It would be illuminating to pursue in greater detail Hegel's "solution" to Kant's and modern philosophy's dilemma regarding presentation. But I will only underscore its most salient characteristics, which will figure prominently in the formulation of Foucault's ontotopology. First and perhaps of most enduring importance is that Hegel fulfills Kant's promise by bringing into absolute proximity the two moments of critique and presentation. He does this in one fell swoop, so to speak, with his idea of determinate negation, that idea which is at the heart of his dialectic. Determinate negation expresses the fact that every determination, every presentation, necessarily involves a limiting, a negation, *and* that this negation itself harbors a positive content that too can be determined, and so forth. That every proposition is taken up into the dialectic means, simply, that the conditions for the formulation (presentation) of every proposition are also the conditions that enable a critical delimitation of that proposition. For Hegel's dialectic there is no thought or proposition, however crude or naive, that does not have some relation to being, and therefore that does not harbor truth. In this regard one might say that Hegel's achievement is to have recognized the fundamental discursivity of both presentation and critique, of being and thought, and hence, as Derrida modestly notes, Hegel is the first philosopher of writing. Of course, for Hegel this dialectical movement properly belongs within the framework of the Kantian problematic, and therefore he sees this movement as necessarily developing itself into a systematic whole. This systematic whole, as the articulation or presentation of the production of the totality of differences, fulfills the task assigned by Kant to the architectonic. As one commentator notes, "architectonic principles represent the *circularity* of the whole, the determination of every part through the whole."¹⁶ We could summarily say, in a more contemporary manner, that this system articulates the production of differences, that it brings presentation and critique together through understanding the textuality of thought and being. Needless to say, the texture of this textuality is of a peculiar sort; for one, it has no real punctuation – a breathless text. For Hegel, the seeable is, in the end, essentially and demonstrably the sayable.¹⁷

There is a second and related feature of Hegel's solution to Kant's dilemma that brings out the specifically modern character of Hegel's achievement. It has to do with the "look" or shape of the system yielded by the dialectic. Hegel, no less than Kant or Descartes, was driven by the ubiquitous and modern demand for certainty. It is this requirement that imposed upon Hegel the problem of how to make a beginning in the presentation of knowledge that was not a merely historical and arbitrary beginning; rather, a beginning that was certain, true, absolute. Such a determination of the beginning could not be made with certainty in the beginning; it could be made, Hegel holds, only if and when the end of the critical presentation – the result – in fact shows itself to be the same as the beginning. This is possible only if, in a sense, the whole of what is – for Hegel it is an issue of the appearing of knowledge – is complete such that the whole can be surveyed, recollected, reexamined to see if the whole is completely present and logically consistent from beginning to end. We know that this

whole has two fundamental features: it arrives on the scene (in 1807 with *The Phenomenology of Spirit*) through the discursivity of history, and this discursive process called history manifests its completion by finally showing the logic that has governed its development from beginning to end. For Hegel, the demand for certainty can therefore only be met by a historical presentation whose architecture is circular, which, at the final and absolute standpoint, bends back on and retrospectively determines the beginning of the historical process, and *a fortiori* the entire historical process following from this beginning as complete, as absolutely certain, and leading to the absolute. This means that from the standpoint of the end of history the logical and systematic character of the whole of history first comes to light. In short, that the beginning of knowledge is a problem, and that the solution to this problem involves a dialectic that produces a circular, closed system, one that establishes a continuity, indeed a certain identity, between beginning and end, is due solely to the demand placed upon modern thought for absolute certainty, a demand we can well imagine is itself embedded in a thinking that has as its first principle the principle of identity.

If the quest for certainty can and does become a problem for modernity only given the Cartesian dualism of subject and object; if the Hegelian achievement is to have solved this problem – that means, to have overcome this dualism – by presenting a system that finally weds critique and presentation, there is, nevertheless, in Hegel what we could call “a Cartesian residue”: the task of the final closure of the system, the completing of the architectonic, devolves on a special “subject,” one that occupies an absolute position: namely, that position solely from which the historical trajectory of spirit can be ascertained as reaching closure. That position is the one occupied by the phenomenologist, who stands in the threshold of the end of history. Without going into the details, let me simply say that the phenomenologist is in the ambiguous position of being both the one whose identity and absolute status is confirmed by the history of spirit and, as the one whose essential privilege and task it is to first present this history, the phenomenologist is the only one who can and must identify and confirm the absoluteness of this history. This ambiguous position has the ironic consequence of reinscribing at the closure of the modern project that problem at the very heart of modernity: the subject and the certainty (truth) of the phenomenological presentation. This is to say that the default of the presentation of the absolute, systematic character of being and knowledge would be tantamount to the falling asunder of critique and presentation, for it is in the presentation of the system as such that the presentation of the series of shapes of knowledge is ascertained as sufficiently, completely, and absolutely critical – that is, true.

Within this context we can consider the basic character of Foucault’s ontotopological presentation (remembering, of course, that it would be foolish to try to reduce Foucault to Hegel or vice versa). In this regard, like Hegel’s phenomenology, Foucault’s ontotopology effects, in one fell swoop, a wedding of critique and presentation, and like Hegel, the wedding of critique and presentation finds its sanction in a “system” or “framework” that is absolute. By “absolute” I mean not to suggest that Foucault is a Hegelian but that we have

arrived at a certain *a priori* or *sine qua non* for understanding Hegel and Foucault respectively: namely, that just as Hegel's project cannot "get off the ground" unless one understands that a metaphilosophical critique of "philosophical presentation" belongs to the very formation of *his* philosophical presentation, so for Foucault the framework within which he presents his materials is only opened up or deployed (to use a Foucault-friendly term) *a partir de* – beginning with – a critique, a critique of subjectivity, metaphysics, substance, etc. This *a priori* "framework" in Foucault is what he refers to as *visibility*. Insofar as one can think of Foucault's presentation as a system visibility, it is quite different from "system" in Hegel, which is a body of propositions based upon the principle of identity: namely, a system produced by and based upon the sublation of difference, of negation. If Foucault's visibility as a system brings together the seeable and sayable, it does not efface or sublimate their difference (as does Hegel's) but inaugurates an interplay or "communication" between them, a communication that finds its articulation in the ontotopological presentation.¹⁸ Ontotopology traces the visibility that encompasses, without conflating, the seeable and sayable. Clarifying the relation of visibility to the seeable and sayable is indispensable for understanding the systematic character of visibility.

While visibility most obviously has a relation to space, to sight and things seen, it cannot be reduced to perception and the implicit spatiality of things in perception; visibility in fact necessarily involves a critique of perception, its space, and its "things" and hence is, for Foucault, pivotal in his critique of phenomenology (Hegel's and others'). Visibility is a dimension that is, in part, produced through freeing the surface of things from every residue of substance, interiority, and inherency – from all *Dinglichkeit*; accordingly, visibility is a spatiality that lacks all depth, that secret dimension where, as Foucault says derisively of hermeneutics, all things supposedly communicate. And while visibility has a relation to discourse and language, it is a relation quite different from the traditional view in which language first enters into space, as it were, by signifying things that are, by their very nature, spatial. Rather, language is, as Foucault says in the train of the *nouveau roman*, essentially spatialization itself: "Gap, dispersion, fracture, difference are not the themes of literature today; but that in which language now is given to us and comes to us: that which makes it speak."¹⁹ This *discursive* spatialization is the production of visibility. As Foucault's study of Raymond Roussel shows, although the visibility produced through discursive spatialization may involve a sort of dialectical play on the part of things, his brilliant study of Brisset shows that this spatialization also may proceed in discourse as a phonic proliferation prior to any reference to things.²⁰ In fact, it is here, unencumbered by "things," that we have perhaps the purest or most striking example of the productivity of that visibility from which arise and into which are dissolved all things. Discursively produced visibility is, then, the condition – one might even say the condition for the possibility – of the appearance of things, but unlike Kant's space which, ubiquitously homogenous, is the medium for the appearance of things such that they correspond absolutely to logical determinations, Foucault's visibility is neither logically nor spatially continuous or homogenous. A full account of

visibility would reveal it as a system of differences, in the last instance the manifest difference between the seeable and sayable. If visibility is a system, it is therefore nevertheless one that does not resolve these differences (hence visibility is fundamental but not a determinable ground); rather it finds in these differences a liminal dimension, an “interstice” or “blank space” he calls it, that is the proper site of genuinely critical, ontotopological thought. Therefore, as a system visibility is marked by a nonhomogeneity, a discontinuity; visibility is the ontotopological presence of the seeable and sayable in their manifold differences. Strictly speaking, visibility is neither the dimension of language nor the dimension of perception; it is the dimension of thought, and here we see that for Foucault thought exceeds what can be rendered propositionally – hence, if visibility is a system, it is not, as is Hegel’s, a system of propositions. Foucault writes in the Preface to *The Order of Things*:

Thus between the already “encoded” eye and reflexive knowledge there is a middle region which liberates order itself: . . . This middle region, then, in so far as it makes manifest the modes of being of order, can be posited as the most fundamental of all: anterior to words, perceptions, and gestures, which are then taken to be more or less exact, more or less happy, expressions of it (which is why this experience of order in its pure primary state always plays a critical role).²¹

The visibility integral to Foucault’s concept of presentation – a presentation that is equally a critique – becomes clearer against the background of those moments of Hegel’s philosophy I have identified: namely, the wedding of critique and presentation and the “problem” of the beginning Hegel hopes to solve *in the end* through the absolute – that is, systematic – presentation. If Foucault learned anything from phenomenology, existentialism, or Marxism it was the untenability of beginning with an implicit affirmation of the subject – an affirmation inevitably concomitant to making certainty the fundamental problem of the philosophical presentation. Indeed, it is the absolute necessity of *not* beginning with such an affirmation of the subject that provides Foucault with his “absolute beginning,” which is to say that Foucault’s so-called anti-humanism is not so much a result of his analyses, but is what makes them possible.²² The critique or displacement of the subject in Foucault does not, as might be expected from Hegel’s determinate negation, mean that the ontotopological presentation makes its beginning with some being other than the subject;²³ nor does this ontotopological “negation” lead to the *logical* generation of its materials, as does Hegel’s dialectic (which is fundamentally a *logical* rather than a phenomenological enterprise). Rather, this inaugural critique deploys a “space” within which all possible “objects” of philosophical analysis “take place.” Whatever they may be (and there is in principle no restriction to what may be examined), objects of ontotopological analysis are seen as occurring within, and as absolutely conditioned by, a space of fundamental *exteriority*: this “space” of fundamental exteriority is *visibility*. By “fundamental exteriority” I mean a “space” in which there is in principle no interiority, no simple or essential identity; rather, all things, all thoughts, all concepts are

fundamentally exorbitant, ex-centric, ecstatic in the sense of being "outside" themselves and systemically determined by their exteriority to "other things," and this without the Hegelian promise of their returning, by some dialectical or analytical maneuver, to an interiority, a self-sameness. Indeed, the exteriority-without-interior is so complete in this space of visibility that Foucault does not so much speak of *objects*, which seems surreptitiously to imply a substantial interiority, as he does of limits, patterns, points of dispersion. The exteriority of visibility is absolute; it cannot be conceived of as an interiority by supposing something that might lie *outside* this space, for there is nothing outside visibility; least of all is there a Kantian transcendental interiority synthesizing visibility. Visibility, which is absolutely antihumanist, contests the identification proposed by metaphysics: the identification of the seeable and sayable, the subject and object, the inner and outer. Foucault's visibility is, instead, the seeable and sayable *in their radical exteriority*.

Herein lies the implicit ontotopological critique of the traditional conception of space and things commensurate with vision. For example, space for Kant is the form of outer intuition, a "container" for things, each of which takes up or contains space that has an absolute point of reference: the subject. The idea that things harbor an essential interiority is formalized and absolutized in the notion of the *Ding an sich* and its subjective correlate, transcendental apperception. The basic character of space as such a container and things as having contents, therefore as capable of giving rise to an infinite number of perceptions or adumbrations governed by a transcendental logic, does not fundamentally change with the critique of Kant so long as things continue to be seen as objects of perception or as correlates of a consciousness which, despite (or in virtue of!) its essentially temporal or historical character, remains a unity, a self-same whole whose intentionality or linguisticity constitutes the object. In Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Marx, or even the early Heidegger a thing continues to be seen as perspectival, which means as directly or indirectly referring to a subject whose discursivity in one way or another constitutes the phenomenal object and which constitutes itself as a temporally unified being. Moreover, there is in this schema necessarily a privileging of the *present* perspective over perspectives which are, in one way or another, conceived of as *not* present.²⁴ As that ontotopological dimension deployed by the inaugural critique of the subject and its spatio-temporality, visibility dissolves the perspectival character of things and space and, concomitantly, the privileging of the (present) moment around which other moments are ordered. Visibility is therefore a space lacking any center, any privileged perspective, any viewing subject or moment. If things as conceived within the visibility of ontotopology nevertheless are seen as determined by their relations to other things (a circumstance that traditionally would be described in terms of perspectives), these relations are all immediately present; none of them can ever be imagined as being a privileged, founding, or original relation even if there may occur with this space relations of dependency. If ontotopology engages in a critique of some specific configuration of visibility, as is the case in Foucault's thematization of madness, medicine, the prison, etc., it shows that the prevailing system of the seeable and sayable is itself exposed to fortune and chance, to a play of subjects and things

that have no origin nor any final cause; it shows that every visibility is undergoing its own constitutive ek-centricity. All is, in its being, transgressive, in flux. Ontotopology is the end of the metaphysical fantasm of identity.

Ontotopological visibility involves a determination of the being of things: viewed ontotopologically, things have nothing to hide, they are fully exposed and ontotopology is the fundamental ex-position or tracing of these things as systemically determined in their visibility. As conceived within the order of perception space always involves an element of latency, potentiality, or interiority. Conceived ontotopologically as visibility space no longer implies any interiority nor any seeing subject; nor is it the counterpart to discourse. Insofar as "space" is seen as the essential medium of the seeable and is, as such, disjunctive with the sayable, visibility represents a dimension that is more fundamental than space or discourse; it is a dimension prior to and presupposed by the occurrence of subjects and objects, of discourse and things.²⁵ Being situated without remainder in ontotopological visibility, things are subject to an a priori critique precisely insofar as they tend to be taken for original, self-same, essential, utopic things and concepts which imply or harbor an interiority, an essence. Ontotopology as a critical presentation therefore repeats, so to speak, in each instance and with every thing and every discourse, the critical gesture that initially opens up and deploys that ontotopological space called "visibility." As the central concept of ontotopology, visibility amounts to an ontological determination and presentation of materials that is essentially and immediately critical of those materials.

We saw in Hegel a wedding of presentation and critique and, within its Kantian context, how the prospect of the default of certainty – that is, epistemic nihilism – led Hegel to conceive of a dialectical wedding of presentation and critique in such a way that, and I stress these words, *in the end* the dialectic finally produces an architectonic, a system. Even for Hegel every thing is reduced to its presentation, so to speak. Within his system the presentation of each and every thing finds a final, absolute, and certain determination. This is why the dialectical critique of every thing or "shape of knowledge" must be understood *systemically*. For Hegel, only the whole is true, only the system is absolute. So too for Foucault, ontotopological visibility is absolute, but it is deployed only on the basis of the disappearance of any and every absolute or essential being and this would include that figure indispensable for the completion of Hegel's system – that privileged subject: the phenomenologist. As Denis Hollier notes, "the disappearance of any seeing subject [is] the correlation of the advent of absolute visibility" (*MF*, 137). Inasmuch as we saw a certain foundering of Hegel's system precisely at the moment of its definitive, absolute presentation, we could say that Foucault's system is formulated in the wake of the collapse of Hegel's system. Hence the deployment of ontotopological, absolute visibility is the *inaugural* moment of Foucault's presentation rather than something deferred to a later moment; Foucault's ontotopology is systematic *from the beginning*, whereas for Hegel the system is only actual at the end; the ontotopological system is not discursive in the Kantian sense; neither is it progressive or historical in the Hegelian sense.

So, ontotopology is not simply a wedding of presentation and critique, but,

like Hegel, it envisions something like a system as essentially belonging to its presentation. However, unlike Hegel, its definitive deployment is not deferred to a later, privileged moment; rather, it is coextensive with that space deployed by the inaugural critique and displacement of the subject. The ontotopological system of visibility is not immanent or progressive but immediate.²⁶

As a system, visibility serves the general function that system serves in Hegel: it is the absolute dimension within which each and every "thing" finds its determination; hence I speak not just of the topological character of Foucault's thought, which would do little more than echo Deleuze's admittedly brilliant analysis of Foucault, but of its *ontotopological* character.²⁷ What François Ewald says of the spatial character of normative power holds for visibility generally – it "is at the same time the link, the principle of unity – of communication – between these individualities . . . [It] is at the center of a form of communication without origin and without subject" (*MF*, 171).

For Foucault the sayable is intelligible insofar as it is visible,²⁸ which is an essentially anti-ideological conception of intelligibility. Likewise, the intelligibility of the seeable is not to be sought in its signification, as metaphysics is wont to do, but in terms of its visibility. This means visibility is, for Foucault, the fundamental form of intelligibility – ergo its critical potential. As a differential system of intelligibility visibility here reveals its basic coincidence with power. For Foucault, power is always dyadic; it always has a target, a moment of resistance, and a "targeter," an aiming. The absolutely coordinate character of power relations invests them with an inherent intelligibility. As Foucault says, "Power relations are both intentional and non-subjective. If in fact they are intelligible, this is not because they are the effect of another instance that 'explains' them, but rather because they are imbued, through and through, with calculation."²⁹

Foucault's ontotopology, and its core concept of visibility, is extremely complex and I only hope to have sketched a few of its characteristics in this chapter. Foremost I hope to have indicated how Foucault's concept of presentation responds to a traditional problematic revolving around the issue of a *critical presentation* and, moreover, that Foucault's "solution" to this also involves, as does Hegel's, a system, one I have given the perhaps ungainly name of "ontotopology." Moreover, I hope to have suggested the related but nevertheless quite different connections that are conceived between "subject" and "critical presentation" in Hegel's and Foucault's system. When Foucault speaks of his system he speaks of visibility, a system initially deployed with the critique of the subject, a critique which necessarily extends to the conception of the seeable and sayable commensurate with the traditional concept of the subject. Here not only does the difference between the seeable and sayable become manifest, but the seeable and sayable are each inherently differential insofar as all that is seen and all that is said is conditioned by a fundamental exteriority. The critical presentation for Hegel, on the other hand, comes to rest squarely on the shoulders of that peculiar subject, the phenomenologist.

If visibility is indeed a system of exteriority whose primary modalities are the seeable and sayable, we are led to ask, especially in light of the difficulties Hegel encountered in the final deployment of his system, is there no vision that

survives the death and disappearance of the perceiving subject? Whose discourse is it that inhabits and maintains the mute, invisible, and blank threshold between the seeable and sayable, that space or “gap” that Foucault says he seeks to occupy? What power is it that gathers together and maintains pandemic exteriority as a field of intelligibility? To address these and related questions would require returning to the inaugural deployment of visibility and the question of the subject, a return that lies beyond the bounds of the present inquiry.

PART THREE

**EXPRESSIONS AND THE
LIMITS OF PHILOSOPHY**

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INTRODUCTION

DESIRE, DISPLACEMENT, AND LAUGHTER

Further displacing the philosophical hegemony of vision, this part advances an audio-tactile manner of expressing the limits of philosophy. The essays proceed as if thought were no longer authentic and as if its task were to be the correlate of a certain erotic dispersion. Complementary to this is the emphasis on the uncanny now related to feminist expressions. Without making itself known, thinking operates within the representational break between desire and identification. The event of an “after-seeing” is introduced while engaging in a “blinking of difference,” a new practice of letting thinking play beyond Heidegger’s specular economy of (pure) openness.

In Chapter 6, “Frames of Visibility: Si(gh)ting the Monstrous,” Robert Burch invokes Heidegger as the philosophical exemplar upon which such a countermetaphysical transformation may be constructed. However, for a variety of reasons, Heidegger’s deconstruction of ontotheologic visibilities amounts to an intensification of the uncanny that prevails in the history of philosophy. Burch claims that while Heidegger challenges the monstrous picturing that surfaces in the unlimited techno-will to power (*Gestell*), he does not succeed in freeing thought from the “monstrous that reigns.” And this because his thinking, attuned to the voice of Being, is virtually deaf to the narratives of human beings. Marking the ends of metaphysical monstrosity, Heidegger’s turn to an economy of hearing and touching exposes a silent yet visible inhumanity: a hand without warmth, an ear that cannot hear (others). Burch is not surprised that Heidegger’s famous *Spiegel* interview shares its space with a companion-piece on the Loch Ness monster. He wonders whether or not Heidegger’s case is fresher and more mysterious than that of Nessie. Arguably, he concludes that Heidegger’s re-vision of metaphysical regarding within and beyond enframing belongs as much to the monstrous as the essence of technology itself.

In Chapter 7, on “Francis Bacon, the Philosopher’s Painter, and the Logic of Sensation,” Zsuzsa Baross inscribes the interimplicated questions of visibility, thinking, and the uncanny absence of identification. Following Deleuze, she reads visibility beyond the subjectivity of imagining in the infinite terrain of desire, thus breaking with the concept of image as representation, narration, or

even illustration. The image is the visibly open and not a matter of seeing, but, as she shows, the body thinking/desiring. The body/image has its own visibility – the eye that expresses the in-visible. Indeed, Baross indicates how thinking traverses the post-Cartesian region of the eye, inviting the philosopher to smile as the painter glances at the stories of spirit's fall. Thinking/desiring now emerges as philosophical laughter, simultaneously liberating the visible from the purely imaginal. In her intriguing account of Deleuze's distinct reading of seeing in relation to Bacon's painting, Baross underscores the task of an after-philosophy's thinking/desiring/painting as one which makes visible the in-visible by nonreferential possibilities of the hand. The hand is shown to be victorious over the eye as organ of pleasure, nonetheless continuing the strife of the possible (visible) and the improbable (expressive). Suddenly, in "point of view of the hand" ocularcentrism becomes insignificant. Free to leave its mark, the hand invites the flaming intuition of an in-visible exchange. Thinking frees the hand from the supervision of the eye. Paradoxically, the in-visible becomes concretely visible in traces of wild, erotic intensities. Eros becomes catastrophic – an in-visible chaos, collapsing even the point of the gaze, the moment, *Augenblick*. A post-Kantian *Augenschein* philosophy now regards an impossible escape, metaphysics turned inside out by the hand pointing to the open, the flame of free desire.

In Chapter 8, "Bataille's Erotic Displacement of Vision: Attempts at a Feminist Reading," Ladelle McWhorter argues for a new eroticism of the visible. Providing several intriguing readings of Bataille's *Story of the Eye*, she illustrates the event of an after-seeing that is more radically visible than the eye's eros. In short, this event marks the eye's fading into vaginal darkness. An erotics of touch no longer "specularizes" the visionary process. Instead, it withdraws from a commonality of language and logic in the very play of visibility's end. All of this amounts to an invisible *theatrum*, an eros that, McWhorter claims, is no longer a "thing" but blooms in the very intimacy of the visible and the tactile. Indeed, the viewpoint of this intimacy signifies the in-visible exchange of a festival, a chaos, a drunkenness, on Nietzsche's view, "a Dionysian emancipation." No doubt Bataille's reading of the birthing of this economy of touch is in part appropriated from Nietzsche's earliest philosophical text. The dream of vision becomes the intoxication (*Rausch*) of intense in-visibility. While Nietzsche's field of action is the womb of the earth, Bataille concretizes this image in vaginal festivals. According to McWhorter, these festivals reveal a specularity of being beyond the eye's glance, yet in the very dance of the limits of *Denken* the eye desires. In turn, these erotic spacings suspend the hierarchies that prevail in our world, disabling the forces of dominance. What is sacrificed in McWhorter's offering to readers is no doubt visibility as they have always understood it.

Without mourning the ends of representation, Lynne Huffer proliferates the erotic *Befindlichkeit* McWhorter introduced. In Chapter 9, "Luce Irigaray's Specular Mother: Lips in the Mirror", she exhibits the ambivalence of erotic visibilities in the context of a certain radical feminist discourse on woman-as-mother. Within Irigaray's strategies of subverting the Platonic expressivity of the in-visible, Huffer specifies modes of an unexchangeable exchange by

supplementing Nietzsche's *Gedankenlyrik* of laughter and play. She argues that philosophy's turn (including Heidegger's) merely addresses the matter of difference in metaphysical repetitions of the same. The in-visible, she claims, is still represented within a metaphysical region. What remains to be thought transforms the work of mimesis into an "extra turn," a postaesthetic tropism, to be more precise, a paradoxical troping/turning which arises out of "self-reflexive" laughing in the joyous constellation of rubbing and kissing. The body of visibility, therefore, is played by the play. This playing, as Eugen Fink articulated from another perspective in *Spiel als Weltsymbol*, is not confined to metaphysics. In Huffer's story playing marks a different practice, the art of becoming another woman. In her attempts to exceed a specular economy of sameness, she opts for intense interbodily touchings that ultimately cannot be known, seen, or expressed. All that remains is the in-visible in-between the very lips of singular expressivities. On her view, the erotic practice of difference no longer articulates an identitary expression. In effect, the in-visible becomes visible in the "extra turn," the bizarre constellation of rubbing/turning/laughing. It would be absurd to ask what this play imitates. The play plays, indeed, the plays play and in that playing "some lips . . . open themselves . . . in a language that 'ripples.'" The in-visible starts without ever being the same again.

FRAMES OF VISIBILITY

SI(GH)TING THE MONSTROUS

Robert Burch

I

Our theme is “frames of visibility.” We need not pause to consider niggling issues – is this title a citation that a fashionably literate person ought to recognize but to one’s embarrassment cannot place at all? Is it simply a spur-of-the-moment invention (*in vino quaestio*, perhaps), designed to elicit inevitably wrong guesses as to what one might have had in mind? How then to pretend successfully (if pretense is in order) that one knows in principle what an essay gathered under this heading is supposed to be about? and so on – for philosophers to have some sense of being on familiar ground, even if the precise limits and terrain are unclear. For the topic, “frames of visibility,” may well be the topic of Western philosophy itself as that of the “visible and invisible” *tout court*.

What I have in mind is an oft-told tale. In the Western philosophical tradition, sight has been exalted above the other senses. “The reason,” Aristotle argues, “is that of all of the senses, sight can best bring us knowledge and best discerns the differences among things.”¹ Though no one is apt to doubt Aristotle’s tough-mindedness, on this score even he is drawn into a word-play that in Greek had become standard: the verb, “to see” (*eido*), being used in the perfect and pluperfect forms to mean “know” and “knew.” Herein lies the intrinsic but now largely effaced ambiguity of the opening sentence of the *Metaphysics*: “All human beings by nature desire to see/to have seen/to know [*eidenai*].” The evidence which Aristotle adduces for this desire turns on the ambiguity. “The sign of it,” he says, “is our love of the senses [*aistheseon agapesis*],” indicative of a pure aesthetic *energeia* which, “apart from all utility,” delights in the sensing (*aisthetos*) of the sensed (*aisthetos*) as such (*di autos*). The principle form of this activity, Aristotle adds, is the sheer delight we can take in seeing for its own sake. It is this desire (which would come before the peculiar wonder at *aporias* in which philosophy is said to begin, and be more specifically human than those natural desires which require us to deal [*prattein*] with things) that serves as the mundane analogue for the “perfect and unimpeded *energeia* that contains delight in itself,” that is, the “theoretical *energeia*” which as “self-sufficient” (*autarkeia*) is “the most pleasurable of all.”² This appeal to a pure *aisthesis*

likewise decides in favor of knowing as seeing-for-its-own-sake the meaning of the term for "desire" in the phrase *eidenai oregontai phusei*, thereby occluding the term's root sense. *Oregontai* derives from the verb *orego*, which has the literal meaning of "to reach for, to grasp at, to strike a blow at." Etymologically, then, the term does not so much connote an intrinsically delightful *aisthesis*, as the will to make what appears as "other" one's own by seizing upon it, a will which transcends both the pragmatic satisfaction of needs and the disinterested pleasure of looking. The story of sight's epistemological and ontological precedence might then plausibly be told as the story of the interplay of these conflicting senses of desire. In such a telling, the originative "oregematic" desire, though initially suppressed in favor of a pure aesthetic pleasure of vision, reemerges with the subjectivist turn to find explicit expression in the form of "humanity's absolute right of appropriation of all things,"³ fulfilled metaphysically in the total conceptual (*begreiflich*) vision of "absolute knowledge" and having its all-too-human completion in the absolute expropriation of all reality in the essence of modern technology.

Nonetheless, a basis for the linguistic equation of knowing and seeing may be found in the distinctive character of physical sight itself. In contrast to the other senses, sight can and, within a variable range, must work at a distance from the object sighted, and in this respect it is, so to speak, the least carnal of the senses, the least intimate, private and idiosyncratic. With this remove, sight has its peculiar anticipations and variable foci, its alternative vistas and possible adumbrations of its object, as well as its facility at the flick of the lids to shut out its world in favor of a distanceless blackness. Thus, relative to the other senses, there is with seeing a loss of visceral immediacy and a greater dependence on the act of "intending" an object within a particular "horizon". "The gain," however, "is the concept of objectivity, of the thing as it is in itself as distinct from the thing as it affects me."⁴ Though our other senses do open upon an objective world (since Suskind's *Das Parfum* we might even suppose the possibility of an olfactory ontology), it is the peculiar virtue of sight to intend a world that is essentially external, public, and in principle intersubjective. Moreover, in contrast to the other senses, sight has its peculiar dimensionality. The "present" for sight is essentially a "horizon," a time space "within which things can be beheld at once and can be related to each other by the wandering glance of attention" (*PL*, 144). Thus sight "brings knowledge" and "discerns differences" because of its peculiar freedom, its distinctive disengagement and choice of object and aspect. Accordingly, our topic "frames of visibility" might well be read more essentially as a subjective genitive, since all seeing has its distantiating frames, or rather *is* a framing; for as Hegel shows, every "here" and "now" is not a mere given frame but a constituted, mediated present (*PG*, 76–89).

Sight thus serves in two respects as the sensuous basis for the traditional notion of theory. First, in the simple certainty of visible evidence, that is, in the self-evident accord of "intention" and "fulfillment" with respect to what appears at a distance to sight, one finds the sensuous basis for the usual concept of truth as *adequatio rei et intellectus*, as well as its final criterion. Second, in the peculiar dimensionality of sight, one finds the "sensuous basis for the idea of the

eternal, that which never changes and is always present.”⁵ That the noblest activity of the mind, *theoria*, is described in metaphors taken mostly from the visual sphere, that the root sense of the *theoros* had sacred associations, that the homophonic resonance of *theoria* and *theatron* with *theos* was strong enough to yield a long-lived but erroneous etymological derivation, are all elements of this story.⁶ The noble distance of physical sight brought with it the presumption that in and through theorizing mortals would be able to dwell in the neighborhood of the gods, and so to look with impunity upon the spectacle of the cosmos to get its overall sense and to see things in their proper relative places.

This exclusive privileging of sight and, with it, of the peculiar eros to discrete self-evident clarity and pure presence was nonetheless a fateful decision. Heraclitus counsels that “eyes are more accurate witnesses than ears,” though neither serve well those having “barbarian souls.” But when the issue is *sophia*, he instructs us more prominently, that “listening [*akousantas*] to the logos . . . , it is wise to agree that all things are one,” the acoustic eros for the coherence and resonance of changing moments here taking precedence.⁷ Though anticipated in the Parmenidean *noein*, the fateful decision in favor of sight effectively comes with Plato’s choice to name the true, the real, and the good as *eide*, that is, as something essentially seen. The term *eidos*, which had meant in common speech the outward aspect of a thing to the physical eye, shows itself noetically as one. We know too the pedagogical point of Plato’s choice. The recollection of *eide* is to lead us beyond the shadowy images of the cave of everyday concerns and conflicts, and to bring the true standard into view. To be appropriate to such an object, noetic sight has to aspire to a perspective beyond all mere “frames,” that is, beyond the human, all-too-human, limitations of every cave-like outlook. It has to achieve, as it were, a frameless frame of visibility, a vision from everywhere and nowhere.

We have been warned by Heidegger of the *inversion maligne* which attends this decision. The standard sought is one beyond all human *doxai* and *ethnoi*; yet to name that standard as *eidos* is in effect to confine truth and being *in advance* to an essentially *human* measure, to something that must be visible to our mind’s eye and indeed in some sense have always already been seen. Accordingly, Heidegger declares that “the beginning of metaphysics with Plato’s thinking is the beginning of humanism,”⁸ and deliberately offers his famous “Letter on Humanism” as an *addition* (a “*supplement*” in Derrida’s sense) to the essay on “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth.” “Humanism,” Heidegger writes, “means the process bound up with the beginning, unfolding and end of metaphysics according to which human being, after various considerations but always knowingly [*wissentlich*], moves into a position in the center of beings [*in eine Mitte des Seienden rückt*], without thereby as yet becoming the highest being” (W, 142). The key verb *riicken in*, with its sporting and military connotations of taking the field (*ins Feld*) and of going on maneuvers (*ins Manover*), suggests how we deploy ourselves and thus command a domain. “Concern for human being and for its position [*Stellung*] in the midst of beings prevails throughout the metaphysics” (W, 141). This self-positioning of human being in the midst of beings is, Heidegger suggests (continuing the sporting and military allusions), the

“still uncontested [*unverrückte*] all prevailing fundamental actuality of the on-rolling history of the world [*anrollenden Weltgeschichte der Erdball*] into its most modern modernity” (W, 142–3). Thought in this way, the Cartesian turn which thinks of truth and being essentially in terms of the subject’s self, securing representation of clear and distinct ideas is not a reversal and rejection of Platonism but an inner essential development. What is decisively modern in this turn is not specifically the self-positioning of human being, nor the epistemological and ontological privileging of the subject’s self-certainty in the form of clear and distinct ideas. Rather it is the preoccupation in this self-positioning with the conditions of its possibility that ensure the objectivity of the object seen, that is, with what in the very sighting of the object determines the object as object a priori. With this preoccupation come several corollary shifts: from the self-evident presence of the thing for noetic sight to the self-certainty of our clear and distinct idea of it as object; from the thing within itself to the priori conditions of its possibility for representation; and from the frameless frame of noetic vision to the subjective roots of the transcendental horizons of consciousness. This preoccupation, together with the explicit quest for a divine eidetic measure, comes to magisterial completion in the Hegelian absolute Idea as absolute self-knowing knowing, a seeing that is infinitely thorough in that it encompasses in a single whole and without essential opacity both the seeing and the seen.⁹ Such is the thoroughness of the Hegelian vision of vision that if it fails all subsequent metaphysical attempts can only be epigonous.

Scarcely anyone today would concede the total and thus final success of Hegel’s “panoramic” synthesis. In the wake of its collapse, the precedence of sight still persists in two fragmented extremes. The first extreme marks the completion, not of metaphysics proper, but of its original implicit inversion. The eidetic quest is now fulfilled in and through the “enframing” of the essence of modern technology as the sighting of all that is in terms of essentially human measure that set everything in place at a distance for calculation, expropriation, and control. The other extreme, which persists on the margins of this enframing, counters both the metaphysical tradition proper and its inversion by exploring the relation of seeing and seen in terms of “differential networks” of signification always already in play, networks in which nothing is anywhere ever simply present or absent, such that panoramic closure is perforce an endlessly elusive limit. To the absolute frame of metaphysics proper, and the homogenous enframing of the essence of modern technology is juxtaposed heterogeneous and incommensurate self-subverting frames of visibility.

II

Though not especially original, the preceding rehearsal of the history of philosophy indicates something of how philosophically one might situate our chapter topic. But what of the particular theme, “sighting the monstrous”? That requires beginning with a more specific vantage-point.

In the autumn of 1966, the *Spiegel* publisher, Rudolf Augstein, interviewed Martin Heidegger in his home in Freiburg.¹⁰ Heidegger conceded to the

interview, we are told, as “a contribution to the ‘public clarification of [his] case’” (SI, 5). The occasion, *Der Spiegel* adds “by way of background,” was a letter to the editor sent by Heidegger the previous March “in which he contradicted some of the statements peddled in the literature about his relationship to the Third Reich” (SI, 3). *Der Spiegel* admits to seeing in this an opportunity, surmising that, “after twenty years of silence on this theme, the letter to the editor was a guarded hint . . . that Heidegger was ready to address himself to the reproaches.” Such a prospect would doubtless have had for *Der Spiegel* a dual appeal, holding the promise not only of an exposé that would finally tell all, but because of its particular subject also have the veneer of philosophical respectability, a *Gespräch* and no mere interview. What there might have been in it for Heidegger is more ambiguous. In the provided “background,” *Der Spiegel* fails to mention that Heidegger’s letter was prompted not just by the “statements peddled in the literature,” which indeed had always been around, but specifically by “untruthful statements about him written in the *Spiegel* essay, ‘Heidegger – Midnight of a World’s Night’ [February 7, 1966],” and that, after writing the letter, Heidegger had initially refused a *Spiegel* interview in no uncertain terms.¹¹ That he finally agreed, we are now led to believe, was due largely to the efforts of his friend Erhart Kastner, who, “looking far ahead and thinking of the long-term strategy, both pressed Heidegger to give an interview for the magazine,”¹² and “prompted Rudolf Augstein to write an empathetic two-page letter to Heidegger” that “offered to interview him,” a letter by which Heidegger seems to have been persuaded (SI, 233).

That eventually Heidegger would involve himself freely in some sort of direct discussion of this vexed theme could only have been hoped. That he would have conceded to this particular venue and format is less cheering. Readers of Heidegger’s text will be well aware, for example, of his trenchant remarks about the manner in which newspapers’ illustrated magazines “set public opinion to swallowing what is printed, so that a prepackaged set of opinions becomes available on demand.”¹³ Would not Heidegger’s concession to the interview inevitably make him complicit in just that economy and demand, and do so to the detriment of both the person and the thought? Such readers would also have cause to wonder what, before the event, Heidegger himself expected from what he himself had chosen to deem the “public clarification of my case [*öffentlichen Aufklärung meines Falles*],” and what relation, if any, he thought (or hoped) this *Aufklärung* would have to a thoughtful “elucidation” (*Erläuterung*) and “explanation” (*Erörterung*) of his work. Heidegger’s strict requirement, as he says, “out of concern for my work” that the text of the interview not be published until after his death might be taken to indicate a belief that the two matters ought truly to be kept separate, or rather the events of the particular life were not especially relevant to the work and that debate about them would be distracting, all the while knowing full well that in the public imagination the events of the life would always be of equal interest to, or indeed overshadow, the philosophical work. To concede to an interview only on the condition of posthumous publication could save Heidegger from a potentially endless debate in which he clearly did not want to be drawn, postpone further public discussion of the issue until it would not matter to Heidegger,

and bequeath to posterity the issue of the relation of his life and work, which is where it has to be decided in any case.

Still, however much it is still a concession to the idiom, that Heidegger should deliberately speak of the matter as an *Aufklärung meines Falles* ought to give pause. To the aficionados of murder-mysteries, as well as to most of *Der Spiegel's* usual readers, this phrase would have had the clear resonance of "the solution of the crime." Of course, if there were a crime or mystery here to be solved, the German term *Fall* (unlike the French term *affaire*, with which the whole problematic has now come widely to be designated as *l'affaire Heidegger*) has the convenient etymological sense of something contingent and accidental, as well as a direct etymological connection with the term *Falle*, implying in this context a trap or snare into which one who was "in no way politically active," (SI, 193) presently stepped. Consonant with these meanings, the *Aufklärung meines Falles* might be intended in the obvious way (objective genitive) to suggest instruction regarding the facts of Heidegger's overt political involvement, ostensibly *aus berufenem Mund*. Yet, Heidegger being "Heidegger," it might also have been intended in the less obvious way (subjective genitive) to suggest that his elucidative discussion of his case would serve as an awakening to those unenlightened about the essence of the political and its dangers.

Of course, readers of Heidegger's text might also hear the term *Aufklärung* less with an ear to the idiom and more to its role in his critique of modern "subjectism." In that case, use of the term might be taken to augur ill for a thematic disclosure of anything truly essential. In this respect, the term *öffentlich* is even less ambiguous. Heidegger's early account of the essential "leveling down" that constitutes publicness (*Öffentlichkeit*),¹⁴ should one make immediately skeptical of his intention to "go public" in this way. In this regard, one is reminded of some recent remarks by George Steiner.

Journalistic presentation generates a temporality of equivalent instantaneity. All things are more or less of equal import; all are only daily. Correspondingly, the content, the possible significance of the material which journalism communicates, is "remaindered" the day after. The journalistic vision sharpens to the point of maximum impact in every event, every individual and social configuration; but the honing is uniform. Political enormity and the circus, the leaps of science and those of the athlete, apocalypse and indigestion, are given the same edge. Paradoxically, this monotone of graphic urgency anesthetizes.¹⁵ In Heidegger's vocabulary, such journalistic anesthetization would be the opposite of genuine understanding, whether authentic or inauthentic (SZ, 146). When it comes to *self*-disclosure, moreover, there cannot be a "genuine inauthenticity." But as soon as the journalistic interview would move beyond the clarification of objectivity decidable "facts" (*Tatsachen*) to the question, who is Martin Heidegger, it would transgress its own essential meaning and role.

Of course, in all of this Heidegger might well have been more naive and artless than the preceding conjectures presume. He may simply have intended by means of the interview to contribute in a straightforward way to the public clarification of his case in terms that the public would readily acknowledge and accept, a motive which *Der Spiegel* might honestly have shared. By that

criterion, however, the interview was arguably not very successful, the interview being far from dogged, perhaps, after all, not wanting to appear vis-à-vis Heidegger *too* openly journalistic, gossipy, or accusatory. In any case, that deference, together with the express intention to raise questions in “a larger context” than simply that of the shady “incidents in [Heidegger’s] life,” arguably served an additional though contemporary purpose, a purpose that may indeed have been held by an “artful” Heidegger at a different level. It may have well been Heidegger’s intent to challenge, if only implicitly by the course of the discussion itself, the essential and final significance of any such public clarification of his case judged by public standards. In this latter regard, Heidegger might even have banked on *Der Spiegel* to render his case of public interest, and thereby to set it up as something soon to be relegated with all cultural matters to the ranks of the indifferent and boring, and to bank on this for the sake, ultimately, of the singular task of his thinking.¹⁶ Yet, because of the leveling-down of publicness, it is precisely a *publically* effective distinction between the case and the task of thinking that would not be sustained. Knowing this, Heidegger might have gambled that to go public in this way would indeed consign both the case and the thinking indifferently to *public* oblivion, in hope that perhaps the thinking itself would here and there be preserved by those who still care to think about how it stands with Being as a “still stored-up past [*noch aufgespartes Gewesenes*],”¹⁷ a “heritage” to be resolutely taken over in our essential building-dwelling-thinking. Be that as it may, the alacrity with which *Der Spiegel* published the interview (i.e., at the very first opportunity, a scant five days after Heidegger’s death) adds to the impression that the case itself is on a par, for example, with the latest dirt on the “O.J. trial” (all of which being destined to be forgotten virtually as it is told in the ever-constant flow of new information, as are the “hot” stories themselves supplanted in the *je mehr desto besser* lust for new titillations and *divertissements*).

Seen in this way, the manifest irony that Heidegger’s case is situated as the feature article in the *Kultur* section of the magazine loses some of its force. Heidegger warns against the contemporary transformation of all creative activities and processes into the production and consumption of cultural values, a transformation in the “service of humanity’s making itself secure as *subiectum*,” establishing itself at the very center of all being by representing the whole world as objects disposed and deployed in its own image.¹⁸ From such a stand, we effectively level all measures of worth into whatever we happen to posit at the time, and so impoverish all such measures into matters of convenience and curiosity. That the Heidegger case became a matter for *Der Spiegel*’s weekly survey of culture exemplifies this very process.

III

Whatever one might make of the preceding ruminations, they exhibit no obvious connection with the theme of the monstrous. For that one ought to read the interview from an ostensibly different angle. As the lead article in the *Kultur* section of the magazine, the Heidegger interview shares that space with a companion-piece, a “progress report” on a US research team who, “with the

greatest outlay of technology," is seeking once and for all "to establish the truth about the 'Loch Ness' monster" (SI, 5). Now, the arrangement of the cover for this issue of *Der Spiegel* has always been for me a source of some wry amusement – the black and white photograph of a despondent, fair-haired, dark-eyed youngster, head in hands, tightly enframed by two precariously stacked towers of books, under a black boldface sans-serif headline, *Schul/Angst*, the cover-story title taking up as much space as the photo of the boy, yet overwhelming him, with the title, the left tower of books and the word *Angst* to a black-type-on-yellow diagonal ribbon across the bottom left corner of the cover (as if it were a seal to be broken, should one want to pursue the magazine's contents), bearing the text, "Spiegel-Gespräch mit/Martin Heidegger/Der Philosoph und das Dritte Reich," the name "Martin Heidegger" also being in boldface, connecting it with the cover-story title (offering perhaps, on the one hand, a tangential reminder of the perennial danger of the philosopher corrupting the youth, and on the other a possible warning to those who might hitherto have derived symbolic capital from being a *Heidegger-Schüler*, as well as questions about what images this particular *Spiegel* reflects). Yet, beyond this ironic layout, to which initially I had not given much thought, the juxtaposition of Heidegger and Nessie under the rubric of *Kultur* came one day as a small epiphany. On the assumption that a news magazine of *Der Spiegel's* prominence does not make layout decisions adventitiously,¹⁹ I wondered: "Were, from a cultural perspective, the case of Heidegger and the case of Nessie to be regarded as indifferently the same, the former taking prominence only because it was fresher and perhaps more mysterious? Was, then, seeking out and exposing allegedly existent monsters in their deeply hidden lairs, the cultural theme for that week? If so, would success in the search and exposure in either instance have increased or decreased the cultural value associated with the name 'Nessie' or 'Heidegger'?" At first, such questions only teased me; yet with time they grow more vexing.

If the cultural theme was sighting the monstrous, few would deny that in his deference the interviewer did little directly to expose his quarry. It is perhaps a different story, if one reads the interview in the larger context:

(1) Along with the piece on the Loch Ness monster, the interview appears in the *Kultur* section together with shorter items providing the latest information on "Film," "Television," "Space Travel," and "Tourism," as well as the obligatory "Best-Sellers" list. Though it is unlikely that this juxtaposition too enjoyed Heidegger's *imprimatur* (we know, for example, that the selection of graphics and captions did not) (SI, 235), it ought not to surprise him. For "what one calls culture," Heidegger had once observed,

theater, art, film, and radio, as well as literature and philosophy, and even faith and religion, all of this everywhere hobbles around behind what the configuration of the atomic era accords to our age. One could report on all sorts of things, a business which today the "illustrating newspapers" handle extremely skillfully and obligingly. Of course, "information" like this is also just a sign of the times. The non-Germanic word "information" speaks more clearly here insofar as it means, on the one hand, the instant

news and reporting that, on the other hand and at the same time, have taken over the ceaseless molding (forming) of the reader and listener.²⁰

In this case, dissemination of the latest news was enlivened by the deliberate delay – Heidegger’s postwar silence and his demand to withhold publication of the interview until after his death. Whatever its content, the information from the interview amounted to the latest news, since it would be coming from the suspect himself, presumably under cross-examination by a practiced interrogator. The publication restriction also added to the titillation, since it lent *prima facie* credence to the suspicion that indeed there was something hidden, and so perhaps truly a monster to be exposed.

(2) In keeping with *Der Spiegel*’s regular format, the text of the interview is set in a narrow three-column grid, broken throughout by boldface interior blurbs captioning iconic illustrations and photo-clichés. The format serves the essential purpose of *Der Spiegel*. For “if a magazine wants to create a mood of urgency, narrow . . . columns are best. Narrow columns . . . say ‘News!’ Wider columns suggest dignity and stability.”²¹ Likewise, the boldface blurbs serve to inform us quickly how to organize our reading and what especially to glean from it (a contemporary necessity, if the usual venues for such reading are the doctor’s waiting room, the airport lounge, the bathroom, i.e., contexts where one will soon be called on to other things or has other pressing preoccupations). The photos and illustrations help to concretize, personalize, and define the discussion (we can now know, e.g., who Kant, Marx, Nietzsche, or Hegel is from a photo; or that the “reign of enframing” is to be readily understood in terms of space-technology; or that “the *Heimat* of humanity” is now equivalent to “American astronauts on the moon”), as well as serving to set the relevant scene (e.g., with photos of a Nazi book-burning, one of “NS students,” another of “NS Professors,” the latter having a convenient “x” to pick Heidegger out from the crowd).

(3) To assist the reader further, the editors excerpt one of Heidegger’s remarks (“only a god can save us”) to serve as a convenient and authoritative title. The resolute antivoluntarism of Heidegger’s thinking in the context of the hegemony of the technological will-to-power would seem to warrant the choice. But given the concern which occasions the interview, and juxtaposed with a short and unilluminating exchange on Heidegger’s most infamous pronouncement from 1933 that “the *Führer* himself and alone *is* the present and future German reality and its law,” it is somewhat more suspicious (*SI*, 198).

(4) The text of the interview is framed, antecedently, by a regularly featured one-page column on the German “scene,” and subsequently by a two-page spread advertisement for *Westdeutsche Landesbank*. The theme of this advertisement is that, just as experienced captains follow their pilots, so too ought captains of industry to follow the financial guidance of the bank. The photo is a wide-angle shot of an airport tarmac, focusing upon a dome-lighted service van with the words in English “Follow Me” illuminated across the back, this photo paralleling Digne Meller Marcovicz’s now-famous shot on the previous page, showing from the back Heidegger and Augstein, walking along the mountain path that passes Heidegger’s *Hütte*, with the caption from Heidegger’s closing

words, “to build a narrow footpath as a passageway [*Schmale Stege eines Übergang bauen*].” This juxtaposition and the sense of the caption are made pointed both by the evident frailty of Heidegger in the shot, head bowed, and steadied on Augstein’s arm, and by the evident impression that the two of them are not really walking anywhere in particular. The Marcovicz photo is also juxtaposed, whimsically, with a full-page advertisement on the preceding, adjacent page, showing a plump, innocent-looking bunny (as bunnies are wont to look) sitting on a weigh-scale. The bunny too, one assumes, is destined to an *Übergang* – from the scale to the pot to the platter – the efficiency of this “electronic” scale (“just put on and read-off”) out-weighing all of the rabbit’s iconographic associations, including the early Christian image of *ardua facilius* as symbolic of the ascent to Christ.

(5) Interspersed with the interview are a number of full- and two-page spread advertisements, including an oil company promotion promising “Energy. And new Ideas,” associated iconically with white-water kayaking; an announcement for a new coupé with the banner copy, “Presenting [*Vorstellung*] a new Ideal”; an advertisement for a French cheese-spread, splitting a sentence in which the interviewer is challenging Heidegger’s apparent counsel (to be read thereby as both foreign and *käsig*?) that we must “only wait”; advertisements extolling the virtues of Lufthansa to the first-time flyer, one for Niemeyer pipes and tobacco (presumably, no relation to Heidegger’s erstwhile publisher), others for bottled beer, for all-weather, non-slip tires, for inter-city high-speed rail, and (as mentioned above) one for an “utterly versatile electronic weigh-scale” that not only “reduces weighing to the mere putting-on and reading-off,” but also is “so precise that it will often pay for itself in a year.” One full-page advertisement (the only one explicitly marked *Anzeige*, as if there might be some doubt) offers commemorative cassettes for the jazz great Django Reinhardt (whose accompanying photo bears in the eyes and mustache at least a superficial resemblance to certain shots of the young Heidegger), and quotes unabashedly in 30-point copy a reviewer’s judgment that Django was “a God” (not just the *Lautenspiel Gottes*, nor a “mortal” *Fubrer*, but a veritable “divinity”), the words *ein Gott* being set out from the rest of the banner-copy on a single line directly above the photo.

(6) Juxtaposed to the text at two crucial points are additional black-and-white half-column advertisements, similar to the interior captioned graphics, promoting *crisenfest* investment certificates, an escape vacation to the Bahamas, and two brands of pills *für Männer* (“Sexanorma” and “Libodo-6”) to ensure sexual prowess in an ever stressful world (though not unusual for *Der Spiegel*, the crudity of these latter ads is exceeded nowhere else in that issue). Money, sex, philosophy, tropical escapes are here all graphically one.

(7) In the table of contents, the Heidegger interview is announced in positive terms – “Heidegger: a clarification of my case” – creating the expectation that this is just what we get. In contrast, the piece on Nessie is captioned more tentatively – “Scientists seek ‘Nessie’ – a survivor from a prehistory or merely a pile of driftwood?” The interior titling follows the same pattern. The Heidegger interview is bannered declaratively – “Only a God can save us”; the Nessie piece interrogatively: its title “Fins from a Remote Prehistory?” posed as

a question to caption one of the many shots of an alleged plesiosaur-like Nessie. By the end of the article, the question of Nessie is not definitively answered, though since real scientists with high-tech equipment are hard on the job, it is clearly just a matter of time. Conversely, in the case of Heidegger, the interview raises more questions than it answers, and perhaps even raises doubts for this week about which of the two is the true *Überbleibsel aus grauer Vorzeit*.

To be sure, the structure of this layout, and with it the sort of ready juxtaposition of philosophy, the unexplained, sex, money, tropical escapes, all side by side in the domain of culture, simply follows *Der Spiegel's* standard format, a format which pertains to the kind of thing this magazine *is*. In that light, the specific use to which this format is put vis-à-vis the Heidegger interview might at a stretch be seen as charming self-deprecation on the part of the editors, a tacit acknowledgment that they too do not escape Heidegger's critique of culture. Yet, more plausibly, indeed inevitably, it serves to situate Heidegger in a particular way. Under the guise of clarifying the case, it blends both the case and the thought into a pastiche of cultural images, thereby diffusing any distinctive importance that *either* might otherwise be accorded.

IV

Readers of *Die Frage nach der Technik* will recall that Heidegger too considers the monstrous. In the attempt to uncover the peculiar mode of revealing that is the essence of modern *Technik*, he invokes the example of a hydro-electric plant damming the Rhine River. "The river is dammed up into the power plant," he writes, such that "what the river now is, namely, a water power supplier, derives out of the essence of the power plant" (VA, 23). Heidegger comments further: "In order that we may even remotely consider the monstrousness [*das Ungebeurere*] that reigns here, let us ponder for a moment the contrast that speaks out of the two titles, 'The Rhine' as dammed up into the *power-work*, and 'The Rhine' as uttered out of the *art-work*, in Holderlin's hymn by that name" (VA, 23). To avoid precipitous judgments (e.g., that this contrast, like Heidegger's more famous meditation on one of Van Gogh's paintings of shoes, evinces a windmills-along-the-Rhine romanticism, a nostalgia for an idealized pastoral life that has never really existed) we need to be clear about what is being sighted here. First, the contrast is not directly between an actual past and a present form of life, but between two "works," the *Kraftwerk* that is the hydro-plant and the *Kunstwerk* that is the poem. Second, the contrast is specifically for the sake of attending to the "monstrousness" that "reigns in" (*waltet*) the damming up of the river into the power plant. We can make proper sense of these points if we keep track of the main turns taken in Heidegger's essay — on the one hand, the turn from the essence of *Technik* as what *Technik* is, to essence of *Technik* as the disclosive domain within which instrumentality belongs, and thence to the essence of modern *Technik* as enframing, and on the other hand the coincident turns from the abstract and universally correct instrumental/anthropological definition of what *Technik* is, to the truth of the essence of *Technik* as a mode of revealing, to the truth of the essence of modern *Technik* as the revealing that is "enframing." Considered in these terms, what is being

contrasted by Heidegger are not two beings at hand per se, but what *speaks out of two different works*, one a work of *Kraft* and the other a work of *Kunst*. What is in contention then are not two ontic projects, the modern power plant and some alternative, archaic technology, but two domains (*Bereich*, *Wesensgestalten*) that govern and make possible what appears within them. The two works are essentially different, not simply because one is an instrument, the other a poem, but because of the difference in their origins and what those origins bespeak and make possible.

What speaks out of the *Kraftwerk* at its origin, as in Heidegger's vocabulary the term *Kraft* itself suggests, is the essence of modern *Technik*. It is that essence which makes possible the power plant as such, and conversely is that which the power plant itself centers and reveals. By now, the path of questioning along which Heidegger charts the domain of technology's essence has been so much retraced in the secondary literature that its specific turns need not be reiterated here. It suffices to recall a few key turns. All instrumentality, Heidegger argues, and hence all activity that posits ends and procures means, presupposes essentially a prior disclosure of beings, the opening-up of a realm of truth within which beings are revealed in a characteristic way, so disclosed that with respect to them ends can be determined, means procured and utilized, and production effected. He does not then distinguish between modern and ancient technology in terms of evident differences in the types of instruments and instrumental procedures each utilizes. Rather, insofar as Heidegger characterizes human being essentially in terms of its basic mutuality (*Zusammengehörigkeit*) with the essence of truth, he traces the technological *facere* in each case back to the mode of truth which first makes instrumentality possible. "It is as revealing, and not as manufacturing, that *techne* is bringing-forth" (VA, 21). The essence of modern technology lies in one particular mode of such truth: namely, in the fundamental orientation through which first and foremost all reality, whether human or nonhuman, animate or inanimate, is without limit summoned forth as a resource on hand for the most expedient ordering, manipulation, exploitation, and control. As a specific mode of truth, "the revealing which rules throughout modern technology has the character of setting-upon in the sense of a challenging forth" (VA, 24). As such, it casts everything in the realm of our experience in advance in its own image, such that everything is disclosed essentially as something to be categorized, extorted, standardized, manipulated, controlled, and thus put at our disposal, having in turn no other effective reality than what this disclosure makes accessible. Yet precisely in disclosing all reality in this way, this challenging-forth conceals its own essence as *a* mode of truth that grants *a* specific characteristic disclosure of things, as if to the contrary all reality were in and of itself purely an ordered and orderable resource at our disposal, including the very disposition and authority to order per se. It is this orientation above all, Heidegger claims, that gives sense to the whole of contemporary experience, such that our epoch can truly be called "technological." Admittedly, not everything in our world is determined absolutely as an instance of this challenging disclosure; yet everything comes to be and has its meaning only in relation to this outlook. "Here and there" possibilities reducible to the essence of modern technology do continue to exist,

but as such they are “not the effective working principle of what is presently going on.”²² Nonetheless it is in just such “marginalities” [*Geringen*] that we find the loci for a “fostering of the saving power” that will prepare the space to move us beyond the mono-dimensional reign of the essence of modern technology.

It is thus not the power plant per se that Heidegger deems “truly” monstrous, but the essence of modern technology from which the power plant derives. It may indeed be “correct” to deem the power plant monstrous in virtue, for example, of the way in which physically it dominates the landscape, disrupts the natural flow of the river and our movement on and around it, offends the local canons of aesthetic taste and propriety. In general, then, the monstrous in this scene amounts to something which is starkly manifest and stands forth precisely because it is “out of order” in one way or another, often its being out of order portending an occult power. For the very same reason, the monstrous is something awful – at once both repellent and unsettling, and yet fascinating, perhaps even exhilarating. All this holds as an abstract and universally correct account of what the monstrous is. It does not disclose the monstrous in its essential truth, nor then how peculiarly the monstrous comes to be in our time.

In this regard, it is useful to recall Heidegger’s remarks about the danger of technology. “What is dangerous,” he claims, “is not *Technik*. There is no demonry of *Technik*, but rather there is the mystery of its essence” (W, 86). Though it always remains correct and prudent to calculate and obviate the material threats to life and limb posed by this or that instrumental use, this in itself does not confront the truth about what is currently dangerous. Keeping to his ontological purpose, Heidegger characterizes danger as such in terms of the destining of revealing, that is, in terms of the coming to pass of those “seldom and simple decisions” arising out of the original essence of truth and constituting the history of Being (VA, 34). The destining is danger as such precisely in its “mystery,” that is, in the opening of an interpretive horizon which gives characteristic significance to phenomena as a part of a particular world of meaning; not only is the englobing illuminations of beings as such and as a whole concealed in favor of particular beings disclosed (as a figure by its distracting assertiveness conceals the very *fond* which grounds its standing out as a figure in the first place), but this process of concealing is *itself* concealed. This is the original essence of danger in a twofold sense. First, insofar as human being is essentially the locus and medium for the disclosure of Being, the mystery is a concealment of our very essence. Second, it is in terms of this concealing of concealment that any phenomena can stand out ontically as dangerous or not. This “destining of revealing,” Heidegger claims, “is as such, in every one of its modes, and therefore necessarily, *danger*” (VA, 34). What further marks the essence of modern *Technik* is the extremity of danger. “Where enframing reigns, danger is the highest sense,” precisely because under the sway of this mode of truth of human being as the orderer of all beings, including ourselves as resource, “nowhere any longer in truth encounter ourselves, i.e., our essence” (VA, 36). Since danger belongs essentially to every mode of *revealing*, this condition is never absolute or complete. “The world’s darkening

never reaches the light of Being.”²³ Moreover, it is precisely in the extremity of this danger that the essence of truth itself becomes radically questionable, and the possibility of a transformation beyond the occlusive hegemony of technological truth may be vouchsafed.

In this configuration, however, another sort of *inversion maligné* can be seen. Where the extreme most danger holds sway, danger as a rule and for the most part is concealed, as if to disappear. This occurs when all dangers are cast simply as ontic, posed as something that can in principle be calculated in advance and so obviated, a strategy assisted nowadays by the super-conductor.

A parallel case may be made for the monstrous. “What is a monster?” asks Abel Tiffauges in Michael Tournier’s *Le Roi des Aulnes*. “Etymology already has in store a somewhat frightening surprise: *monstre* comes from *montrer*, ‘to show.’ A monster is something which is shown, pointed out, exhibited at fairs, and so on. And the more monstrous a creature is, the more it is to be exhibited.” The monstrous in this sense is a freak of nature, as a rule inviable or unproductive, “as if nature wished to cut short an experiment it judged *deraisnable*.”²⁴

But here we are stopped short, not so much by the turn to etymology per se, which has at least the ostensive authority of Heideggerian precedent, but by the odd, even *deraisnable*, appearance of *this* etymology in *this* place. When Heidegger speaks of the monstrousness of the essence of modern *Technik*, it is not the Latinate but the Germanic etymon that is in play. To invoke the former as if to illuminate the latter would thus seem capricious and unreasonable. Were we also to take to heart Heidegger’s explicit assertion of an “inner relationship [*Verwandschaft*] of the German language with the language of the Greeks and their thinking,” (*SI*, 217) together with his parallel contention that there is a “rootlessness of Western thought” that “begins” with the “translation” of Greek terms and experience into Roman terms and thought, then the appearance of unreasonable is redoubled (*H*, 13). To cite a Latin etymology to elucidate the monstrous in Heidegger would thus seem to have its own monstrous aspect.

However, there is at least one Heideggerian precedent for citing an etymology of this sort. When it comes to the interpretation of *Dasein* as “care” (an interpretation in which it is the “business” of philosophy “to preserve the force of the elemental words in which *Dasein* expresses itself [*sich . . . ausspricht*]”), Heidegger ignores the Indo-European root of the Germanic *Sorge*, with its infelicitous connotation of “being sick” and its connection to the English “sorrow,” in favor of the Latin *cura*. To Heidegger, the Latin term is more felicitous, since he finds it in a “double sense” that expresses the twofold structure of our Being as “thrown projection.” He also finds an explicit historical statement (*Aussage*) in which “the self-interpretation of *Dasein* as ‘care’ is set down” and which “brings into view in advance the kind of Being that rules throughout our *temporal sojourn in the world*” (*SZ*, 197–9; 220). If, then, the Latin *cura* counts among the “most elemental words” of *Dasein*’s self-expression, so too perhaps does the Latinate “monster.”

But it is one thing to grant that the Latin etymology of “monster” *may* have a fundamental disclosive force; it is quite another to cite Tournier’s “sinister”

writer to demonstrate that possibility. This strategy is prodigiously suspect. The problem here is not that we cite a novel instead of a lexicon; for the order of authority in such matters lies in just that direction. Rather it is that *Le Roi des Aulnes* is arguably a novel in which "everything that happens . . . is the result of misreadings, misinterpretations," and in which philology is decidedly more culprit than cure.²⁵ Without apparent warrant or reason, we admit into our discussion from left field, as it were, the whole *problématique* of Tournier's text, and thereby threaten to disrupt whatever semblance of order that discussion may have enjoyed thus far. And we do this by means of etymology as discerned specifically in a novel in which the very authority of etymology is suspect. Furthermore, the particular etymology in question is received from the hand of the sinister writer, Tiffauges, a reputed and self-avowed ogre, who chooses to understand himself in terms of it. Yet "there is no better way to portray systematic, logical madness [*la folie raisonneuse et systematique*]," Tournier warns us (not, perhaps, without some self-directed irony), "than to allow one's characters to speak for themselves."²⁶ Tiffauges accepts his monstrosity as given and offers the etymological self-explanation unquestioningly as both genuine and apposite. The authority for the explanation is what "etymology [itself] already has in store [*l'etymologie réserve déjà*]" (RA, 14), the a priori *déjà* implying a transcendental force, which Tiffauges simply accepts. In the course of the novel, however, he proves himself to be the slave and not the master of such "citations." Yet, he does so not merely in the contingent and particular sense that he gets defined by arbitrary semiosis, and is for the most of the novel a dupe of the "diabolic" power of signs to "take over" the things themselves (RA, 405–7). He is also enslaved in the universal "dialectical" sense that all mastery, excepting self-mastery, makes one dependent upon the "other" that one presumes to rule. Yet in this case the "other" is the "sign" and hence something actual only in its being read, the enslavement being therefore a self-enslavement to a semiotic fetish.

When it comes to etymological matters, Tiffauges would thus seem to be a dubious judge and authority. Of course, we might set aside our suspicions about its provenance and, on the grounds that it both seems and sounds quite plausible, take Tiffauges's etymology of *monstre* to be genuine. Yet to do so would be to take it as Tiffauges himself does, and that prospect ought to give pause. For Tiffauges's world is one in which effective distinctions between genuine philology and spurious semiotic invention, between the vicissitudes of signification and a natural order of things, seem to have collapsed, with the result that Tiffauges himself, thoroughly sign-besotted in believing that "everything is sign," is a deceived pawn of arbitrary semiosis. He does recognize that "an institution rarely survives without the consent and even the positive will of the majority" (RA, 64) and that his own ontological distinctiveness and self-worth is premised on the hegemony of signs. He thus wills to interpret signs so as to endow himself with a "magic nature . . . which permits the course of things to be bent in the direction [*sens*] of his own history" (RA, 13). But this endowment and permission are a self-deception, such that the beginning conceit which has Tiffauges writing his own life in his own voice must give way to Tiffauges as a character in the anonymity of a third-person text. Accordingly,

for Tiffauges to be redeemed (if redemption in a world exclusively of sign makes sense) something other than merely a reconfiguration of signs is needed. It requires as well that Tiffauges come to the very limit of signs and so begin to see what is going on (ironically at the point when, through another arbitrary semiotic variation, he is named "Triefauge"). Yet, for this to happen, Tiffauges must "listen with all his ears, with all his being" (RA, 553) to the "unknown" immediate voice of the "other" (i.e., the child Ephraim, whose name is eponymous of Israel, who speaks a language Nazi philology arbitrarily bans and whose people the Nazis are committed to expunging) and to respond to this other in kind, that is, in immediacy. Only thus can the other be truly acknowledged and Tiffauges truly recognize himself, can signs recover a genuinely "symbolic" meaning, and (as philosophers might put it) can the difference of sense (*Sinn*) and reference (*Bedeutung*) become truly questionable.

Now, whatever one might say of Tiffauges's supposed monstrousness, he proves by conventional standards to be a slipshod philologist. Standard sources hold that *monstre* is taken from the Latin *monstrum* (literally, *mone-strum*, "that which serves as a warning, reminder, or instruction"), a *monstrum* being a portent, omen, or directive from the gods through an event contrary to nature.²⁷ But the term *monstrum* does not derive directly from *monstrare*, as Tiffauges's reference to *montrer* would suggest. Instead, it comes from *monere*, meaning variously "to warn" (hence *la admonestation/admonition*), "to remind" (hence *le monument*), "to instruct" (hence *la remontrance*), and "to advise" (hence *moniteur/trice*). Nonetheless, Tiffauges's etymology is not wholly spurious. The verb *monstrare* is a derivation from *monstrum*; hence *monstre* and *montrer* do have an etymological connection. But to claim, as Tiffauges does, that *monstre* comes from *montrer* is in a sense to get it backwards. On the one hand, this puts the ogre, Tiffauges, in good company. When it comes to *un monstre*, Derrida too,²⁸ following an Heideggerian gesture, chooses to privilege the connection with *montrer* and so to show a common *sens* in the French idiom among the terms *une monstre*, *la monstre*, *une montre*, with *montrer* and its variant *monstrer* (both from *monstrare*). On the other hand, it may serve as a warning that when it comes to the "monstrous" we ought especially to be on guard. In any case, what Tiffauges's etymology omits is the original religious sense of *monstre/monstrum*, that a monster is a divine sign to be deciphered. Accordingly, it suppresses the fact that etymologically the verb *monstrare* had an original religious sense which was lost as the term passed into common usage, and it leaves unexplained how, simply from *montrer* the contemporary lexical meaning of *monstre* could ever have been derived. Were one to follow the direction suggested by Tiffauges's explicit etymology, a *monstre/monstrum* would have no divine reference or portent but would be constituted as such only by a passing semiotic deviation within a system of signs (e.g., Tiffauges – Tiefauge – Triefauge; mon[s]trer – le monstre – la monstre – la montre). Even those seeming monsters which to the semiotically unsophisticated appear to be truly contrary to nature, in being "shown, pointed out, exhibited at fairs" would have their "monitory" power dissipated and be given in their unreasonable appearance a manageable sense. Any portentous threat to order is thereby reduced to the sterility of a curiosity,

a mere instance of a type in a circus of odd significations. "Thus the more a being is monstrous, the more it should be exhibited."²⁹

With these etymological moves, Tiffauges effectively elides (or is the victim of an elision already in play) any difference between the mere appearance of something ostensibly out-of-order and what in being that appearance might effectively portend. In the process, he inverts the original sense of the power of the monstrous as being both derivative and monitory. "The monster [*to teras*]," Aristotle claims, "is actually a kind of deformity [*anaperia*]" (*HG*, 420ff). It is thus unproductive, since as a deformity, it is not in itself a nature with an intrinsic power to act according to its nature (*kata physin*) but exists only as a defect and deficiency in the natural order of beings, able to act only parasitically *through* that order. Thus (in the terms made canonical by St. Augustine), a monster is a "privation" and as such comes to be in virtue of the lack of some good that should be in a thing, its "*de-raison*" and its power to act in nature being dependent upon the prior *raison* and power of nature itself upon which it preys. Understood in these terms, the monstrous in nature would have only an accidental cause. Accordingly, when this metaphysics is cast in theological terms, the appearance of the monstrous in nature has ultimately to be traced to the good belonging to the order of grace. The monstrous in nature is thus to be read as a divine omen to the fallen but free creatures that things are not as they ought to be.

In Tiffauges's world too "monsters do not reproduce." Yet this cannot be because they exist as privations in the order of nature itself. For Tiffauges's world *is* a world of *signs*, outside which there is no place for either natural reproduction or sterility, all reproduction and sterility having to be, so to speak, a matter of semiosis. In such a world, a monster *is* only a semiotic deviation, an apparent failure to be like other signs ("*être semblable à ses semblables*") [*RA*, 14]. As a monster, Tiffauges is what he is in virtue of signs and their interpretation: for example, of the fact that Rachel ("the feminine being in [his] personal universe" [i.e., another sign] whose name comes not only from a foreign tradition but also as a veiled reminder to look behind the veil) calls him an "ogre" and how (dubiously) he chooses to interpret that; of his interpretation of an accidentally discovered and seemingly inexplicable facility to write with his left hand; of the coincidence that a hope for liberation through fire becomes an incendiary reality (*RA*, 14); of the vagaries and whims of how he is designated by the Nazis. Likewise, his presumed "magic nature" as a monster is also semiotic. But this too has its ambiguity, if not *inversion maligné*. For although Tiffauges has his monstrous *being* as a deviate sign, in a world where everything is sign his presumed monstrous *power* to direct "the course of things" requires that the deviation become the norm. In the event, the sign loses its monstrousness as a sign, and hence its monstrous being. "I am sure that I only live at all," Tiffauges remarks with unwitting irony, "through a misunderstanding, because the mass of my fellow creatures don't know that I am there" (*RA*, 101). Yet this "misunderstanding" may well mark Tiffauges's true monstrousness in the traditional sense.

Tiffauges's etymology also suppresses another line of thought. Standard lexica show that it is *monstrance* (via *monstrantia*) that derives directly from

monstrare (and not *monstre*, as Tiffauges has it). In contemporary French, however, the term *la monstration* has currency only in dialect, the standard term being *le ostensor* (RA, 14). Thus, if Tournier intends to insinuate that the ostensive monster Tiffauges might well be in truth a vessel for the body of the incarnate God who bears our sins, it would remain for ears otherwise attuned than to standard French to get the etymological hint.

Having invoked Tournier without warning, we now seem to have strayed rather far from the specific theme of *Heidegger* and the monstrous. Yet we need not reinvoke Heidegger with the same ostensive abruptness to get us back on track. It was the story of Tiffauges, metaphorically would-be St. Christopher, gradually appropriated to the Nazi project, who thereby unwittingly becomes the less than euphoric "Ogre of Kaltenborn," a stealer of children, that was the external occasion, before the epiphany of Heidegger/Nessie, for my reading of *Der Spiegel's* "Heidegger" as the "Ogre of MeBkirch," implicated by choice in National Socialism, ready at hand to bear a new "god" to "save us," and connected semiotically by the issue's cover to an imminent pedagogical threat that is destroying the youth. Chronology alone would rule out that Tournier was drawing upon the published *Spiegel* interview; as for the reverse, we may never know. Yet that Tournier intends to link Heidegger and Tiffauges is evidenced by his wicked parody of what is perhaps the most famous of Heideggerian figures.

Heidegger restores the truth of art through a poetic description of a Van Gogh painting of shoes. Tiffauges (whose "hands love shoes" and "in truth cannot really get over not being feet") picks up an actual pair of discarded, worn-out boots from a trash-can (though with the "ensnaring laces" that so troubled Derrida's "polylogue voices" already having been retrieved or lost) (*H*, 22ff). For Heidegger's uterine image of the "dark opening" from which (as midwife?) he brings forth Being as the world of the peasant woman, Tournier substitutes the image of "humiliated" shoes as two hanged faces, whose "tongues lolled . . . and empty eyelets stared." With this substitution, he underscores a fundamental difference. For the sake of the truth of art and Being, Heidegger retrieves the "poetry" from a prosaic artifact. He does so, however, not from "actual pieces" that "everyone knows [*kennst*]" and that in the end, "broken, ragged, eaten away with sweat" (RA, 78–80)³⁰ will be tossed in the trash, but from a "pictorial representation" of such equipment, "a well-known [*bekanntes*] painting by Van Gogh," that as such is already on hand as a valuable cultural artifact. With respect to the one pair, even the power of Tiffauges's shoe fetish is not enough to restore the actual worn-out shoes to their actual prosaic use, and so with "a distinct pang," he "put[s] them back on the heap of rubbish." With respect to the other (and here the question, "Is it really [*bien*] a pair?" (RA, 79) comes too late) the philosopher's relation to the "humble" and "mundane" is mediated essentially by what in his description the artwork is supposed to let us "know [*wissen*]" : namely, "what the shoe [*das Schuhzeug*] is in truth" (*LVP*, 312). Yet, for all its ontological originalness, this truth is essentially different from that other mundane truth, the one which the peasant woman herself realizes, not as a thinker who for the sake of the truth of art and Being is concerned with *das Schuhzeug* or *die Bauernschuhe* as such, but as an

actual laborer who wears a particular pair of shoes in the course of making a living – the truth that someday, all-too-soon, these shoes will inevitably be worn-out beyond repair and if they are to be replaced (for not every worker in the fields can afford to be shod) the resources will have to be found and sacrifices made. From out of the most extreme forgetting of Being, that is the essence of modern *Technik*, Heidegger seeks to recall the truth of Being, and thereby the ontic-ontological bifurcation of the essence of truth that the metaphysical tradition has progressively elided in favor of beings and their absolute manipulation. Yet what Tournier seems to play upon in *Le Roi des Aulnes* is an *inversion maligné* in this project, whereby instead of a genuine difference in which *Gelassenheit zu den Dingen* is an essential dimension of the need to recall the truth of Being itself and to respond to what our actual situation demands, all truth is reduced to a play of signs such that ontic truth, including the ontic actuality of self and other, has no voice and gets no hearing. Without presuming to offer a thorough interpretation of *Le Roi des Aulnes* along these Heideggerian lines, enough of Tournier's play with Heideggerian themes can be adduced to show the monstrous for what it is.

"Only a being [*Wesen*] that speaks, that is, thinks, can have the hand, and in its handiness can complete works of the hand [*in der Handhabung Werke der Hand vollbringt*] . . . And only when humans speak do they think . . . All work of the hand rests upon thinking. Therefore thinking itself is the simplest and for that reason the most difficult handiwork of man" (*H*, 24). So Heidegger declares and more. "The hand's gesticulations [*Gebärde*] run everywhere through language . . . and every movement [*Bewegung*] of the hand in every one of its works carries itself [*trägt sich*] through and bears itself [*gebärdet*] in the element of thinking." But "'In what way does language occur as language?' We answer: *Language speaks*" (*HD*, 51). Thus Heidegger traces an essential circle that has no outside. Meditation of the hand leads us to thinking; on thinking, to language; on language, to the hand. Now, it is in virtue of a mundane accident depriving him of the use of his right hand that Tiffauges becomes a "sinister" writer devoted to the "sole purpose of unburdening his heart and proclaiming the truth," a writing "deformed by all the gaucheries of genius."³¹ He easily interprets the "sudden revelation" of his "sinister" ability as a true sign of his "magic nature." The writing which he then undertakes has the purpose of recording what it "will be the essential function of the future to demonstrate, or more precisely, to illustrate," (since in this total world of signs, all demonstration with respect to things is effectively only the illustration of certain signal relations as opposed to others): namely, the "seriousness" of the "secret collusion" between "his personal adventures" and "the course of things." (*RA*, 17). As Tiffauges is drawn more deeply into the Nazi project, the story of this truth, seriousness, and collusion is no longer even ostensibly written in his own hand.

"The hand," Derrida reminds us in speaking of Heidegger, "is the monstrous [*monstrosité*], what is proper [*le propre*] to human being as the being of monstration" (*RA*, 75). As such, the hand has a "double *vocation*. I use the word 'vocation', Derrida adds, "to recall that, in its determination [*Bestimmung*], the hand holds on to speaking. This double vacation is . . . : to show or to sign [*zeigen*,

Zeichen] and to give or to give itself" (RA, 15; 13). In a sense, Heidegger himself already indicates this double vocation, yet without naming it. "The hand extends itself and receives its own welcome in the hands of others. The hand holds. The hand carries [*trägt*]. The hand designs and signs [*zeichnet*], presumably because human being is a sign [*Zeichen*]." (HG, 424) The immediate context of these remarks is a meditation on some now familiar lines from a draft of Holderlin's *Mnemosyne*: "We are a sign, pointless [*deutungslos*]/We feel no pain and have almost/Lost our tongue in a foreign land." The wider context allows for a ready "elucidation." Heidegger is expressly concerned that "what is to be thought . . . withdraws itself from us, drawing us along in its withdrawal, whether or not we notice it immediately, or at all" (HG, 5). In his lexicon, what "withdraws itself" is "Being, as it reveals itself in beings" (HD, 51). Thus, as a sign, human being points necessarily to the *Sache* that needs to be thought: namely, the forgotten difference of Being and beings that is concealed in the essential withdrawal of Being itself in favor of the disclosure of beings at hand. Humanity is such a sign essentially as the locus and medium of Being's truth. In its essence, "it stands in the disclosure of beings as the concealing domain where and as Being itself occurs [*west*] in its truth,"³² and is thus the place where "the ontological difference becomes factual" (W, 31). In this constellation, human beings become a "pointless" sign where they are so "insistently" involved with beings themselves that our essential "existent" relation to and of Being is radically occluded. In the event, we are directed explicitly and so exclusively to beings themselves solely for the sake of "technical" manipulation that only unknowingly and negatively, that is, as an unknown lack in us, do we point to the transcendence that is the ground of the ontological difference. In its "monstrative" essence, the so-called "double vocation" of the hand is thus itself twofold. The hand gives and receives, the hand signs and designs, the hand gestures and holds back, in relation to beings within the world; and the hand is the ontically distinctive mark that points to the transcendental mutuality of thinking and language that is our distinctive Being in the world as the "understanding of Being." Furthermore, this mutuality that occurs in us is the ontological basis for all our ontic seizing and letting go, taking truly (*Wahrnehmung*) and mistaking. Yet the more demonstrative we are in resolutely and exclusively setting up and seizing upon beings at hand, the less we are able to heed the essential warning of the "monstrousness" in the essence of modern *Technik*, and thereby to receive what essentially is handed to us to be thought and so to recall the truth of Being itself. Now, Tiffauges too is a pointless sign but in a different, perhaps more monstrous sense. In a world in which "everything is sign," his signal being *is* his difference from other signs, and nothing more. In this configuration, the ontic truth of beings in themselves is not disclosed only within a prior system of signs; it is not effectively disclosed at all. Nor, then, is the system of signs the "*transcendens* pure and simple" that "first makes possible manifestness of beings" (SZ, 38; W, 28), it is itself indifferently the truth of Being and beings. Likewise, then, our own "monstrative" being has no heights or depths, no surfaces or grounds, in short, no ontological difference, and hence no sense other than the manipulation of signs (both subjective and objective genitive) for its own sake. Tiffauges thinks himself a monster by

mistakenly assigning to his being a “sym-bolic” significance in a world where all symbols, as a “glass through which we darkly see,” has been effectively supplanted by a “dia-bolic” manipulation of signs without limit. To break the spell of this diabolic world requires a hearing in virtue of which Tiffauges “sees arising [*s’edifier*] a universe that reflects his own with terrifying [*effrayante*] fidelity and that inverts all the signs” (RA, 553).

The resonance of Heideggerian themes is also to be heard in “the notion of *phoria*,” which Tournier declares, is *Le Roi des Aulnes*’ “real subject. All the mystery and profundity of *phoria*,” he adds, “lies in this ambiguity,” its “terrifying dialectic: to serve and subjugate, to love and kill,” the “avatars” of which have “an universal import [*portée*]” (VP, 125). The echoes here of Hegel – of the master/slave dialectic and *Aufhebung* – are unmistakable. Yet there are also resonances with Heidegger’s text. In *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerk*, for example, the thing is “correctly” but not yet “truly” characterized as the bearer [*Träger*] of its properties; a description of a Van Gogh painting carries the weight of the argument; the peasant woman wears [*trägt*] her shoes, which in turn support her weary tread of the earth. In the essential mutuality of artist and artwork, “neither of the two alone sustains [*trägt*] the other,” but both are born from the poetic “founding” of art itself. Following Derrida’s lead, we cite two further examples.³³ In *Sein und Zeit*, Heidegger claims that “Hearing constitutes the authentic openness of *Dasein* as in hearing the voice of a friend whom every *Dasein* carries with it [*bei sich trägt*].” In the essay *Die Sprache*, Heidegger writes: “Die Innigkeit des Unterschiedes ist das Einigende der *Diaphoria*, des durchtragen Austrags. Der Unter-Schied trägt Welt in ihr Welten, trägt die Dinge in ihr Dingen aus. Also sie austrägend, trägt er sie einander zu” (US, 25). In these passages, the resonance with *Le Roi des Aulnes* is clear. “The ground of the ontological difference,” Heidegger writes, “we call the transcendence of *Dasein* . . . the being-in-the-world proper to human being” (W, 31/36). It is this “difference,” moreover, “which bears (*trägt*) the reference to Being and the relationship to beings” in which *Dasein* stands essentially, to which it belongs and attends (*zu gehören*) (N, 207). Ontologically, thematically, our “(co)responding” to the difference via language that calls it forth “is hearing” (US, 32–3). In the sense, then, “hearing constitutes the primary and authentic openness of *Dasein* for its ownmost being-able-to-be.” Thus, every *Dasein* “carries the voice of a friend with it,” not in virtue of some previous factual and contingent relation to an other that is or can be made effectively present existentially but in virtue of the essential structure of its being-in-the-world as “being-with,” that is, as a constitutive item in the a priori structure of every individual *Dasein* as such. Whatever one encounters of the other is always already borne by that transcendence which, in its radical individuation, is one’s own selfhood and is the ground of the ontological difference. Thus, all ontic hearing has its essential basis in the ontological hearing, listening, and belonging (*Hören, Zuhören* and *Zugehören*) to Being that is the definitive characteristic of our Being, radically individuated. Yet Heidegger warns us that this difference “is neither distinction nor relation” (US, 25) from which then one term could simply be abstracted and made absolute. “It is, at most, dimension for world and thing.” Accordingly, a genuine solicitous

hearing of an other would not simply be one's own hearing of Being per se, to the exclusion of the individuality of actual others encountered or encounterable within the world, for that would be to hear nothing essentially other. Nor would it be simply an ontic hearing of some particular other simply in his or her factual distinctness, for that in effect would be to hear the other as a thing at hand. Nor would it even be a matter of bringing these two sorts of "hearing" into some definite relation, for in genuinely solicitous hearing what is borne (*latus*) in and by the mutuality of the ontic and the ontological, that is, by their essential sameness in difference, is prior to what can be related. Genuine solicitous hearing of the other would be *at once* always already a hearing of Being *and* a hearing of the other. Yet, as genuine, this sort of hearing of the other would not presume simply to take the other as just what in fact it is without obvious exclusion or prejudice (which can lead to the presumption that one does know faithfully the other as such and thence to the kind of domination whereby, on the basis of this presumed knowledge, one simply "leaps in" [*einspringen*] and acts for the other). Genuine solicitous hearing would be polyphonic and multi-dimensional, attentive at once to what ontically, pragmatically the situation and its participants truly require, to all that which constitutes, ontically and ontologically, the "business" (*Sache*) they share, and to what is called for interpretively both for the sake of one's own *seinsverständliches* Being and for the possibility of "leaping ahead" (*vorausspringen*) in order to "free the other in its freedom for itself" (SZ, 122).

Tiffauges's fate signals the need for such hearing without admitting it. Insofar as he sees only signs, Tiffauges hears nothing of the other and misunderstands himself. He is thus the monstrous sign of a diabolical twist in the symbolic correlation of signs and things. Both to hear the other and to understand himself, he must bear the other and give of himself in the bearing. "There is abnegation in this phoria, but of an equivocal sort" (VP, 125). It is "secretly possessed by the inversion of malign and benign, a mysterious operation which, without causing any apparent change in the nature of a person or thing, alters its *value*, putting less where there was more. The good giant who becomes a beast in order to save a small child is not so far from the predatory hunter who devours children. He who carries the child carries him away." Perhaps there is in this inversion a Hegelian lesson: that the slave can be redeemed only through its *own* labor, and that the true "immaculate and salutary" phoric master could only be the incarnate Lord as the rule of divine Reason that the slave realizes in itself by laboriously realizing itself rationally. Yet, as Hegel's left-wing followers were quick to demonstrate, the true concrete fulfillment of this dialectic demands a state in which all difference is absolutely essentially no difference at all (and so, for example, they called for the universal liberation of the Jews as people at the expense of their very Jewishness). Instead, then, it is perhaps the "irresistible power" of Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (VP, 159), a text which teaches a negative Hegelian lesson on demonstrating the inevitable dialectical failure of all relations-with-others, which speaks more clearly in Tiffauges's fate. Tiffauges would thus be dialectically monstrous in the way that "the shadow of St. Christopher, bearer and savior of children, is the Erlking, abductor and murderer of children" (VP, 125). After all, the actual Ephriam is

preserved and elevated (*aufgehoben*) only as an astral sign (at best a new star in the East), and the actual Tiffauges, not at all. Perhaps, then, Tiffauges is unwittingly monstrous in a third but positive sense, that is, as pointing in his very failure to a form of our being-with-others that is not dialectical *stricto sensu* but occurs always *Unterwegs* as hearing/responding in the dimension of the ontological difference.

With that thought, we come back again to the issue of Heidegger and the monstrous. Heidegger speaks of the *Ungebeuerlichkeit* of the essence of modern *Technik*. The original sense of the adjective *ungebeuer* is *unheimlich* and so *schrecklich*, out of the order from that with which one is truly at home, familiar, comfortable, and so frightful.³⁴ It was only in the eighteenth century, following the example of the Latin, *monstrum*, that the noun, *das Ungebeuer*, came to prominence. Now, paradoxically, the *Ungebeuerlichkeit* of the essence of modern *Technik* as enframing is precisely its effective elimination of the monstrous in the metaphysical and metaphorical sense. Nothing can essentially be out of order, since no order is recognized other than that established by the unlimited technological will-to-power. Even the insatiable demand for freakish curiosities is ordered and packaged, on sale with candy and chewing gum at the supermarket check-out counter or on video cassette. The monstrous in this domain is simply a matter of degree, the technological will-to-power indeed seeking the monstrous in its pursuit of the ever-more and the extreme. What might in this framework be said to be tragically monstrous – war, famine, genocide – comes down as a rule to the “extent of the damage.” This, however, is not a mistake, a failure to judge the truly monstrous as it is. For the constellation of the technological *Gestell* as a rule and for the most part determines in just this way what the monstrous things that appear *are*.

On this reading, *Der Spiegel* itself derives from the monstrousness of the essence of modern *Technik* and stands in its service. Thus, were it to have tracked down an alleged monster of *MeBkirk* according to the terms which define its very *raison d'être*, this would have been to defuse any genuine “uncanniness” (*Unheimlichkeit*) to the revelation, and so to set things right again by putting the monster in its place, along with everything else. And if the dominion of the technological *Gestell* were absolute, and there were no ontological difference, then this putting in place would be the truth *simpliciter*.

v

In the *Letter of Humanism*, Heidegger remarks that because, in writing, “thinking easily suffers the loss of its mobility [*Beweglichkeit*]” – which means for Heidegger, if we take seriously the *Weg* root, a loss of its very essence – “it is in that case supremely difficult to maintain the multidimensionality of the domain proper to thinking” (W, 147). What is meant by this multidimensionality can be heard, for example, in the manifold but harmonious resonances of *Wesen* and *Wahrheit* sounded on the *Denkweg* of *Die Frage nach der Technik*. Yet, in its multidimensionality, this thinking of Being does not differ from the mono-dimensionality of metaphysics by simply abandoning all pretense to a

totalizing, unifying vision in favor of a playful heterogeneity. Rather quite the opposite. It too sights the monstrous in terms of the hegemony of the technological *Gestell*, even including, most notably, that most notorious monster with whom Heidegger's prosecutors would like to link him more definitely but now quite explicitly in terms of a *seinsgeschichtlich* vision of beings as such and as a whole. If, in a fundamental ontological sense, this vision is right, then to point out the essential sameness of the Nazi phenomenon and its death camps with the mechanized agri-business (as Heidegger presumes to do)³⁵ is to point out the monstrosity of our time. This, however, does not absolve us from making ontic and ontological distinctions. Indeed, this monstrosity makes even more urgent the necessity (*Notwendigkeit*) here and now to understand the truth of order itself and thereby to discriminate genuinely in all our building-dwelling-thinking, the right, the correct, and the true.

VI

But what of the strife of seeing and hearing that runs throughout our discussion? Here we end on a discordant note. On the one hand, when Heidegger gives priority to hearing over seeing in the domain of thinking this is not meant to substitute one ruling metaphor for another. "Only within metaphysics," Heidegger insists, "is there the metaphorical" (*SG*, 89). And metaphysics of its essence fails to think the ontological difference *as such*. The precedence of ontological hearing serves to emphasize, before all mundane hearing and seeing of this or that thing and all metaphysical sight that reduces truth and Being to an essentially human measure, the manner of our original and invisible "belonging," "obedience," and "dependence" (*gehören, gehorchen, hörig*) on Being. This hearing, which is not simply our doing, is of the essence of our freedom, before all *libertas indifferentiae*. On the other hand, "in hearing, the percipient is at the mercy of something or somebody else."³⁶ In the Hebrew biblical tradition, where God is heard and not seen, this dependence is central, and the one "who can hear, cannot reject, because he has ontologically entered the will of God, as the will of God has entered him."³⁷ Analogously, one cannot reject the "voice" of Being, since that voice defines who and where we actually are, and is the basis of all action and power, choosing and rejecting. Still, unlike the singular "knight of faith" who at the height of sanctity hears and obeys a divine command *in immediacy* and as such "is in absolute isolation,"³⁸ the pious thinker within the domain of the ontological difference and in the world with others must effect a transition, from hearing and responding to the voice of Being as Being's shepherd, to knowing with right, good cause what here and now is called for as our brothers' keeper. And as the case of Heidegger himself might be taken to demonstrate and serve to warn us, one can be so attuned to the former call as to be virtually deaf to the latter.

**FRANCIS BACON,
THE PHILOSOPHER'S PAINTER,
AND THE LOGIC OF SENSATION**

Zsuzsa Baross

1 SETTING UP THE PROBLEM – IN TWO STEPS

Image/In-sight

In the opening passage of his *Dialogues* with Claire Parnet, Deleuze offers this intriguing insight into his project:

The aim is not to answer questions, it's to get out, to get out of it. Many people think that it is only by going back over the question that it's possible to get out of it . . . They won't stop returning to the question in order to get out of it. But getting out never happens like that. Movement always happens behind the thinker's back, or in the moment when he blinks.¹

Nowhere is this strategy more evident than in his work on the cinema,² a field where thinking has been unable to find an exit from the “question of meaning” – from the obsession that the question of the cinema is the question of meaning. While the dominant discourses return time and again to the impossible semiotic project of reconstructing, not only the film-image but the image in general, on some model analogous to language – “film language,” “language system” (in the early work of Metz), “sem” (Pasolini), “code” (Eco), “third meaning” (Barthes), “symbolic form” (Panofsky), or “memoir” (Derrida)³ – Deleuze turns to the most elementary and blindingly obvious fact about the cinema: movement. But fleeing in the direction of movement, he finds not the image of movement – the banal and obvious movement of “every leaf” that so impressed the first spectators and whose *illusion* the cinema succeeds to give so completely for the first time – but the “movement-image”: the very *real* movement whereby the image unfolds in time, and which it, also for the first time, appropriates as one of its own “dimensions.”

No strategy could be more different from deconstruction (which, even if in a

negative way, "won't stop returning" to the question of "truth," "presence," "representation," "subject" . . .), or from the psychoanalysis (Lacan's) whose "writing is distinguished by a prevalence of the *text* . . . that makes possible the kind of tightening up that . . . *leave(s) the reader no other way out than a way in*" (my emphasis).⁴ If, with Lacan, one is to *enter* the "order of the signifier" and follow its torturous path to the eye of the hurricane – the navel of the dream text – in the hope of glimpsing at what it fleetingly brings to light before it would vanish again, then, with Deleuze, one takes flight in a direction tangential to this force which draws the reader to the center of the text to leave no other way out than the way in.

When the "thinker" – whether semiotics or film theory, deconstruction or psychoanalysis – blinks, Deleuze takes flight, exits from the question that structures and organizes the discourses of the field – through the spot (where) the thinker does not see: in the case of the cinema, movement. In the case of the work in question, *Francis Bacon, Logique de la sensation*,⁵ the nature of the escape to be attempted is still a question. (But is it not in the nature of at least some escapes that they should hide not the end but the origin of their flight?) To find the question that motivates it, even if in a negative way, we must open up the text. Yet one thing is clear already – and it would be so even without the thinker's commentary: we need not turn to his *Dialogues* to know *not* to think of this flight as arbitrary or opportunistic, nor to attribute the (other) thinker's blindness to ignorance or stupidity. As Paul de Man anticipated, this flight is of interest and value only if blindness is the reverse side of insight; if Deleuze's thinker – the thinker Deleuze himself is, for we should not hesitate to see him as a *thinker* as he takes flight through a blind spot – makes his exit through a hole in the fabric of thought which is strategically sought out precisely for the insight on its reverse side. Flight is thus a "theoretical" moment.

In relation to the work in question, his work on Francis Bacon, the strategy of flight spelled out in the *Dialogues* raises immediately two questions: what *question* does the thinker (Deleuze) try to get out? and who is the (other) *thinker* behind whose back the movement of flight takes place?

However, a certain unease as to what constitutes the "Work" in this case immediately blocks our path to progressing with these questions without delay: only half of this double volume is Deleuze's and a *text*; the other half is Bacon's and contains only *pictures*. How are we to use this other volume, this book of images? Does it belong to the Work? If so, in what ways? For if one half of the Work is incomplete and cannot stand alone without the other, it is *not* the book of *images* that needs writing's support. And even if it should turn out that the pictures fulfill only a subordinate and "illustrative" function – are made to work *for* the text – it would be writing, again, that is "parasitic" (to use Derrida's phrase) and draws from the image its life support. Yet, on the other hand, when it comes to the question of work (as labor), it is the text which liberates, brings forth, the *work* of the image. The writing opens up, *exhibits* literally, Bacon's *work*: the painter's struggle, painting (the act and the object) as struggle – performance/performative, work-site.

But then is that all the *work* that the *writing* does? Is that all the labor the *text* performs? All this is obviously premature here, or would be if it did not show

already that the Work here, this *double* volume, raises its own question regarding the nature of the relation between image and text – not in general but very specifically with regard to the question of work (as labor). Between image and text, how are we to locate the work within the Work, where to situate the work-site? Is there a division of labor, or is the work (in the Work) to emerge from in-between the image and the text? But then again, is (not) the writing in command of this work in either case? Does it (not) oversee the division or the work in-between?

If the text will not “enter” this question, and it will not, then this alone is significant, indicative of the work (in the Work); for we know from the *Dialogues* that the missing question, Deleuze “missing” rather than entering the question of relation between the image and his text, need not be a failure. It is rather a feature of his work, and as such it is to be suspected as a strategy, a stratagem for writing doing its work.

All this in turn calls for a strategy of reading. One that immediately suggests itself is finding *Deleuze* at work in the text which paradoxically seems to acknowledge only the painter’s *work*. Hence tracking him down in the Work – which is not identical with his text, and where, moreover, painter and writer are found in such confused intimacy and embrace – will be my strategy for reading. I will be trying here to open up his text by tracing it to the thinker and to the question the thinker – as a strategy for thinking – is trying to evade.

Picture/Painting

In a previous essay I have asked (with) Lacan “what is a picture?”⁶ Perhaps the most intriguing feature of his answer, I have found, is that it defines “picture” in terms of *light* – “the veins through which the domain of vision is integrated into the field of desire” (*FFCP*, 85). Unlike anyone else before him, Lacan situates the image in a scopic field which is structured, or rather split, into two heteronomous domains by rays of light: (in the scopic field) “everything is articulated between two terms that act in antimonious ways – on the side of things there is the gaze, that is things look at me, and yet I see them” (*FFCP*, 109).

Now this has an immensely liberating effect for anyone trying to get out of the trap of representation (whether analogous to language or not); for the “picture” thus conceived is neither a copy nor a replica of an original (model) – although it may very well present the eye with the semblance of a model; it is not the “flat” or “geometral” anamorphosis of a real or imaginary space – although, it may *hold up* precisely such spaces for the spectator’s eye to dazzle its gaze; nor is it (a system of) signs and significations inscribed onto a picture surface that is analogous to writing’s unwritten page and is waiting for a spectator to be read and deciphered – although, again, in the long history of painting, we find the painter turning to symbols and secret significations on many occasions. Instead, the *defining* factor is *seen* – precisely, for it is something to be seen – as a *structuring* of the relation between the “eye” and the “gaze” in the order of the spectacle traversed by light (and desire): from the picture – and from behind the *screen* of the image it represents – a gaze is found to be looking

out at me, soliciting my eye, entrapping – luring – *its* gaze, disarming its voracity.

Elsewhere Lacan offers an anecdote which illuminates this answer. As a young intellectual he joined some fishermen on their boat off the coast of Normandy: “as we were waiting for the moment to pull in the nets, Petit-Jean pointed out something floating at the surface of the waves. It was a small can, a sardine can. It floated there in the sun, glittered in the sun. ‘You see that can? Do you see it? Well it does not see you’” (*FFCP*, 95). One difference between the sardine can sending a ray of light into the eye, and forming there in the depth of its retina a picture, and a *picture*, is that this latter not only *looks* at me but *sees* me: seeks out my gaze, calculates *my* (eye’s) vision, presents itself and cuts itself to the measure of its desire:

The painter gives something to the person who must stand in front of his painting which, in part, at least, of the painting, might be summed up thus – *You want to see? Well, take a look at this!* He gives something for the eye to feed on . . . (emphasis Lacan, *FFCP*, 101)

Now on the one hand, this answer permits, indeed, requires, me to rethink the image and its lure: to think of it *not* as the *what* of representation (the beauty of the spectacle that dazzles the eye and which the painter gives the eye to feed on, or, as it is so often claimed today, the body in the spectacle) but the dialectic play of the eye and the gaze. (“From the outset, we see, in the dialectic of the eye and the gaze, that there is no coincidence, but, on the contrary, a lure” [*FFCP*, 102].) On the other hand, it also presents me with an anomaly in the form of Malevich’s *Black Square*, a painting which, at least at first sight, so obviously appears *not* to be a “picture.” This “last painting,” an attempt perhaps to end all painting – even though men may continue to paint long after it⁷ – this black square without depth, a “blind and stupid wall,” a tear in the membrane of the visible, offers the eye nothing to feed on – nothing: a black hole or blind socket – to see. From this square – a whole in the visible – no light will travel or escape to meet or entrap my gaze, to grasp me, to solicit me in every moment. (“A black hole is what captures you and does not let you go out. How do you get out of a black hole?” asks Deleuze [*DI*, 17]. Have I unwittingly inherited his project and problem of how to get out?)

Thus the concern Malevich brings to my reading of Deleuze is this unresolved question of the difference between “picture” and “painting.” Or how to think of the difference between the *structure* of relation Lacan’s picture at once makes visible, and, for its lure, parasitically depends upon, on the one hand, and the *visual image* this structure holds up to dazzle the eye’s vision on the other. With Lacan and Malevich both active in the field, leaving their own separate, textual and pictorial, marks on it, the two (structure and image) no longer coincide; the security of one’s knowledge, what one believes a “picture” to be, is fundamentally disturbed. For it would be all too easy to call this painting by Malevich (or the other “*carrés*” of the suprematists) by some other name; this is in fact what ordinary art history is doing when it speaks of

“abstract,” “non-figurative,” “suprematist,” or “abstract expressionist” paintings. Yet, naming this event, which manifestly takes place on the picture surface, in terms of *style* (and as an event that pertains to the *surface alone*), only glosses over that other, far more disturbing event *in the order of the spectacle*; the name, suprematist, effaces this disturbing fact that from the depth of Malevich’s *picture* no ray of light will travel to solicit the spectator’s vision. For surely, the challenge of Lacan’s definition is precisely to see/situate this black hole, this blind mirror, this tear in the visible within the same visual field the “picture” structures and occupies. For something – an agitation, a negative passion – is at work here, in the same field; a (blinding) gesture is being made vis-à-vis the image which *is* a “picture”: it looks at you, solicits your gaze, answers its appetite for pleasure. Hence after Malevich’s introduction of this unprecedented, blinding painting into the visual field and the order of the spectacle, iconoclasm can no longer be seen as the sole practice of the text; it will not be apprehended by making reference to the age-old “competition” between writing and the image, to the envy of the letter, or the “evil eye” of the text.

One always comes to a work from somewhere: I come to Bacon/Deleuze, this fused/confused figure – “assemblage,” to use Deleuze’s own terminology – via a very specific route. I encounter it at a certain point en route to rethinking the lure of the image for writing, for the text. The point (of encounter) is this: I believe that Lacan offers a way out of the question of the image as something secondary – representation, resemblance, signification, sign, message, replica, copy, memoir – something which like language traces the condition of its possibility to absence, mourning, and death. A way out is always a way in: in this case to the image *as* caught by and implicated in the dialectic play of light passing between the “eye” and the “gaze.” But just as I begin to see this, I encounter an image, or, rather, a painter who places this black/blind square into my visual field: a painting which is either not a “picture” in the sense Lacan understands it, or is a “negative” of a picture, which withholds everything a picture gives.

What has drawn me at least initially to Deleuze’s Bacon (this figure Deleuze presents/assembles in the book) is his (Bacon’s) struggle against seeing/painting resemblance, figuration, narrative, copy, statement, sign. It resembles *my own* with a tradition of writing that insists on *reading* the image in this very way: as sign, as proxy, a second thing standing in for something absent, a story, an event, a meaning, an object, or a referent. Moreover, Bacon, this figure Deleuze presents/represents, does not struggle with representation, with the impulse to tell a story, with the imperative for the image to be about something, *in private* – in thought. Rather he *paints* the passage from “picture” to “painting.” The attraction of (Deleuze’s) Bacon is that he works like a theorist – makes the question visible, documents its passage, and leaves traces of its transformation all over his paintings.

The obvious question is, then, where does Deleuze stand in relation to this work (labor) and the figure of the painter *he* places (assembles) before the canvas as his work-site? At first, Deleuze is nowhere to be seen, simply absent from the scene (where, we know, he is the *metteur en scène*). The work-site presented/

represented in this text is that of painting and not of writing. (Observe the contrast with Foucault⁸ who immediately addresses the problem of writing: the visible and the sayable are not isomorphic domains; we should not try to say what we see.) Deleuze leaves the problem of writing unattended; it is not a question he will enter in the text. Not in this text, in any case.⁹ But this much we have expected from someone whose aim is to get out. And if the aim is "how to become imperceptible" (*DI*, 46), then the violence or transgression of this (my) writing will be in making Deleuze visible where he does not wish to be seen.

But perhaps the question is no longer whether the thinker – a being separate from the painter – is wishing to hide from our view, but what is put into question is the thinker being separate from the painter – his pretext for writing, his interlocutor, or mere subject matter:

You are not a little Eskimo going by, yellow and greasy, you need not mistake yourself for him. But you may perhaps put yourself in his shoes, you have something to assemble with him, an Eskimo-becoming which does not consist in playing the Eskimo, in imitating or identifying yourself with him or taking the Eskimo upon yourself, but in assembling something between you and him, for you can only become an Eskimo if the Eskimo himself becomes something else. (*DI*, 53)

If the "thinker" does not wish to "identify" with the "painter," if thinking about painting is neither identification nor standing in admiration before the work but "assembling" something with the work, then the quest and strategy of finding him will have been sabotaged beforehand. The task of tracking him down in the writing will have been made difficult if not impossible by the writing itself: for it is not that Deleuze does not wish to be seen but that he is no longer to be found. He has become something else; the writing is an assemblage, a becoming. But then, yet again, is it not here, in this disappearance which is at the same time an assemblage, that the *work* and the place which is that of the thinker (Deleuze) alone should be sought?

2 THE SCENE OF PAINTING: THE SCENE OF STRUGGLE – A BATTLE-GROUND

I would like to enter the *text*, but Deleuze, invisible, offers no other point of entry than the image, which in turn he (re)presents as the scene of violence and struggle. I must enter this "work" from the other side, from the side of the image, the paintings – which I will do in three movements addressing three different aspects of the (painting's) struggle.

Vision Beyond Representation

First, there is the familiar image of a struggle with "representation": the *painter* struggles to exit from the figurative, illustrative, narrative mode, to *not* model anything, *not* to tell or even commemorate anything (an event, a story, a history) – to break with representation, to rupture narration, to escape illustration:

“rompre avec la représentation, casser la narration, empêcher l’illustration.” (LS, 10).

If I ask Foucault what the painter wrestles with, I receive a somewhat “cerebral” answer. He says that modernist painting violates/overcomes the two principles that ruled Western painting from the fifteenth to the twentieth century: “The first asserts the separation between plastic representation (which implies *resemblance*) from linguistic *reference* (which excludes it)” (TP, 33); the second, more interesting here, posits an equivalence between the *fact* of resemblance and the *affirmation* of a representative bond: “Let a figure resemble an object (or some other figure), and that alone is enough for there to slip into the pure play of painting a *statement* – obvious, banal, repeated a thousand times . . . ‘What you see is *that*’” (emphasis on statement added) (TP, 34). I hear echoes of Deleuze here: the figurative implies a relation between image and the object it is supposed to illustrate. And between the two slips in, always, “histoire” (LS, 10). Of course, by this second the first rule gets subverted: if the first allows the two systems (the linguistic and the visual) neither to merge nor to intersect, then with the second, language surreptitiously returns and by the very route of resemblance. Hence the distinction, weak to begin with, between representation by reference and representation by resemblance, collapses under its own weight, in the direction of language.

Modern painting will interrupt this infinite murmur, this articulation and prohibited association with language – this narrative of “this is what you see.” Kandinsky will do it, Foucault says, by effacing simultaneously resemblance and the representative bond. He paints “things” (a term analogous to what Deleuze calls the “fact” in Bacon’s painting) so that the painting, when asked what it is, can reply only by way of a tautology, by restating itself: “triangles,” “red shape,” “yellow upward” (TP, 35).

But for once this cerebral answer seems all too easy – too universal, too general; painting has always transgressed/violated the regime which constitutes it *as* painting (as opposed to a stain or a scribble). For once, I want to take this notion of a struggle seriously, literally – want to see Bacon struggling as Jacob struggles with the man/angel, or as the Figure struggles with invisible forces and powers in his paintings. (As Deleuze says, the fight with the shadow is the only real struggle: “la lutte avec l’ombre est la seule lutte réelle” [LS, 42].) I want to make visible that black shadow opposing him, resisting him (which in his painting has as much presence as the body which casts it, from which it leaks) to reciprocate or satisfy thereby the commandment of painting – since phenomenology and Cézanne, phenomenology’s painter – “to make the invisible visible.”¹⁰

From Foucault’s answer it would appear that by silencing the painting’s murmur – putting an end to its illicit association with enunciation (statement of reference or referential function) – Kandinsky or Malevich somehow returns painting to the domain of the purely visible (unsayable). And yet is this how it really is? Is this the *direction* of the movement affected – away from language and toward vision, light? I would like to examine this via a detour: the *trompe-l’œil*.

It is again Foucault who says that the *trompe-l’œil* “seeks to support the weightiest burden of affirmation” by the ruse of a convincing resemblance:

What you see on the wall's surface is not an aggregate of lines and color. It is depth, sky, clouds that have shaded your house, a real column around which you can walk, a stairway that continues the steps you have begun to climb (already you start towards it, despite yourself), a stone balustrade over which lean the attentive faces of ladies and courtiers, wearing clothes identical to your own, to the very ribbons, smiling at your astonishment and your own smiles, gesturing to you in a fashion that is mysterious, because they have answered you without even waiting for your own gestures to them. (VI, 43–4)

Foucault speaks of a “representative” bond here – a referential and thus ultimately a linguistic function – but curiously the bond in the example (in the most representative painting of all) is not in the direction of the represented (i.e. an original but absent real or imaginary space). And as we will see, it does not even belong to the order of representation but to the order of the spectacle. The connecting gesture in this most representative painting of all – the smile – comes from *inside* the painting *towards* the spectator whose gaze it meets, whose arrival it has anticipated all along, whose smile it itself plants – and has planned (calculated) all along. Here the “gaze” – operating without recourse to narrative or language – *shows*: “smiling at your astonishment; gesturing to you in a fashion that is mysterious because they have answered you without even waiting for your own gestures to them.” For centuries this gesture and smile inside the painting have been waiting for you, for the bond to be established, if only for a fleeting moment, once again by your reciprocating gesture and smile. If there is a mirror function here, then it must be assigned to the present “reality” in front of the painting; it is the *spectator's* smile which mirrors the one inside the picture which is the original – as cause and origin – and which comes first. The spectator's is a mere reflection of the first – without, however, being its representation or even its copy or replica. For this “reflection” in the order of the spectacle has no referential function. Instead of reference or resemblance (to something absent), an event takes place in the present: something passes between the eye and the gaze in the field of vision – traversed by light and desire – which (event) falls completely outside the order of representation, whether by reference or resemblance.

In other words, this smile on the spectator's face, his pleasure in coming face to face with this most faithful of all representation, cannot be apprehended by making reference to a “representative” bond. Whichever way we conceive it – a signifier/signified relation or as the result of a geometral operation (anamorphosis or projection) between two sets of points in space – these are relations of/for the “mind,” blind. As Derrida says in his *Memoirs of the Blind*, language is for the blind – speaks of the blindness which constitutes it.¹¹ But so is anamorphosis. Its optics, says Lacan, allows *vision* to escape wholly and is within the grasp of the blind (*FFCP*, 92) who need only a hand to follow the *thread* of projection from object to its projected image on the flat screen. What neither optics nor representation can apprehend however in the *trompe-l'oeil* is the *light* that passes between the two smiles in a field that is purely “visual” – something for the eye alone which has no use either for the ear of the blind nor

for the blind hand. This something does not articulate with language and is not to be apprehended by a geometry that serves the blind so well – and Descartes shows this well – to apprehend objects in space as lines/outlines. Rather than connecting perfectly two sets of points in space (those “before” with those “behind” the painting) – but the name already announces this – the *trompe-l’oeil* puts into play a play of *error* between an “eye” and a “gaze” which only an eye – and one may add a *subject’s* eye¹² – can apprehend.

Once we abandon the Cartesian vision, which after all models vision after the two sticks of the blind, we see that modernist or “abstract” painting – far from affecting a movement toward the purely visual – closes up something in the visual field. Baudrillard,¹³ rather imprecisely, calls it “the missing dimension” which establishes the space of seduction and becomes a source of vertigo. Without assuming that this missing dimension is the third dimension, that the spectator’s vertigo has to do with the illusion of depth, we may safely say that Malevich’s *Black Square* is a picture gone blind, and that, instead of affecting a movement towards the purely visual, Malevich (or Kandinsky) closes off something in the visual, withholds something from the eye in the dimension “where things lose themselves in appearances, in the seduction of their image” (*S*, 67) and from where the gaze of the *trompe-l’oeil* solicited the eye, trapped and lured the spectator’s gaze.

Having taken this detour via Foucault, how much closer are we to seeing Bacon’s struggle? Profit as always comes at the cost of an investment: like Bacon who breaks with narration, illustration, representation, we too must break with the *concept* of the image as representation, figuration, illustration, narrative. Only if we give up the notion that what we call a picture has to do with the affirmation of identity, the closed space/play of resemblance to an original, only then can we begin to see that Bacon’s struggle has nothing to do with convention or the abstract principles that govern tradition but with the eye, with the organ of vision itself.

We immediately find evidence of this once we look, with Deleuze, inside the picture space where he detects an effort to eliminate “all spectators, and thereby all spectacle.” (“On surprend même dans les tableaux de Bacon l’effort pour éliminer tout spectateur, et par là tout spectacle” [*LS*, 15].) Even though in many cases there is a sort of spectator in the painting – “un voyeur, un photographe, un passant, un ‘attendant’” – the function of witnessing is not assigned to a spectator. And the only spectacle (of effort) is produced when there are no spectators left. (“En vérité, le seul spectacle est celui de l’attente ou l’effort, mais ceux-ci ne se produisent que quand il n’y a plus de spectateurs” [*LS*, 15].) The extreme solitude of the Figure, the enclosure of the body, excludes every spectator: the Figure becomes one by this enclosure, where it encloses itself and which encloses it. But more than that, the function of witnessing is far more complicated than absence and presence. While there are many explicit witnesses in the tryptic – “1962, les deux personnages inquiétants du panneau gauche; 1965, les deux petits vieillards . . . et la femme nue . . . ; 1968, les deux ‘attendants’” (*LS*, 51) – witnessing has nothing to do with the function of the *eye*: in the deepest sense (“le témoin plus profond”), the function belongs to the one who does not see at all, who is not in the situation to see. (Le témoin plus

profond . . . ce sera celui qui ne voit pas, qui n'est pas en situation de voir" [LS, 51].)

This initial sense that the wrestling has to do with the "visual field" itself – but not in the conventional sense (not as one would speak about the cinema "restructuring the visual field," for example) – that the duel here is with the eye, the organ of vision itself. This sense is further strengthened by what Deleuze has to say about the function of mirrors in Bacon's paintings which do not reflect anything, are not reflecting surfaces. Unlike the mirror of Lewis Carroll, a point of passage to an other world/logic, to Foucault's heterotopia – Bacon's mirror is an "épaisseur opaque parfois noire" (LS, 17). An opaque, sometimes black *density*, the mirror inside Bacon's painting sometimes functions as does Malevich's painting, which closes off a "dimension" in the field of vision. Inside Bacon's painting we find – as mirror – Malevich's painting: the body does not pass through it, instead it lodges itself with its shadow inside it, its density. There is nothing behind this mirror, which emits no light to seek out and solicit the subject's gaze (whether Figure's or spectator's, whether inside or outside the picture).

Note the contrast with the painting of Velasquez, Foucault's figure of Velasquez, whose painting is a play of light and shadow, and whose canvas *too* structures the visible/invisible. But in its depth there stands a mirror which reflects/opens up to view, to the spectator's view, the space which by virtue of its (painting) nature is invisible in any painting, and should have remained invisible also in Velasquez's painting. This uncanny vertigo and delight is absent, or rather, in the movement of a negative passion, *withheld* by a painting which offers only blind mirrors for the spectator/voyeur who does not witness anything. For here, nothing passes between the mirror and the eye; the witness does not see – is not in the position to see; witnessing is not, or rather – for one should indicate the passage of time and the movement of the struggle – is *no longer* the function of seeing.

This is our first sense that Bacon's struggle is with the eye itself, that the combat concerns the blinding of eyes – as so many positions of seeing/looking within the picture space. This, now neither a cerebral nor an "abstract" project, in turn places the burden on this writing to *see* differently, to see beyond the opposition between "figuration" and "abstraction." It presents the problem of figuring/situating this gesture of Malevich who blackens the mirror for the first time (although it will be repeated many times over, even by Malevich¹⁴ himself who curiously will paint this black mirror more than once) *in the visual field*: to see the figure of the painter (Malevich or Bacon) wrestling not with convention or even with representation but with the "dimension" where, in a field traversed by desire, the gaze takes up its position.

Painting: a Blind Picture?

On another level, another struggle is taking place, but this time the painter does not seem to be involved. One is tempted to say that it takes place inside the picture space, except that it now has no depth. One thus should speak of a battle (battle-ground) on another *plane*, for the opaque thickness of painting is itself the topos of violence.

At first the object of this violence seems to be the body: "The Figure contracts or dilates . . . in a series of screaming deformations, it experiences an extraordinary animal-becoming." (*La Figure se contract ou se dilate . . . elle éprouve un devenir-animal extraordinaire en une série de déformations criantes* [*LS*, 25].) It tries to join the painted surface, to dissipate into the structure; the whole tortured body is about to escape by the opening (*trou*) of a screaming mouth.

Now this violence, we are reminded, is not of the "sensational" (the spectacular, the spectacle, the represented, the cliché); the painting's violence has nothing in common with the violence of war, cites Deleuze. It is the violence of sensation – a "direct action on the nervous system" along whose pathways it travels and whose domain it traverses (*LS*, 29), but which traces its origin not to the represented. The greatest violence is manifest in those Figures to which nothing visible happens and which are subject not even to the slightest cruelty. Paradoxically, cruelty is not in the represented; it is not visible, is not something to be seen, not something for us (spectators) to see.

Is it then that the eye will be affected (attacked) on the spectator's side – outside the picture as well? The body, and (in the portraits) the head, is subject to extraordinary forces from the outside; forces of isolation and deformation take possession of it and become visible each time the head jolts the face or the body the organism. With dissipation, with coupling (*LS*, 42) waves of spasm travel and register on the body's surface: the Figure (thus isolated/caged) stands in the field of forces, in the middle of an invisible hurricane which deforms it and which it makes visible.

For it is not that the Figure wrestles with (embraces) an invisible demon; the Figure is not the subject of the picture. What is painted is not Figure but sensation. Cruelty is not represented; it ceases to be representative; it becomes real. It is less and less tied to the representation of something horrible, it is the action of forces on the body – the sensation (opposite the sensational) (*LS*, 34). The struggle takes place not between the figure and some alien force but between two sensations: that which makes the struggle is the coupling of diverse sensations on two bodies and not the inverse (*LS*, 47).

The body is here not to fight; its function is not to stage the spectacle of a battle: struggle, resistance, pain, horror. Its only function is to lend visibility to forces/sensations – themselves invisible: "il ne leur donne pas d'autre visibilité que la sienne" (*LS*, 42). Yet if, as with Cézanne, the function of painting is to make visible the invisible, how can we speak of a blind picture, of painting systematically blinding, blotting out the eye on both sides, both inside and in front of the picture?

In order to *see* this, we must note the transformation the "visible" has undergone since (Foucault's) Velasquez. *Las Meninas* also makes visible the invisible – what is outside the picture, what is concealed within or even by the picture: the place of the painter, the organizing gaze. The painting itself, Foucault tells us, is organized as the play of/on this division; it divides itself into visible and invisible domains. It is as such that it formulates/shows the *status* of the invisible: it is not for the *eye* but for the *subject* (position/place) that something is in

one or the other domain. For Velasquez it is not the eye but the subject which is blind, does not see.

In contrast, the invisible for Bacon/Deleuze are forces, of isolation, time, deformation, dissipation – sensations. They are invisible not for a subject who finds himself in a particular position of blindness/ignorance; nor is it the condition of an object in a particular mode of concealment (as it is for metaphysics). Invisibility as condition/limit now belongs to the eye itself – the *organ* of vision. It is only in as far as this organ is the correlate (or even condition) of subjectivity – body of organs/body organized into organs – that this blindness of the eye is that of an I, a subject.

Making the invisible visible, then, is the aim/end of painting. But for whose eyes? Who is to see/witness this new visibility of forces/sensations in a painting which itself is without a spectator or a witness? Whose eyes will see this new kind of spectacle in a painting which itself is without “eyes” – spectators, witnesses?

Innocent X screams, but he screams behind a curtain precisely, not only as someone who cannot be seen anymore, but as someone who does not see, who has nothing more to see, who has no function but to render visible these forces of the invisible which make him cry out, these forces of the future. (LS, 41)

(Innocent X crie, mais justement il crie derrière le rideau, non seulement quelqu'un qui ne peut plus être vue, mais comme quelqu'un qui ne voit pas, qui n'a plus rien de voir, qui n'a plus pour fonction que de rendre visibles ces forces de l'invisible qui le font crier, ces puissances de l'avenir.)

The paradox: the painting renders the visible, renders the invisible visible, but there is no one (no eye/I) to see (it). For if we have thought that it was the spectator's function to witness, then Deleuze dismisses early on – and not only because of “inconvenience” – the psychoanalytic hypothesis that “localizes the sensation on the side of the spectator who looks at the tableau.” (En effet l'hypothèse psychoanalytique . . . n'a pas seulement l'inconvénient de localiser la sensation du côté du spectateur qui regarde le tableau [LS, 30].) For indeed, how could there be a spectator without a spectacle?

It is only logical, once painting sets out to transgress the limit of the organ inside, that it would/could not leave it untouched/unaffected outside the painting.

The Blind Painter

The struggle which takes place yet on a third level precedes the act of painting: “It is an error to believe that the painter stands before a blank/white surface.” (C'est une erreur de croire que le peintre est devant une surface blanche [LS, 57].) Clichés and stereotypes have already invaded his canvas and occupy the visual field, his eyes, his head; they impose themselves on his view, govern his eyes entirely, literally: clichés are not only *ways* of seeing, but *things* themselves seen.

And when we ask what kind of image the cliché – which thus besieges our (eye's) vision – is, we learn that in the first place it is the figurative: the photograph, television, the images of the cinema, images in magazines. The cliché in the first place is spectacular, sensational, illustrative, narrative; it is, or at least belongs to, the class of images that Lacan calls a "picture."

The painter coming to the canvas, even before he would begin to paint, is already under the spell – the lure – of the "picture." Hence the fury of the combat and the need for the protracted and terrible struggle. For "la lutte contre les clichés est une chose terrible" (*SL*, 58). Simple opposition would not do – reaction against the cliché engenders only other clichés. "Getting out" – getting outside the lure, winning this terrible battle requires a lot of cunning and prudence: a strategy, precisely. ("On ne peut lutter le cliché qu'avec beaucoup de ruse, de reprise et prudence" [*LS*, 62].) Bacon's strategy is abandonment: he enters the eye of the hurricane, abandons himself (his eyes) to the cliché, conjures them, accumulates them, multiplies them (*LS*, 60); he gives himself to the prepictorial, and, most importantly, gives himself to the will of losing the will.

I am thinking here of Matisse (in Lacan): "that strange slow motion in which . . . Matisse was painting. The important point is that Matisse himself was overwhelmed by the film" (*FFCP*, 114). Matisse is affected by the movement of his own painting. Or the Chinese painter who, according to a legend which Belá Balázs in his *Theory of the Film*¹⁵ records, vanishes upon finishing a beautiful landscape; he is never to be seen again, except that inside the painting a new figure has appeared in the landscape, on the path heading towards the mountains.

Bacon takes up the position of the spectator in front of the spectacle: opens himself up to the image and "not without delight" (*LS*, 59). For he knows that the "picture" is not without delight, not without pleasure. Otherwise there would be no need to wrestle, to duel, no need for the terrible battle. He also knows that these pleasures are neither cerebral nor aesthetic – at least not in the sense in which we have come to use the word. Although photographs leave a deep "impression" (*aesthesis*) on him – he is fascinated by the photographs of Muybridge, his own photographs, even x-ray pictures, paints his portraits after photographs and surrounds himself with photographs (*LS*, 59) – he attributes no aesthetic value to photography whatsoever. He opens himself to the lure of the representative, the spectacular, the sensational, the illustrative, the narrative – to its powers to delight, fascinate, solicit the eye, which it already fills, exercises and governs. Bacon, like his legendary predecessor, the Chinese landscape painter, disappears, vanishes into the pictorial, except that he disappears (enters) only to pass through – to reemerge on the other side – on the other side of vision.

Now this exit ("getting out," once again) from the pictorial, this tearing the eye away from the illustrative, will not be achieved by the eye. The terrible struggle against the cliché will be conducted by the hand. The eye – lured, seduced, filled by the image, the prepictorial – can only react to its movement, produce another cliché. The "free mark" (free from what? we must eventually ask) which will destroy the nascent narration in the interior of the painted image – destroy, that is, the emerging "picture" – will be made by the hand:

But at this very moment, when I have already begun, how to continue so that what I paint would not be a cliché? One will have to place rather quickly "free marks" at the interior of the painted image to destroy the nascent figuration in it . . . These marks are accidental, "by chance," . . . [They] can said to be nonrepresentative precisely because they depend on the act of chance and express nothing concerning the visual image: they concern only the hand of the painter. (LS, 60)

(Mais à ce moment-là, quand j'ai commencé, comment faire pour que ce que je peins ne soit pas un cliché? Il faudra assez vite faire des "marques libres" à l'intérieur de l'image peinte, pour détruire en elle la figuration naissante . . . Ces marques sont accidentelles, "au hasard" . . . Ces marques peuvent être dites non représentatives, justement parce qu'elles dependent de l'acte au hasard et n'expriment rien concernant l'image visuelle: elle ne concernent que la main de la peintre.)

The "free mark" made in the interior of the image by the (blind) hand does not express anything concerning the visual image; it concerns only the hand of the painter. It is accidental, irrational, involuntary, nonrepresentative, non-illustrative, nonnarrative. The marks of the hand are the nonsignifying – asignifying – traits of sensation, the product of chance or action without probability (LS, 60). Rather than a probability "conceived" or "seen," the mark is chance *manipulated* (literally, by the hand); improbable, unseen/unforeseen – it is thus free precisely from supervision by the eye, from the eye's governance of vision.

Obviously, perhaps too obviously, here Deleuze is trying to lead me down another path and to another split – the opposition between the eye and the hand; he is about to set up another opposition, set (up) the eye as the organ of the probable, the rational, and the conceptual (foresight, provision, supervision) *against* the irrational, involuntary, improbable gestures of the hand. But I'm not ready, not yet in any case, to be distracted from the eye and its *folie du voir* – the insatiable appetite for the pleasure of vision (which, to be evaded, requires so much cunning and prudence from the mind). I am not ready to "castrate" its pleasures and appetites in order to deliver it as an "organ" – in Deleuze's sense of the word: organon – into the service of thought, the mind. For conception is not the "natural" function of vision; rather, the eye must be violated, separated from its desires – from its desire for vision, precisely – in order to become an organ of conception for seeing and knowing to coincide.

When we continue to follow the path of desire and pleasure, what comes to our view is the figure of a painter who – in order to "get out" – tears his eyes away from the visual, renounces not only his eyes but also the painter's (Velasquez) "gaze" which ever since the quattrocento has organized the spectacle and has indeed *overseen* the scene of seduction and delight for the (painter's and spectator's) eyes. His struggle, however, will not be apprehended by recourse to an opposition between the possible and the improbable or the calculable and incalculable, for this opposition is (already) void of desire and situates the struggle – the terrible duel – outside the field of desire. It is as such

that it strikes one as “made by the hand,” the organ which either functions in service of the mind, executing *its* conceptions, or moves about like a paraplegic body unpredictably/improbably: blindly. It already testifies of the hand’s victory over the eye as the organ of pleasure; for their struggle has been precisely over the pleasures this “hand-made” opposition already and successfully suppresses. For is not the hand oblivious to the eye’s appetites and pleasures? Would it not be just the “point of view of the hand” to “see” and “conceive” vision as an instrument of the mind? Is not Descartes’s optics – where seeing and knowing coincide – the hand’s vision of vision? A vision void of light and pleasure? It is no accident that this optics is modeled after the hand – the two sticks – of the blind.

At the end of Bacon’s struggle, with the hand victorious, free to leave its mark, the act of painting becomes manual (“travail manuel” [LS, 63]) – blind.

It is obvious that an exit achieved by such a radical act – which not only tears the eye away from the image it wallows in but decenters the eye itself – that such an exit cannot leave the world of the cliché untouched. Indeed, the freeing of the hand from the supervision of the eye is a “catastrophe”: “it is as if, suddenly, one introduced a Sahara, a zone of the Sahara,” as if one put a “rhinoceros skin” under a microscope, as if “one changed the unit of measurement.” It is “as if a *catastrophe* overtook the canvas” – “it is like the emergence of another world” (my emphasis, LS, 65–6).

On the other side of vision there emerges another world (there is another world after all on the other side of painting), but it has nothing to do with the uncanny space of the “other world” the “picture” opens up. This one is “irrational,” “involuntary,” “accidental,” “free,” “nonrepresentative,” “non-illustrative,” “nonnarrative,” “a-significative.” (“These are the traces of sensations, but sensations that are confused . . . And above all these are traits that are manual” [LS, 66].)

But why call this a catastrophe, and not just *another* world? Because “one does not see anything anymore, as in a catastrophe, as in a chaos.” The hand, liberated, intervenes not simply in the cliché (only a *form* of representation after all) but in the visual field itself: the optical organization of the scopic field, ways of seeing and things seen. Foucault might have called it the “regime of visibility.” Destroyed are not only clichés: ways of seeing and things seen, but seeing itself. It is not that one no longer sees anything familiar – that form, spectacle, figuration are replaced by Figure: body without organ trying to escape through its open mouth. It is rather that in a catastrophe one does not *see* any more (“on ne voit plus rien, comme dans une catastrophe, un chaos” [LS, 66]).

It is not that the tableau is not a visual reality – rather it is no longer for the eye; it is not something to be seen. The catastrophe has transformed the eye and its function as an organ: its vision has been transmuted to a “haptic” function – a *touch* which is not borrowed but is uniquely its own as well as distinct from its former, optical function (LS, 99).

At the end of the three movements – and in a series of struggles which ultimately takes place between the eye and the hand – the optical field and the eye, both, will have been transformed – radically, as if by a catastrophe, a chaos.

3 RETURN TO THE BEGINNING

I am ready to return to the beginning, to turn to reflect on this catastrophe from the place of the subject – the spectator – who stands in front of the painting, at his place designated by the painting. Except that I no longer find him there (in fact, he vanished long ago: his place has been empty ever since “Cézanne’s lesson against the impressionists”):

I, the spectator, experience the sensation only on entering the picture and acceding to the unity of that which senses with what is being sensed.

(*LS*, 27)

(Moi spectateur, je n’éprouve la sensation qu’un entrant dans le tableau, en accédant à la unité du sentant et du senti.)

Beyond figuration, there is the Figure: sensation. Something that is in and of the body and not in the air: “la couleur est dans le corps, la sensation est dans le corps” (*LS*, 27). The spectator thus “enters” the painting, or rather the painting – the sensation which is painted – is in the body. This entry, however, bears no resemblance to seduction by figuration, to the disappearance of the Chinese painter who vanishes into his own landscape – becomes a figure on the side of figuration (representation). For as long as there is representation – play of the visible and the invisible inside the diagetic space that representational painting is – his position inside is not that different from what it has been outside the painting: he remains (in fact more than ever) a “being in the spectacle of the world.” He continues to be in a picture he himself cannot see and thus is subject to the Lacanian split between the eye and the gaze: “I see from here, yet I am being seen from everywhere”; he remains subject to an elision insofar as the whole of vision continues to escape him: “a picture is formed on my retina, yet I (the seer) am not in the picture I see.”

The disappearance of the spectator from in front of Bacon’s (or Cézanne’s) painting is rather the vanishing of distance: the painting “acts directly on the nervous system”; it addresses the flesh and not the brain (*LS*, 27). It is presence: “la sensation cesse d’être représentative, elle devient réelle” (*LS*, 34) – excessive, hysteric presence. The image thus has dispensed with every detour – eradicated the *need* for and occupied the *space* of every narrative, concept, signifier, “histoire.” At last, the distance which representation, illustration, narration as their condition of possibility introduce between subject and an original (model, event, referent) gets closed; the absence/death the original (event/referent/object) suffers in the course of every *histoire*/narration/representation (the absence and death these set out precisely and impossibly to remedy or forestall) is reversed as the “lost object” is finally restored to its presence. With the Figure, the struggle against death – the impossible promise and Sisyphean fate of every figuration, narration – comes to an end; ironically and paradoxically, it is with/in the Figure – outside every figuration/representation – that the forever deferred promise of figuration (of representation/of language) is finally realized.

Painting: a direct, tactile relation which permits no distance, no space, neither requires nor allows for mediation. Is this a pictorial fantasy? Is his the

fantasy, or the *rhetoric* of the image: a *dream* of a plenitude and a fusion even more perfect than the visual *impression* the image left on the eye, or else the spectacular *effect* of the image and its “rhetoric” on the discourse of philosophy? For is this not also a plenitude greater and a presence fuller than anything promised or dreamt by language?

Or a textual fantasy? “Presence, presence, this is the first *word* which comes in front of a Bacon tableau,” writes Leiris.¹⁶ Too much presence: no mediation, no deferral, no supplement. Is this not the “presence” the letter/the text – destined to be separated, always at a distance from its referent by Saussure’s bar – dreams of but knows not how to achieve? The promise the signifier does not deliver?

Or a textual paranoia instead? The “evil eye” of the letter excluded and looking in (as St. Augustine’s child) from the outside at this full, perfect, and sensuous union? For this image – of the image acting directly on the subject, on its very flesh – not only excludes but is achieved at the cost of excluding every letter, concept, sign, and which (exclusion) is its condition of possibility.

I recall, rather I am reminded, of *Irezumi*¹⁷ here – a filmic fantasy where the heroine receives a magnificent tattoo which is to cover entirely the skin/flesh on her back; the entwined figures of green and blue dragons enframe the angry eyes of a god or a warrior. The tattoo in *Irezumi*: an “image” of direct, unmediated union between image and subject. She does not enter but rather becomes the picture – its canvas and frame, its bearer and support.

Looking at this (literal and figurative) icon of union/fusion between sensed and sensor – the absolute erasure of difference/distance between subject and object – one must ask at what cost the profit of this intimacy has been achieved, and what unspoken desire is being satisfied here?

Irezumi, the bearer/canvas of the image tattooed onto her back – it comes alive, glows with/on her skin. Yet *this* image is obviously one she herself cannot see – not without the aid of a mirror, not, that is, without reintroducing distance/space whose collapse is the very condition of the being of the picture. “The correlative of the picture – to be situated in the same place as it, that is to say the outside, is the point of the gaze” (*FFCP*, 96).

It is only in relation to a gaze that we may speak of a picture at all, says Lacan. But there is more, for with the vanishing of the gaze comes invisibility: *Irezumi* not only cannot see the picture she has become, but she herself has become invisible (or shall we say, with Deleuze, imperceptible?): looking into the mirror all she/we will see is (again) a picture.

What do *we* find at this vanishing point – where subject vanishes into the picture? Is this the end of all representation, or rather the highest form of mimesis: mimicry? Subject vanishes into the picture, takes up a position inside it – becomes an invisible/undistinguishable stain in the picture. Something no longer to be seen. To camouflage oneself, one takes up a position on the side of the gaze which is looking; it is looking at me from the side of things, I occupy the center of its eyes’ vision, so that it may not see me.¹⁸

One has a better sense of the catastrophe now: it is the collapse of the *point* of the gaze that looks at me from the side of things, which situates me/apprehends me as a “being in the spectacle of the world.” In the catastrophe what vanishes

is not simply the eye, the organ, and its function/organization as purely visual. The catastrophe is the collapse of the point of the gaze – its blinding. And with it the entire structure – which, for the subject, hitherto organized the field of vision – dissipates to become once again homogeneous, undivided by the *split* between the eye and the gaze: the “I-see-from-here-but-I-am-being-looked-at-from-everywhere” and the “I-am-not-in-the-picture-I-see.”

Does this catastrophe announce the collapse of the symbolic, whose foundations after all are laid in the mirror stage, with the appearance of the gaze in the mirror? Or *is* the collapse of the symbolic – a return of or to the imaginary? To the *dream* to become invisible (imperceptible) – to be relieved from the burden of visibility, to see but without being seen? Is it not in the dream that the subject is not apprehended, not seen (dreaming)? The dream-image is pure/excessive presence. In the dream (just as in the darkness of the cinema, and this analogy between the spectator and the dreamer has often been remarked upon) the subject is not seen, not as he really is – *dreaming*. This apprehension is the function of the gaze and of waking: waking, I see I have been dreaming; I see myself in the dream/dreaming.¹⁹

4 POSTSCRIPT

My aim is not to answer questions, it is to get out . . . But getting out never happens like that. Movement always happens behind the thinker's back, or in the moment when he blinks. (DI, 1)

Is the catastrophe – *Bacon*, the painter, collapsing the point of the gaze – the moment, the blink, the “Augenblick” of Derrida, that *Deleuze*, the thinker, has been waiting for all along?

I see this image: the Figure trying to escape through the mouth forming this letter “O” – and ask: where is Deleuze in relation to this figure?

At first, Deleuze seems to be nowhere. He seems to have become imperceptible. (We might say that we recognize a semblance here – between Bacon who engineers the catastrophe the eye can neither see nor foresee and the thinker who writes: “Experiment, never interpret. Make programs, never phantasms.” For programs are “*but means of providing reference points for an experiment which exceeds our capacities to foresee . . .*” [emphasis Deleuze, DI, 48].) But to say that Bacon works like Deleuze, the theorist or the philosopher, is to say that Deleuze does no work at all. He (the text) stands as a mere observer, a spectator of the painter's labor.

Is this a case of abandonment (to the rhetoric of the image)? Is Deleuze taking the place of the spectator who always has too much pleasure in painting? (Proust, for example, who close to death and gravely ill, leaves his house for the last time to see that “yellow patch of wall” on Vermeer's painting.) Does Deleuze take “too much pleasure” in the images *Bacon* is painting? Is he swallowed up by *its* imaginary, does he disappear into *its* lure? Or is this only a ruse and a cunning strategy: mimicry, precisely – and Deleuze, not unlike Velasquez who paints himself into the canvas he is presumably painting, takes up a position inside the picture *be* “paints” of Bacon. (We did say that the scene in

this text is not of writing but painting.) He takes up a position inside the picture, takes the place of the painter.

In this latter case it is a strategic position – the only place from where an exit can be made. (Does not Lacan say that the symbolic, in the scopic field represented by the point of the Gaze, is universal – without an exit?) An impossible escape – figure escaping through its own mouth – will be attempted here, where the world is overturned, turned inside out – from the inside. But what phantasm – enclosure or determination – is *Deleuze* trying to escape? Thus camouflaged (as Bacon) what moment is he waiting for? Is it the catastrophe that would extinguish, even if only for a moment, the Gaze – Lacan's *Gaze* or *Lacan's* "gaze" – creating a momentary opening to the outside before closing up again?²⁰

Lacan's Gaze or *Lacan's gaze*: is it the *concept* of Lacan and the *discourse* of psychoanalysis organizing and structuring the field, or is it the "Seer," this Argus eye that the psychoanalysis of Lacan has put into position to oversee, as if in a panoptikum, the *subject's* every move in the visual field? But is it necessary, even possible, to be more specific about the bearer of the gaze? To distinguish the concept from its referent? Lacan would be the first to concede that the introduction of this sign – the Gaze – "constitutes a forcing"²¹ of reality; the discourse of psychoanalysis which leaves no other way out than the way in, and inscribes the subject in an order that is universal and without an exit, is the thinker's reality. The subject who is a theorist must engineer an exit not from the mistakes of his life but from the order of the text. He thus seeks out the blind spot and waits for the moment when the gaze behind the text blinks to traverse through a rhisomatic opening to something the symbolic order can neither see nor foresee – an exit from the symbolic, precisely.

BATAILLE'S EROTIC DISPLACEMENT OF VISION

ATTEMPTS AT A FEMINIST READING

Ladelle McWhorter

Scholars no less distinguished than Denis Hollier, Jean-Luc Nancy, and Jacques Derrida have made it abundantly clear that, where Bataille is concerned, one cannot write commentary; one cannot write *on* the work of Georges Bataille.¹ To attempt to do so is to fail at the outset. It is to fail to problematize one's own identity as well as subjectivity more generally, stasis, truth, time, and the primacy of productivity, all of which are profoundly problematized in and by Bataille's texts; it is to take up the position of grand, all-seeing master and to treat Bataille's discourse of elusive sovereignty as a kind of luminously present slave; it is to approach Bataille's work as a totality, an object, rather than as a self-violating movement whose silences and gaps are as significant as its words are meaningless. To write *on* Bataille is, thus, to do violence to Bataille. One cannot – that is, one *ought* not – discursively violate Bataillean discursive violence.

The distinguished have spoken, and the rest of us do well to heed, for Bataille's texts do defy even the deftest maneuvers of the commentator's pen. But if not *on* Bataille, where should this (or any) writing be located? How *can* one approach Bataille's self-lacerating texts? Hollier's, Nancy's, and Derrida's warnings put me in a quandry; in the face of them I do not know how to write.

Therefore, for the time being at least, I shall more or less ignore them. I shall do, instead, what all good postmodern scholars do: I shall offer, not a commentary, but a reading.

In fact, I shall offer two readings of Bataille's 1928 novel *Story of the Eye*. First I will read *Story of the Eye* against the background of American feminist analyses of pornography and masculinist supremacy. Then I will problematize that reading and attempt a second feminist reading, this against the background of Bataille's *Theory of Religion*.² In the process, I will of course do violence to Bataille, but in ways that I believe are wholly and perversely appropriate and

consonant with the violence Bataille does to himself and to anyone who reads his texts with eyes open wide.

FIRST READING

The world that unfolds in Georges Bataille's 1928 novel *Story of the Eye* is an unsettling combination of exuberant, youthful innocence and crude, almost demonic sadism. It is a world in which the ugly and the painful are as welcome as the pleasurable and the beautiful, a world in which, in fact, such distinctions seem never to have been made.

The story opens with the young male narrator – “frightened” as he is “of anything sexual”³ – falling in love with and becoming chronically aroused by Simone, a peer and a distant relative. Simone loves him in return and is also chronically aroused. The two engage in a variety of activities designed to stimulate and gratify their desires, activities in which they soon involve other youngsters, including “Marcelle, the purest and most poignant of [their] friends” (*SE*, 7). They masturbate singly, collectively, and mutually; they have intercourse, both vaginal and anal; they engage in both homo- and heterosexual oral sex; they smear their bodies with substances ranging from blood to raw eggs; and they urinate freely, often in each other's orifices. Their pursuits eventually have the effect of disrupting families, driving Marcelle to madness and suicide, and exiling Simone and the narrator to Spain, where, along with their friend Sir Edmund, they rape and murder a priest whose bodily fluids they mix with the eucharist and whose eyeball Simone inserts in her vagina.

These rather radical departures from adolescent developmental norms leave the characters relatively undisturbed, but the effect on the average feminist reader is far from calming. In fact, read against a background of critiques of pornography and sexual violence, the eroticization of dominance, and the masculinist disrespect for life that Mary Daly once dubbed “necrophilia,”⁴ the book is positively horrifying. It appears to instantiate the worst condemnations feminists have leveled against masculinist erotic fiction. Sexual appetites are insatiable; sex and violence are inseparable; and personal boundaries – even those that hold apart life and death – receive absolutely no respect.

There is at least one variation: Bataille has inverted the traditional roles. As Andrea Dworkin points out, most pornographic writing depicts the woman as victim.⁵ But in *Story of the Eye* it is Simone who is the most lustful and most violent of the characters. It is she who is most fascinated by the goring of the toreador Granero, she who seduces the ill-fated priest, she who entreats Sir Edmund, once the priest is dead, to cut out his eye for her erotic enjoyment. Simone is by far the nastiest, most savage, least human character in the story. She is no victim; rather, she victimizes, and most of her victims are male.

However, it would be a mistake to think Bataille has embarked on a program of pornographic affirmative action. We should remember that Simone is not a woman; she is a man's fantasy of a woman, so her victimization of men should give us some pause. She does not simply murder the young priest; she also rapes him at the point of death. Thus, by her very excess she can be reinscribed into either (or both) of two masculine supremacist discourses. She can be seen as a

lusty dominatrix in a long line of witches and bitches who tempt clean-hearted men from the way to God; or, insofar as the text is anticlerical, she functions as the tool of a masculinist desire for revenge against the father. Either way, the position she occupies in the text is classic; paired with the weak-willed and virginal Marcelle (see *SE*, 12), she is just one more literary whore. She serves as the feminine scapegoat and cover for masculinist debauchery, cruelty, and revenge.

Furthermore, we are prevented from redeeming any of this ugliness by interpreting the violence as somehow symbolic or allegorical, as pointing to anything other than the pleasure of violence itself. *Story of the Eye* resists any softening of its nauseatingly gory scenes; on the contrary, it willfully affirms total moral depravity. The narrator proclaims,

I did not care for what is known as "pleasures of the flesh" because they really are insipid; I cared only for what is classified as "dirty." . . . I was not even satisfied with the usual debauchery, because the only thing it dirties is debauchery itself, while, in some way or other, anything sublime and perfectly pure is left intact by it. My kind of debauchery soils not only my body and my thoughts, but also anything I may conceive in its course, that is to say, the vast starry universe, which merely serves as a backdrop.
(*SE*, 49)

It seems *Story of the Eye* is a valorization of the worst and the smuttiest that human beings can conceive, and, despite its gesture toward equality of the sexes – equality in lewdness – the work can be read as profoundly, if covertly, antifemale. If *that* is how Georges Bataille envisions the erotic, we might feel compelled to say, feminists ought to stay as far away from him as possible.

PROBLEMATIZATION

On the one hand, I do not want to discard the above reading. Sexual violence – both discursive and physical – is a horrible reality in our society, and it is irresponsible bordering on criminal for anyone to ignore or obscure that fact. Given current configurations of power and the high levels of danger they produce and sustain, anyone who undertakes to speak of the erotic ought to be subject (and ought to subject her or himself) to the most rigorous of critiques. Scholars who pooh-pooh feminist concerns about such things are at best ludicrously naive. On the other hand, I do want to problematize some aspects of the above reading and eventually to suggest that, despite the very real dangers any interaction between the current arrangements of power and *Story of the Eye* might present, one can read the work as a feminist text.⁶

My second reading takes as its point of departure the notion presented above that *Story of the Eye* is Bataille's vision of the erotic. Standard feminist criticism assumes that pornographic works are primarily visual, even if they are discursive. They are visual in that they conjure up images of women, body parts, scenes of the enactment of male power; and they are visual in that they stand as icons, representations, of eroticism itself. This is in fact Dworkin's criticism of pornography generally. Her fear, as I understand it (a fear shared by all of us

who care about women and children), is that pornography presents a kind of eroticism that readers or viewers will then take upon themselves to represent in their own interactions with others. In other words, one of the most fearful things about pornography is that it is representation that carries with it its own reproductive power.

It is not silly to suggest that *Story of the Eye* can function in that way. Insofar as one finds oneself aroused by the book, one might consider performing oral sex in an outhouse or rubbing raw eggs on the buttocks of a loved one. And insofar as one's desires might be awakened to more violent or outrageous possibilities – having intercourse with a corpse, masturbating in a confessional, urinating on one's mother's head, killing a man of God – we might question whether this particular discursive strategy of transgression is the wisest we might hit upon. Nevertheless, I believe it is worthwhile for feminists to reconsider the transgression Bataille's work embodies before we dismiss it as too dangerous or juvenily obscene.

I do not believe *Story of the Eye* is best read as Bataille's vision of eroticism. I do not believe the most coherent reading of the work takes it as an icon, a representation, a depiction of anything. After all, it is a story of the eye – vision – as an object, and as an object continually displaced. If seeing is what is being displaced in the text, how could the text be, simultaneously, an invitation to see?

There are a number of literal eyes in the story – Marcelle's eyes immediately following her suicide, Granero's eye put out by the horn of the bull, and the priest's eye, which reappears as Marcelle's eye lodged in Simone's vagina at the story's end. All these eyes are unseeing, and each is more radically out of place than the one described before it.

When Marcelle hangs herself and the narrator lays the body out upon the floor, he and Simone have vaginal intercourse for the first time. As Michael Beard points out, this is also the first time that one body actually covers another in any of the novel's sex scenes, and thus it is the first time that, figuratively speaking, the reader-voyeur's vision of either participant is obscured.⁷ This in itself may be an indication that vision is losing its power and priority. But vision is also being problematized in a more direct way. Simone finds the corpse extremely irritating. "The open eyes were more irritating than anything else. Even when Simone drenched the face, those eyes, extraordinarily, did not close" (*SE*, 51). That which is taken as the seat of subjectivity is no longer subject, but it cannot be reduced to object either. "Marcelle belonged to us so deeply in our isolation that we could not see her as just another corpse" (*SE*, 51). Marcelle's corpse remains utterly singular, unlike any other thing and thus uncategorizable, nonobjectifiable. In the moments after Marcelle's suicide the grammar of the common noun is disrupted; the very grammar of representation is disrupted, so that the eye – even the living eyes of Simone, the narrator, or the reader him or herself – can no longer function as the origin of the theoretical gaze. "Nothing about [Marcelle's] death could be measured by a common standard, and the contradictory impulses overtaking us in this circumstance neutralized one another, leaving us blind . . ." (*SE*, 51). We will return to this issue momentarily.

By the time Granero's eyeball makes its displaced debut, our young heroes are with Sir Edmund in Spain. The moment is full of meaningless coincidences. Simone bites into a butchered bull's raw testicle, puts the other testicle in her vagina, and has "a brief orgasm" (SE, 64) just as the toreador dies on the horns of a living bull. Simone's face is splattered with blood – whether from the violence in the bullring or the raw testicles she has variously consumed is not clear; the blood of both types of globe – ocular and testicular – mingles hopelessly. Granero's death occurs "under a blinding sun" (SE, 64) and "a sort of urinary liquefaction of the sky" (SE, 65) that remind both youngsters of Marcelle. But this displaced eye, unlike Marcelle's, has actually left the skull to dangle aimlessly by the threads of its ligaments and nerves.

The third eye, that of the young priest, completes the separation of eye from head. Sir Edmund actually cuts its ligaments, and Simone is able to toss the ball about like a toy. Simone and the narrator copulate while Sir Edmund rolls the eyeball over the skin of their bellies and breasts. Upon Simone's request, he sticks the eyeball in the crack of her buttocks.

But finally, Simone left me, grabbed the beautiful eyeball from the hands of the tall Englishman, and with a staid and regular pressure from her hands, she slid it into her slobbery flesh, in the midst of the fur. And then she promptly drew me over, clutching my neck between her arms and smashing her lips on mine so forcefully that I climaxed without touching her and my come shot all over her fur.

Now I stood up and, while Simone lay on her side, I drew her thighs apart, and found myself facing something I imagine I had been waiting for in the same way that a guillotine waits for a neck to slice. I even felt as if my eyes were bulging from my head, erectile with horror; in *Simone's* hairy vagina, I saw the wan blue eye of *Marcelle*, gazing at me through tears of urine. (SE, 83–4)

Not only is the eye now separated from the head, from the seat of rationality; it is also now housed in darkness, both unseeing and unseen except for the momentary erotic encounter with the narrator, and its new home is the seat of carnality – a vagina rather than a head. The displacement of vision is complete.

This displacement of vision is important for a feminist reader for several reasons. One is that, if we take it seriously, it undercuts the reading I offered above of *Story of the Eye* as Bataille's vision of the erotic. Another is that displacement of vision has been a feminist project for some time. Vision, as many thinkers have asserted before, is privileged in Western traditions as the distancing that allows rational access. Vision separates subject from object so that the viewing subject is able to encounter an object of observation without getting caught up in or contaminated by it. This uncontaminated observation, in turn, sets the standards for knowledge and justice that have shaped the modern West. And it is just these standards, many feminists have argued, that have oppressed women for hundreds of years. Only in a culture that privileges visual distancing could the pain of another – be it person, animal, plant, or ecosystem – be ignored; only in a culture with subject/object dichotomies

could women be “objectified”; only in a culture wherein selfhood depends upon radical separation could women and others be “specularized,”⁸ forced to play the role of mirror to sustain the illusion of a white male independent ego. Thus we might read Bataille’s *Story of the Eye* as the displacement of vision that is the necessary prelude to a more caring, more feminist erotic, an erotic of touch rather than sight. It is in putting aside vision – a painful and difficult process, since vision is the dominant mode of ordering in our culture – that a new kind of eroticism can come forth and a new kind of human body can emerge. Thus we might read *Story of the Eye* alongside Monique Wittig’s equally gory but clearly feminist novel *The Lesbian Body*.⁹

SECOND READING

Nevertheless, it seems to me, Bataille is not presenting us with violence simply in order to supersede violence. There is something too simplistic about reading *Story of the Eye* as the necessarily violent prelude to an eroticism of the gentle touch. I want to put forth yet another reading of *Story of the Eye*, this time working more carefully with the moment of Marcelle’s suicide and placing the novel against the background of Bataille’s *Theory of Religion*.

Marcelle’s corpse is unassimilable. Neither subject nor object, the dead body disrupts discursive order. Because it is utterly singular, it cannot be categorized, subsumed, named, signified. Marcelle’s vacant eyes pull Simone and the narrator out of the world of signification.

Marcelle belonged to us so deeply in our isolation that we could not see her as just another corpse. Nothing about her death could be measured by a common standard, and the contradictory impulses overtaking us in this circumstance neutralized one another, leaving us blind and, as it were, very remote from anything we touched, in a world where gestures have no carrying power, like voices in a space that is absolutely soundless.

(SE, 51–2)

Marcelle cannot be objectified under the sign of a common noun: not “corpse,” not “eyeballs.” Those eyes, now unseeing, cannot simply be seen, will not simply succumb to the categories of a detached theoretical gaze and the common language such a gaze commands. Marcelle is irreplaceable; thus her death is like no other death. Nothing can be substituted for Marcelle, and no word can signify either her or her absence. Her corpse is meaningless, because it defies all meaning. The arrival, so to speak, of the narrator and Simone in this discursively structured space that is nevertheless devoid of significance is figured here as a becoming silent as well as a becoming-blind. The displacement of vision is also a displacement of the commonality of language, of logic, of the subsumption of the particular under the universal. Marcelle’s eyes can be pissed on, but her corpse cannot be subsumed.

It is in this moment – with Marcelle’s blind eyes drenched in Simone’s urine – that vision is first and most powerfully displaced. And it is in this moment that theoretical (logical, grammatical) space contracts. There is no distance that

could be counted upon to maintain the separation of subject from object; there is no measure that could be counted upon to maintain the boundaries necessary for a reliable distribution of identities and differences – likewise, there is not even undifferentiable fusion. There is no stable ego, no law of the father, no phallic maternal plenitude. There is nothing nameable at all.

Thus, in the moment of vision's displacement, representation itself is displaced. From that moment on, *Story of the Eye* ceases to be a novel that can properly be said to be *about* anything at all. We must read it against the logic of representation. As Jean-Luc Nancy writes,

Alongside all the themes he deals with, through all the questions he debates, "Bataille" is *nothing but* a protest against the signification of his own discourse. If he is to be read, if reading rebels straight away against the commentary which it is, and against the understanding which it ought to be, we have to read in every line the work or the play of writing *against* meaning.¹⁰

Bataille's *Story of the Eye* is neither a representation of the erotic nor a depiction of a prelude to an erotic beyond violence. If it can be said to be anything at all – and to suggest it can is fraught with danger – it must be said to be a movement, a displacing; it is a displacing of the eyes of the reader as much as it is anything else.

I want to approach this work now from two different angles more or less simultaneously. On the one hand, I want to speak of the disruption of representation in the language of the text, particularly in relation to the words "les yeux" and "les oeufs," "eyes" and "eggs." On the other hand, I want to speak of *Story of the Eye* in the context of *Theory of Religion* and the movement in the latter text toward self-conscious self-disruption. In this way I hope to speak of *Story of the Eye* as a kind of self-overcoming that might be undergone as one reads the text.

I will develop the notion of a disruption of representation first by examining an alternative to the reading I advocate here. If, contrary to what I wish to do, one were to take Bataille's language to be representational, a central interpretive problem of *Story of the Eye* resides in the movement from eggs to eyes in the adolescents' erotic play. Fairly early in the story Simone becomes fascinated with eggs.

... Simone developed a mania for breaking eggs with her ass. She would do a headstand on an armchair in the parlor, her back against the chair's back, her legs bent towards me, while I jerked off in order to come in her face. I would put the egg right on the hole of her ass, and she would skillfully amuse herself by shaking it in the deep crack of her buttocks.

(SE, 10)

Later, while exploring the various possibilities afforded by eggs combined with bidets, toilets, and excrement, the two fantasize about what they will do with Marcelle when they free her from her asylum-prison. It is at this point that eggs

begin to slip over into eyes, *les oeufs* slides into *les yeux*. “It was after such dreams that Simone would ask me to bed her down on blankets by the toilet, and she would rest her head on the rim of the bowl and fix her *wide eyes* on the *white eggs*” (SE, 37). Then one day the pair sits watching eggs float in the toilet when

a half-sucked egg was suddenly invaded by the water, and after filling up with a bizarre noise, it was shipwrecked before our very eyes. This incident was so extraordinarily meaningful to Simone that her body tautened and she had a long climax, virtually drinking my left eye between her lips. Then, without leaving the eye, which was sucked as obstinately as a breast, she sat down, wrenching my head toward her on the seat, and she pissed noisily on the bobbing eggs with total vigor and satisfaction.

(SE, 38)

Shortly after this singular orgasmic experience Simone makes the equation of eggs and eyes complete. The narrator asks her what the word “egg” reminds her of, and she replies,

A calf’s eye, because of the color of the head (the calf’s head) and also because the white of the egg was the white of the eye, and the yolk the eyeball. The eye, she said, was egg-shaped. She asked me to promise that when we could go outdoors, I would fling eggs into the sunny air and break them with shots from my gun, and when I replied that it was out of the question, she talked on and on, trying to reason me into it. She played gaily with words, speaking about *broken eggs*, and then *broken eyes*, and her arguments became more and more unreasonable.

(SE, 38–9)

From this point (about midway) in the story, eggs are replaced with eyes in all the adolescents’ sexual games and fantasies.

From the perspective of a representational reading, this slippage between eggs and eyes must mean something; we must be able to account for it as metaphor. Eggs must stand for eyes and eyes for eggs, or both for some third thing. In short, this verbal slippage is the opaque hermeneutic center of the novel. Our job is to discover what it means.

However, if we take displacement of vision – and of the logic it entails – seriously, we need not be bound by this imperative. We might take the “meaning” of this slippage to “be” the slippage itself, pointing to nothing – “her arguments became more and more unreasonable” (SE, 39); the ordered space that holds together identities and differences is lost.

But then, what is happening? How can reading go on in the absence of reason, in the absence of clear identities and distinct differences, in the absence of any stable distance to separate subject from object, and, therefore, in the absence of a stable, identifiable reading subject?

In *Theory of Religion* Bataille speaks of a time before the positing of subject and object, a time before the grammar of representation. Of course there was no such “time,” since time itself is bound up with objectivity and the instrumentality it implies (that is, with the separation of means from ends and the

temporality imposed by projection of a goal). But if we may speak of such a "time," we might say that in it life was immediate and nonhierarchical. "There is no transcendence between the eater and the eaten" (*TR*, 17). The predator did not, and could not, objectify the prey. No clear distinction between the two existed; one flowed into the other like a wave flowing into another wave (*TR*, 19).

At some point, however, a hungry animal makes a tool. "Insofar as tools are developed with their end in view, consciousness posits them as objects, as interruptions in the indistinct continuity" (*TR*, 27). The tool-object, bound up with the aim for which it is designed, introduces the notion of difference – now, then; now when hunger occurs and then when the desire for food shall be satisfied. From this interruption emerges the possibility of objectivity, of time, and of hierarchy, all at once. The tool is seen from the outside and can be fully known, since its being consists in its potential for use. Thus utility affords the first identity; instrumentality inaugurates meaning. Ultimately, this event will establish the individuality of all that is; even human selfhood arises from this eruption of objectivity. All that is will *be* as things, for only things are distinct from the intimate flow. And all order, all rank, all intelligibility rests on this cataclysmic event; for only individuated things can stand in ordered relation.

With the emergence of individuated instrumentality, much is gained; however, something is lost – something, paradoxically, that was precisely what *was not*, what was not identifiable: immediacy, the flow. Hence, this impossible "loss" inspires the paradoxical positing of a something that once was: the sacred, that which was no thing. And the insistent maintenance of the thingliness of things is apprehended as a violation of the sacred; thingliness is injury done to the nonidentified immanence of sacred intimacy.

Thus there are posited two realms of being, the real (profane) order wherein things must persist in maintaining their own bounded thingliness and the unreal (sacred) (anti)order wherein difference makes no difference and nothing is any use. One of the passages between these two realms is named "sacrifice." In the moment of sacrifice thingliness is destroyed; utility is obliterated; sacred intimacy again holds sway.

From the perspective of real order, sacrifice is horrifying, for it destroys the particular being in the process of destroying the individuality of the thing; the real turns away from sacrifice as from its most serious threat. "The real order must annul – neutralize – that intimate life and replace it with the thing that the individual is in the society of labor" (*TR*, 47).

But, Bataille asserts, life is not, first of all, a thing; thingliness is fragile in the face of the overwhelming flow. The real order "cannot prevent life's disappearance in death from revealing the *invisible* brilliance of life that is not a *thing*" (*TR*, 47). Death is the moment when utilitarian temporality comes to an end, the moment when the real order with its thingly relations dissolves; it is unnameable, unidentifiable, meaningless singularity. "Death suddenly shows that the real society was lying" (*TR*, 47). In the moment of death – even if death does not occur as sacrifice – the endless deferral that constitutes utility is halted, and life, which ultimately is not useful, is revealed in its intimate meaninglessness.

Surely this is what occurs in the moment of Marcelle's suicide. Though her death is not a sacrifice, it throws the characters into a space that resembles the space of sacrifice in that it dissolves the subject/object structures that have allowed them to maintain some distance from the objects of their obsessions prior to this point. They are in direct contact with – in fact now belong to the space of – utter meaninglessness.

But so far even this reading remains inside the book qua narrative, qua representation. It still fixes attention upon the story as a succession of events. Given that narrative temporality is predicated upon utilitarian temporality, such a reading is apt to lead away from the nonmeaning of Marcelle's death. If we are to follow this text into the event of death it discloses, the method, the very temporality, of our readership must be shaken.

The space of sacrifice is an impossible space; nothing can survive there, and no word can be spoken. The sacred and the profane (continuity and individuality, meaninglessness and reason) cannot coexist. But if human being is to live and yet not live in denial of death, a compromise must be reached. In *Theory of Religion* Bataille explores one such compromise: the festival. "The festival is the fusion of human life. For the thing and the individual, it is the crucible where distinctions melt in the intense heat of intimate life" (*TR*, 54). Yet the festival, though a summoning of intimacy, is not a complete loss of all boundaries.

[I]ts intimacy is dissolved in the real and individualized positing of the ensemble that is at stake in the rituals. For the sake of a *real* community, of a social fact that is given as a thing – of a common operation in view of a future time – the festival is limited: it is itself integrated as a link in the concatenation of useful works. As drunkenness, chaos, sexual orgy, that which it tends to be, it drowns everything in immanence in a sense . . . [But] in the end the festival itself is viewed as an operation and its effectiveness is not questioned . . . The festival is not a true return to immanence but rather an amicable reconciliation, full of anguish, between the incompatible necessities. (*TR*, 54–5)

The boundaries among individuals are lost, but they are lost only insofar as they are reenacted at the level of the community. Thus, self-laceration produces communication, not annihilation. Festival is the ground for affirmation of animality and union that suspends thingliness without destroying the beings for whom thingliness is a living possibility.

Unfortunately, we have no more festivals. Our uneasiness with intimacy erupts in our society's denial of death and its channeling its violence to whatever it defines as beyond its boundaries – in imperialistic dominance of other cultures, in oppression of those among us we deem other, in hatred and erasure of whatever is considered out of order, irrational, and therefore evil. But, Bataille warns, if we are not to annihilate ourselves totally in war, we must find another way. Something like the festival must be allowed to heal the self-inflicted wounds we call our individual selves.

That healing – that reconciliation between meaning and meaninglessness, individuality and communication – cannot come through modern religions,

attempts at "synthesis," fellowships of sameness that maintain the separation of individuals by denouncing the violence of intimacy as evil; it cannot come through psychoanalysis with its worship of phallic wholeness; it cannot come through modern identity politics, through artificially constructed "communities" who guard their borders with the iron bars of definitive names.

What way might there be to counteract the violence of exclusion that maintains the rigidity of reasoned identity? Bataille offers *Story of the Eye*, a movement of thinking into the labyrinth beyond representation, a soporific for the rational, a festival of self-violation that is to be undergone rather than read. Bataille offers "the sleep of reason – which produces monsters" (TR, 113).

A narrative that shatters narrativity, *Story of the Eye* "is," then, a latter-day festival space. It does not annihilate the real world of individuality; still, it can displace not only vision but subject/object rationality itself, in part by exposing the mutual dependence of the two. Thus it can allow the madness that results from their separation, which is absolutely imperative in a society that is dangerously close to denying both the possibility and the (non)meaning of death. Such denials, of course, are exactly the conditions under which death is most likely to prevail – death, death camps, death of the planet under a noxious haze of productive excess.

Bataille names the space that unfolds as *Story of the Eye* "eroticism." It is not a return to sacred intimacy, but it is a space in which the impossible occurs: it is a space (unlike the space of identity politics, phallic subjectivity, and war) in which the loss of self – that is, the reader's self – the laceration and sacrifice of individuality, do not result in the end of human community – quite the contrary. It is a space in which the hierarchies that prevail in our world are suspended, a place in which dominance and self-aggrandizing aggression cannot take hold. And thus this giving over of self into the moment of communication is an eroticism that is at least compatible with feminist dreams. It is an eroticism without male supremacy, for it is an eroticism without any supremacy at all. It is the affirmation of the undergoing of loss of ego that, if it were to be conscious of itself as affirmative self-violation, would surely shake and perhaps disable notions of eroticism that amount to no more than imperialistic conquest.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this chapter, in lieu of phallogocentric commentary, I proposed a feminist reading. Then, in the subsequent decentering of representation, I promised a second feminist reading. But in the end, perhaps, I have failed. I have not offered a reading at all – if a reading implies a reader. In the end, perhaps Bataille's *Story of the Eye* defies reading altogether. Its violations of itself and its reader must simply be undergone. Its truth, as Bataille says of *Theory of Religion*, is "the truth of a scream" (TR, 13), a "prelude to the deepest silence" (TR, 13). Every festival must have its sacrifice. In the festival space of *Story of the Eye*, the sacrifice is precisely we who read.

**LUCE IRIGARAY'S
SPECULAR MOTHER**

LIPS IN THE MIRROR

Lynne Huffer

ideal republic
Language ripples our lips

Susan Howe¹

It's so hard to be present.

Most of us live in the past and the future. Today, in a new century, our collective shift away from the present expresses itself in terms of a "post"-time: ours is the age of postfeminism, poststructuralism, post-Marxism, and post-modernism. The new is no more than the past repeated, but in a form that is false, inauthentic, a copy.

As a result of this loss of the new and the true, we have both mourned and celebrated the cracked and shifting ground of epistemology and representation. The very project of cultural production, traditionally fed by a faith in originality, is put into question by a culture of repetition and sameness where anonymous subject positions replace creative agents. The production of meaning, in its postmodern sense, is a repeatable, infinitely reproducible process whose author has disappeared. With the death of the author comes the death of meaning; with the death of meaning comes the loss of truth. Thus to speak the truth is to borrow a voice whose truth has already been spoken. To speak is to repeat the already said.

These defining traits of our postmodern age have been so often repeated that they themselves have become empty clichés, descriptors that lack any substantive meaning. However, there is more than cliché to this story. Not everyone has come to see newness as an impossibility; not everyone has given up on truth. Eclipsed by the shadow of all those dead authors are those who have never claimed to kill the creative subject, or the particular truth that subject might speak. Feminists and other progressive intellectuals have been especially important to this project of thinking about truth as particularity in an analytic context where meanings are racialized, gendered, and socially situated.²

Unfortunately, philosophers have often ignored and even denigrated that progressive intellectual stance precisely because, unlike traditional philosophy, it pays attention to particularity, difference, and change. Despite postmodernism's rhetoric about dismantling truth, philosophy continues to privilege a general and universal visibility in the name of truth. A Western, white-dominated, masculinist version of the truth becomes canonized and celebrated, like a Platonic ideal, in a self-perpetuating, normative structure. That truth-telling system is what the French philosopher Luce Irigaray – a feminist thorn in philosophy's side – has famously called “the same” (*SF*, 301–457).³

Like Irigaray in *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974), I want to challenge philosophy on its own terms, but from a standpoint of feminist critique that ultimately hopes to dismantle the philosophical structure of the same. Like Irigaray, I want to ask how that challenge to philosophy can be articulated around the question of gender. But I also want to take philosophy, gender, and Irigaray's *Speculum* further than they have yet been taken. More specifically, this chapter pushes the feminist Irigaray of the 1970s beyond herself by placing some of her most important, early feminist insights in the context of the present, labeled by many as our postfeminist era. In the seeming indifference of today's gender play and gender trouble, how can we ask about woman? Or, stated slightly differently, in refusing to buy the postfeminist label, is it possible to return to woman, and to find different interpretations of the already said? In other words, can the ongoing feminist project of thinking gender – in the characteristic “post”-movement of thought thinking itself – open up its own possibilities, *as* thought, to the self-critical changes necessitated by that rethinking?

Indeed, it seems crucial, now, in this age of conservative backlash, to ask those feminist questions. My aim here is not simply to repeat the already said. Rather, I want to rethink the texts where questions about gender have already been articulated, but where they have been denied the full potential of their liberatory possibilities. Irigaray's work is particularly suited to that purpose, as the ongoing interest in her philosophy makes clear.⁴ So let us ask, yet again, from a philosophical perspective: What is a woman?⁵ How can we read, represent, and know her?

One way to think about these questions is to look again at the linkages between systems of knowledge and the construction of the feminine. Specifically, and more locally, the institutionalization of psychoanalysis and philosophy within the academy has produced two master codes through which the interpretation of sexual difference has yoked itself to a more general rhetoric of epistemological and representational crisis. It is not surprising, then, that a number of thinkers have raised crucial questions, particularly from the standpoint of feminist critique, concerning the ways in which those two discursive fields have named the limits of their knowledge as feminine. Crucial to my project is the way in which philosophy and psychoanalysis together articulate the related questions of woman, knowing, and the telling of her story through a metaphorical system in which the mother functions as a central trope. Without going into the specific political and ideological forms the collapsing of woman and mother has taken, it is possible to ask about the relationship between them

through the reading of two exemplary texts – Plato serving for philosophy and Freud for psychoanalysis – which articulate that connection. Asking about woman then becomes asking about the mother, from the double perspective of both philosophy and psychoanalysis. So, to repeat the same questions, but with a different turn: What is a mother? What does it mean to read, represent, and know her?

This return to the mother through a double reading of psychoanalysis and philosophy mirrors and interprets my exemplary “French feminist” model, Luce Irigaray’s *Speculum of the Other Woman*. Irigaray’s pairing of the Freudian and Platonic texts in the first and last chapters, respectively, delineates the paradigmatic construction of those systems of knowledge and sexual difference around the maternal figure. More specifically, *Speculum* links the Platonic quest for truth as transcendent illumination with the psychoanalytic quest for subjecthood as the loss of a maternal origin. This pairing of the philosophical and psychoanalytic models of sexual difference reveals a parallel structure of origins that, whether expressed as an epistemological ground of speculative thought, or a psychic explanation of human development, functions according to a logic in which sexual difference is reduced to a repetition of “the same.” Both structures pivot on a maternal locus of absence articulated either, in Freudian terms, as a primordial lost object of desire or, in the Platonic system, as the shadowy reserve of the shining light of truth. In other words, the structure of origins is constitutive of the structure of sexual difference. *Speculum*’s inverted speculation begins with Freud to end with Plato’s story of the cave. So doing, *Speculum* rewrites the psychoanalytic enigma of woman (What is a woman?) as a question that already anticipates its answer in the form of a philosophical parable of truth: Plato’s myth of the cave. Freud’s story of “becoming woman” (*SF*, 9–162)⁶ ends, from the start, in the Platonic freezing of becoming as being. In that movement from becoming toward the freezing of being, a collapse occurs, the collapse of the possible difference *between* women – between woman and mother, for example, or between mother and daughter – into a non-differentiated sameness. That sameness reduces the feminine to an equivalency between woman and mother.

How, then, might the story of becoming woman become a true story of difference? That question of difference and the writing of texts points to the reasons for rereading, within its own mimetic logic, Irigaray’s miming of those two exemplary paternal texts, Freud for psychoanalysis and Plato for philosophy. My own rereading of Irigaray is motivated by the specific strategic goals of a feminist practice that resists the indifference of a purportedly post-feminist era. It is also spurred by a more generally theoretical agenda. Taken together, both strategy and theory involve precisely the politics of difference and the horizons of understanding the writing of literature and history. More specifically, as a paradigmatic figure of the ground or origin from which difference is constructed, the mother not only links psychoanalysis and philosophy but also connects the strategic concerns of feminist practice with theoretical questions about knowing and seeing, epistemology and representation. As a figure of difference caught in a logic through which the disruptive potential of that difference is effaced, the mother provides a way for thinking about the

potentially *asymmetrical* relationship between strategy and thought, between political positions and theoretical moves. That asymmetry exposes the cracks in the logic through which the very terms of that analogous opposition between acting and understanding is constituted. Submitting the maternal figure to critique, then, not only puts into question the structures of sexual difference that define the domain of strategic feminist intervention but also disrupts the symmetrical logic of mimesis through which difference itself is reduced to fit an equation of analogical substitution. Is there a way to push beyond the metaphorical thinking that replaces difference with the same? If so, what role does the mother play in that movement?

My own particular reading of *Speculum's* maternal figure works here, then – as Plato works for Freud, or Freud and Plato for Irigaray – to exemplify, “for example, or in an exemplary way” (*SF*, 301) a strategic feminist textual practice of difference through which the logic of mimesis is exposed and subverted. The model for that different practice – Irigaray’s oft-cited strategy of mimicry – both repeats, as reiteration, and puts into question, as interruption, the verbal edifice that constitutes identity (Freud) and truth (Plato) around a feminine figure of absence.⁷ That absence can only appear in its veiling as figure; moreover, as Derrida has famously shown in his reading of Nietzsche,⁸ the feminine shape of that figural construction places woman at the liminal juncture where the quest for truth faces its own impossibility as unknowledge. More important for my analysis, it is precisely through the economy of metaphor that the feminine shape of this impossible truth operates the collapse of woman and mother.

As replaceable terms marking the category of the feminine-as-absence (the lost origin), woman and mother expose the logic of identity through which difference is subsumed into a totalizing truth. *Speculum* intervenes, as an exemplary feminist interruption, at the point of collapse where woman and mother are hinged as impossible metaphors of truth. Irigaray returns to the Platonic cave in order to read it, *this* time, as the impossible figure of an impossible truth. So doing, she exposes the asymmetry that threatens a mimesis whose illusory symmetrical logic links the economy of metaphor and the economy of sexual difference. That logic of model and copy, in its connection with a logic of sexual difference, constructs the potential difference *between* model and copy, mother and daughter, as a repetition of sameness. The collapse of the potential movement of difference *becoming* (Freud’s “becoming woman”) into the freezing of being as form (Plato’s edifice of truth) is based on an opposition between nature and culture: between maternal, womanly, biological beginnings and their dialectical overcoming through the work of representation or cultural production (*PF*, 105–13).

More specifically, Irigaray uses Plato to read the Freudian primal scene – that first conception between ovum and sperm – not as an origin but as the mimesis of an already mimed, more originary nature that remains inaccessible. Through Plato’s parable of the cave as a space of fictional illusion, the primal scene becomes a copulation of puppets against a screen of projection. Thus the “nature” of human origins and sexual difference, the natural model of biological conception, is constituted in relational, metaphorical terms, as the flat retracing

of a three-dimensional model that is always more originary, more organic, and more elementary: copied on the model of elementary organisms (*SF*, 12).⁹ The three-dimensional materiality of the Platonic space-time of origins is therefore already a false reproduction, an exemplary copy that provides a model from which we can only recommence an exploration.

This exposure of biological beginnings in “the uterine cavity” (*SF*, 347) as a product of figuration or metaphorization similarly exposes the mimetic logic that constructs woman and mother as the same, as nature. The feminine, maternal form of that nature is a metaphorical and necessarily impossible projection of a ground-as-earth, into the shape of a den, matrix, or womb (*bustera*).¹⁰ Mother-as-nature, the biological matrix from which life begins, becomes from the start the grotesquely false imitation of the pregnant body caught within the frame of representation. Those who would, as seekers of truth, come forth into knowledge from this womb of beginnings are therefore trapped, as prisoners of the rhetorical deception of the cave, in the mimetic play of a logic of identity: “they remain, all of them, in the same place, the same time – in the same circle, or circus, theatrical enclosure (*“enceinte théâtrale”*)”¹¹ of that representation” (*SF*, 303).

In this way, Irigaray shows how the deceptively three-dimensional cavern-as-*bustera* is reduced, through the process of copying, or mimesis, to the two-dimensional plan of a circus ring, theatrical scene, or frozen lake of reflection: a place where any transformation, including the biological change and swelling of the pregnant body, is revealed as a flat illusion. Going back to Freud, she further uses this logic to show how Freud collapses difference into sameness, through the formula: “becoming woman = being (like) my mother” (*SF*, 47). What happens, therefore, is that any possibility of maternal difference becomes assimilated into the substitutions of metaphorical thinking, so that the mother herself always remains off-stage, as the forbidden remains of knowledge. Invisible and obscene, the maternal figure is the unknown object, or inaccessible origin, that is both produced and forbidden by the truth-speaking law of philosophical and psychoanalytic knowledge. Thus the maternal *bustera* is both constructed as a presence and denied as a dark spot or a hole, simultaneously figured and left behind as the “behind” (*SF*, 425) through which representation is made possible. She is the “behind (of) the mother” (*SF*, 425)¹² that both lies behind and is left behind in every mimetic performance of truth. Thus the mother can only “appear” in disguise; as formlessness itself, she can exist only through the borrowing of forms given to her by the paternal, truth-telling system. She becomes a performance of nature, an act of the maternal event of copulation, pregnancy, and birth, that in fact never really happened.

This is the logic through which the philosophical and psychoanalytic systems of knowledge construct themselves as universal truth. What is crucial here is the following recognition: the totalizing power of this self-identical system of truth contains within itself the very mechanism of its failure. Through the process of turning, or troping,¹³ the metaphorical reductions of a self-identical system of truth reduce woman to a repetition of the same: “becoming woman = being (like) my mother” (*SF*, 47). But Irigaray points toward the possibility of a supplementary turning, what she calls a “hysterical

tropism" (*SF*, 341) or "extra turn" (*SF*, 45).¹⁴ So what can happen in that "extra turn"? More of the same, or something different? Irigaray suggests that the extra turn of "hysterical tropism" can crack open the dark hole, or blank, that collapses *women* in their *difference* into the sameness of an analogical equation. Those differences between women require a different model of representation in order to articulate themselves *in their difference*. What they need, in other words, is a different model of rhetorical relation: another way to speak.

It is difficult to know how to describe that other-than-metaphorical relation, since the system of description we have at our disposal is itself metaphorical. But one way to think about a different rhetorical model is to borrow the terminology of psychoanalysis. In anthropomorphic terms, the model of the "extra turn" might be imagined as an opening relation between woman and mother. The different operation of that other relation would involve another (dare I say *lesbian*) desire that, in its *extra* turn, would destabilize the Platonic edifice of truth. Still beginning in the logic of copy and model on which representation depends, the relation would shift because of the opening of difference *within* sameness. And that introduction of difference into the analogical equation which reduces women to a repetition of the same would create an opening for different possibilities of saying and knowing. It would move beyond the *false* difference of the heterosexual "copular effigy" (*SF*, 313)¹⁵ where woman-as-mother is forced and frozen into a forgotten, off-stage labor. So while we cannot draw a map of this new model, it seems clear that it would necessitate a rethinking of the relationship between difference and representation. Or, to switch for a moment to a political terminology, it would affirm the liberatory movement of difference and change. Difference would articulate itself *in its difference*.

An example serves to illustrate the collapse that results from metaphorical substitution, and the way that collapse is linked with the construction of sexual difference. In the chapter on Freud, Irigaray points out that the Freudian emphasis on the nature of male and female genitalia is, like the copulation of elementary organisms mentioned earlier, illusory as a literal ground of sexual difference. More specifically, she describes the Freudian conception of the role of the clitoris: for Freud, the clitoris is a copy of man's representation of woman's desire (*SF*, 31).¹⁶ Freud's story of female sexual development posits the clitoris as an earlier stage of a linear progression; he in fact describes clitoral libido as the spark for the later, more fully developed vaginal libido. The logic of mimesis posits the penis as the model and the clitoris as the copy. But then, seemingly out of nowhere, Freud unveils the vagina. This exposure of the construction of feminine libido as the copying of the penis forces one to ask: But what is, exactly, the libidinal counterpart of the penis? Is it in fact the clitoris? Or is not the vagina the penis's more oppositional, more feminine other? It becomes clear here that the symmetry of the anatomical logic of binary opposition is disrupted by, or at the point of, the clitoris. The passage toward "becoming woman" is revealed not only as a movement from model (penis) to copy (clitoris), but more importantly for sexual difference, as a passage from a first to a second copy, from an active clitoris to a passive, receptive vagina.

In that supplementary turn or passage, the clitoris falls away. Thus vaginal libido – the constructed truth of feminine desire – becomes the metaphorical replacement of another, unknowable (clitoral) event, the now forever lost third term of a dualistic, reproductive construction of human sexuality. This exposes the spot where a feminine libido – the clitoral “event” or origin that is lost – would but cannot be. “Woman” becomes a hole, and the phrase “feminine libido” mere words that signify nothing.

What would happen to the concept of the model – exemplified by Plato through the parable of the cave – if its visibility were rewritten through the articulation of a different, clitoral desire? If the clitoris is the lost “event” of feminine libido, might it be possible to set it in motion again, harness its supplementarity in an effort to reopen the collapse of difference into sameness, where “becoming woman = being (like) my mother” (*SF*, 47) means being a receptive vagina-as-hole? If woman is the lost “event” of the origins of sexual difference, might it be possible to set her into motion again through a self-reflexive recitation, or rubbing, at the metaphorical spot (the clitoris) where that loss occurred? In that different model as rubbing, might something different – between woman and mother – move and open toward something other?

These questions suggest that the point of the clitoris – the difference of feminine libido – goes beyond the blank of words that mean nothing. If “the words ‘feminine libido’ mean nothing” (*SF*, 48), it is because our language of tropes cannot say them. “How can I say it?” Irigaray repeatedly asks (*SU*, 207).¹⁷ My answer is: keep rubbing. If you keep rubbing the clitoral spot that seems to remain lost on man, something else is bound to happen. Irigaray calls it lips. Keep rubbing, and before you know it, you’ll find there are lips kissing: kissing themselves and each other. So perhaps the words “feminine libido,” which mean “nothing” in a specular economy of sameness, are the terms of an *asymmetrical* relation between clitoris and lips. These terms, then, rubbing and kissing, might pass through the mirror of representation in an *extension* of metaphorical meaning.¹⁸ Those irreducibly Irigarayan lips neither speak nor figure through a metaphorical economy but come together in their opening, in the rupture of the homological equations of sexual sameness: “Some lips are always able to open themselves” (*SF*, 358).¹⁹ Like the woman and mother who come together in that movement, the terms of the relation – between clitoris and lips, between lips and lips – are connected in their difference: “these rubbings between two who are infinitely close” (*SU*, 76).

So where do we go from here? From this place of self-critique that spirals into crisis, are we forever bound to repeat ourselves? Are we destined to return, to go back to the beginning – in yet another projection of trope toward freezing – to this chapter’s opening question, to the closure of the Platonic question of *eidos*, about the *what* of transcendent truth as form? Shall we ask, yet again, in an endless enumeration, the metaphysical question: “What is a woman?” (*SU*, 145).²⁰

Indeed, Irigaray herself has something to say about that particular form of philosophical speculation. For her, not surprisingly, the *what* of woman is precisely the question *not* to ask. As she puts it in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, in a series of interviews about *Speculum*: “*What is a woman?*” To that question, I think

I have already answered that it is not a matter of 'responding.' The question 'what is? . . . ' is the metaphysical question to which the feminine will not be submitted" (SU, 121). However, in yet another mimetic turning of thought, couldn't we ask: Luce, is not your truth-telling *interdiction* the metaphysical gesture *par excellence*? After all, your interdiction – "That they [women] do not ask the question in the form: 'What is woman?'" (SU, 76) – is aimed exactly at *us* women. Is not this particular prohibition – that women should not ask what a woman might be – a funny way to forbid the self-reflexive turning that, libinally, we might call masturbation? After all, as Irigaray herself puts it, "woman can touch herself, 'in herself,' before any recourse to an instrument. From that point of view, to forbid her to masturbate is rather amusing" (SU, 131). Consequently, is not the question's "metaphysical" status as another inter-diction (a discursive place from which we women should be excluded) reason enough for its rearticulation here?

Not, of course, that despite all that rubbing, we can ever answer the question. Any more than we can know about, see, or speak those lips. But perhaps in amusing ourselves by asking *anyway* – about the *eidōs* of truth, about its feminine form as formlessness (lips), about the lips or women (*elles*) that are always simultaneously here and "there" (SU, 74) – we can say ourselves in the form of a question that can never close itself off completely as form. As a necessary but impossible, perhaps masturbatory, *we*-question, *our* mimetic rearticulation can become something other than the stasis of a posthysterical saying, "sadly repetitive, . . . without a possible historiography" (SF, 71).²¹

So, we too can practice that disruptive "retraversal of our cultural imaginary" (SU, 157) by passing into and through the mirror of mimetic speculation, finding ourselves "both implicated by it and, at the same time, exceeding it" (SF, 157). This essay has shown that the simultaneous construction and effacing of "becoming woman" is integral to the logic of specular mimesis. The mother is both a shadowy place of origin *and* an infinite process of future becoming; she is both the cave as nature *and* the cave as an infinitely reproducible cinematic projection. As Irigaray puts it, "she will be the place of the repetition of the origin" (SF, 45). The feminine is therefore both eclipsed and eclipsing in the specular economy Irigaray describes: woman is both a silent ellipsis projected toward a future form of expression *and*, as that ellipsis, a coming to expression that will never arrive. Woman as mother is both the place of mechanical repetition that leads nowhere *and*, at the same time, the possibility of a repetition that *would* bring difference, the "extra turn" of an alternative future.

But, to return to this essay's opening question, what about the present? Right now, in the present of this time and this writing, our little clitoral trope has been rubbed into kissing lips. Can lips laugh while they are kissing? Can we laugh in our difference, but not know how to say it? I don't know, "from that excess, 'first' I laugh" (SF, 157), Irigaray replies. So we rub, and we kiss, and now we are laughing in the mirror. We are trapped here, in the speculum, but there is also something else going on: rubbing, kissing, laughing, rupture. We insert ourselves here – as a laugh, a *risa* – into the serious project of specula(risa)tion.²² And Irigaray concurs: "Women, among themselves, by the way, begin by laughing" (SU, 152).

More seriously, now, perhaps by rejecting the rigid opposition between work and play, between the ontological labor of *becoming* into *being* and the libidinal play of *jouissance*, that masturbatory self-amusement (whose interdiction is impossible and thus equally amusing) might transform the work of mimesis into another story. If the play of mimesis constitutes a “ludic repetition” (*SU*, 74) of a paternal truth whose seriousness is all-too-deadly, then, in all seriousness, let us replay it.²³ Let us practice the difficult “retraversal” of the mimetic retelling of a linguistic event – the *what* of a (feminine) truth that never occurred – which makes its appearance in an eidetic structure. Let us replay it, again, and turn up the voltage with an “extra turn” (*SF*, 45), thereby pushing the *plus de*, or more of truth, to (and beyond) its limit. In other words, if the metaphysical question *par excellence* is precisely, “What is a woman?,” then let us ask it again – as rubbing, kissing, laughing lips – in a different practice, or practice of difference, of another woman “becoming.”

Is this business of lips serious or funny? Or, more pertinent, perhaps, to our current postmodern condition: is it politically responsible to play (however seriously) such games? Perhaps, in at least a partial response to that closing question, the nagging *we* of *this* particular reading – the one that keeps popping up, huffing and puffing, only to laughingly disappear off-stage – can be brought into the possibilities of its own performance. For it is precisely that vaguely designated and unknowable *we* which said, from the start, that the story of difference would be doomed to failure before it even began: “But let’s say that *in the beginning her story would end* (*SF*, 47). But who are we to say such things? And who are *we* (yet another “we”) to keep asking such (im)pertinent questions?²⁴

These *we*-questions, in fact, are all too painfully relevant to the crisis of our current condition, the disruptive point of turning that feminist intellectuals have both inherited and participated in building. And indeed, as Irigaray puts it, we are “without a model” (*SU*, 193), as well we should be: there neither is, nor can be, a measure, display, or model of the right thing to do. We are the multiple forms of a question whose answer is impossible, the nonfigural opening of lips that remain “without model, archetype or example” (*SU*, 215). The problem, indeed, is that there is no absolute form of a *we*, any more than there are lips or a language to say them. We are “without lips, plus we,” “no more we” (*SU*, 211). Which is precisely why we must continue to speak: with difficulty, in our catachrestic extension as lips, as a perpetually self-critical *we*.

In the system of exchange through which our language and our labor construct the columbarium of science, we must keep ourselves in circulation and, at the same time, ask the question which resists the terms of that profit-making exchange: “*And if the ‘merchandise’ refused to go to ‘market’?*” (*SU*, 193). Would the “without model or display” (*SU*, 193) of our resistance also rupture the mimetic model that constitutes the very terms of our political refusal? Would that rupture “forever disrupt,” as Irigaray asserts, “the order of commerce” (*SU*, 193) whose economic syntax both constructs and excludes us? Even further, how do we know when it’s serious or funny? How do we know what we are doing when our own gesture of resistance threatens to turn itself into yet

another (metaphorical) pay-off as profit? Would our resistance to the stasis, sameness, and freezing of the *semblant*²⁵ keep itself from freezing *as* resistance?

Of course, we cannot know anything "once and for all" (*SF*, 349). Which is all the more reason for making the (perhaps) uncertain political gestures of another syntax, another model, another turning of our "sad poets"²⁶ into a different economy of laughter. We cannot know the other form of that other, never-ending story. Most important, we cannot allow our desire for a happily-ever-after – "once and for all" – to leave us, once again, in the collapse of an empty mimetic enumeration. Rather, our desire for difference – for the *entre-elles* of rubbing, kissing, laughing lips – must be tempered by the knowledge that desire cannot do it all. It is tempting to read Irigaray's sexy rhetorical play as an invitation to privilege desire and pleasure as the tools as well as the utopian outcome of sexual liberation. But in its emphasis on the *structure* of mimesis, *Speculum* highlights the systemic nature of an oppressive, oculo-centric culture. Simply replacing vision with a celebration of touch and sensual pleasure is not the answer, for any gesture toward difference is necessarily inscribed within a logic and a politics whose structure is given from the start, despite the force of our libido. It is in the *play of the structure* that our work – however uncertain it might be – must happen, and again, continue to happen.²⁷

In continuing to ask those self-negating metaphysical questions (what is a woman?), we may, at the same time, work toward affirming that unknown *we* into a different "economy of abundance." Indeed, in that double gesture of affirmation and negation lies the challenge of a self-critical questioning which, postdialectically, also points to something new. It may well be true that, as Irigaray puts it with the *élan* of a certainty, "our abundance is inexhaustible" (*SU*, 213). But the "other path" (*SF*, 454) of any utopian promise must continue to appear in the mode of a conditional that remains diachronically linked to the past. This is our challenge: to move onto that path while acknowledging, responsibly, the blind spots and the failures of the "*aurait pu*" (*SF*, 453, 454), what we *might have* been able to do.

It is still so hard to be present. We never quite know what we are doing, so we look to the past or dream about the future. If we decide to resist, here and now, we still cannot be sure that we are doing the right thing. Let us take, for example, the revolt of the prisoners described by Irigaray at the end of *Speculum*.²⁸ If we women decide, like Irigaray's cave-dwellers, to kill the philosopher-king, we may discover that we have simply killed what was "already dead: poor present of a copular effigy" (*SF*, 457). We may just be doing the same old thing, replaying a history of violence where, in Irigaray's reading, the imprisoned cave-dwellers end up "tearing each other apart" (*SF*, 457). The repetition of that violence – the denial of difference – is symbolized for Irigaray by "a killing that would have already happened" (*SF*, 547). Irigaray explains:

When Freud describes and theorizes, notably in *Totem and Taboo*, the murder of the father as founder of the primal horde, he forgets a more archaic murder necessitated by the establishment of a certain order in the city, the murder of woman as mother.²⁹

The memory of that other past – the murder of the mother – comes to us “in the conditional of a myth” (*SF*, 457), in the story of Orestes and the killing of Clytemnestra.³⁰ But, as Irigaray reminds us, “mythology hasn’t changed” (*CC*, 17). We cannot repeat *that* murderous past by projecting it into a future disguised as freedom. Rejecting the violence of that mythology means moving from a nostalgic culture of mother-love to a liberatory love between “sister-women” (*CC*, 31). To return to our beginning in this chapter’s epigraph: we may never, thank God, know the “ideal republic” first philosophized by Plato and poetically reinvoked by Howe. But we can start, in the present, in a language that “ripples,” to find the force of our rubbing, kissing, and laughing lips: to discover, as Irigaray puts it, “the singularity of our love for *other* women.”³¹

PART FOUR

FILMING THE (IN)VISIBLE

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INTRODUCTION

AND IMAGES ENDING

The preceding sections raise literary, philosophical, and feminist questions regarding expressive visions. The following two chapters expose these questions more radically by highlighting architecture and film. A new visibility comes to express philosophy's dissatisfaction with itself: suddenly, the monumental appears beyond dialectic recuperation in artographic, wildly filmic textualities. This "postaesthetic" opening for *Denken* grants an archiving, a filing, a building and filming that is incompatible with the tradition of ideas. In diverse and complex ways "artographic" expressions serve to address the gap left from the loss of dialectic synthesis. The monumental marks a filmic *Ersatz* or compensation for the old way of bonding with the concept. The "ideas" are no longer stored, yet the feeling of greatness lingers. As the next essays will show, architecture and film, although they appear to be mimetic, provide in the end an archiving that exceeds mimetism at least "monumentally." Most notably, a distinctive mode of "judging," a critical viewing appears on the scene in spite of filmic distractions.

Chapter 10, "Expressionist Towers of Babel in Weimar Film and Architecture," by Janet Lungstrum turns to architectural and filmic relations of the visible and the expressive. On her view, German Expressionist film and architecture manifest the most dynamic spectralities of an in-visible exchange in the arts of the 1920s – a poetics of glass architecture sketching "a technological-cum Zarathustrean topography." Lungstrum regards this neo-Nietzschean monumentalism as reflecting Eckartian mysticism and Heideggerian dwelling-in-being. She captures traces of this *Stimmung* in her intriguing reading of Taut's architectural and cinematic endeavors as well as Lang's films. Lungstrum calls into question modernity's vicarious and narcissistic desire to present a scenographic will to power, a filmic monumentalism indicative of the need for an in-visible exchange. She points to Walter Benjamin's detailed recording of urban cacophony as the most refreshing antidote to the German Expressionist dilemma of monumentalism. However, she underlines that both Benjamin and Lang overcome the alienation of industrial visibilities only narrowly, and that by streamlining the machinic confusion of the metropolis into lines of pure expressivity: Lang (and Taut) by means of the new law of cinematic perception and Benjamin by his aphoristic geography of interrupted dialectics. The modern narrative of advancing

to in-visibility that begins with a Zarathustrian spirituality, specific to the city's new spectralities, must, according to Lungstrum, be challenged by critical viewing even with regard to Benjamin's emancipatory "theory" of distractions, marking in part an archival freeing from the aura of representation.

In Chapter 11, on "Rewiring the Oedipal Scene," Kaiser and Leventhal examine Wim Wenders's hypertextual response to "monumental" limits of the visible. They argue that Wenders's film, *Until the End of the World*, inverts the conventionally perceived relation between the visible and the expressive. Here the expressive (i.e., discursive) is clearly visible and the visible is unutterable. Paradoxically, it is filming that undermines the elegance of the imaginary. For Wenders, as both authors show, filming means writing the ends of ocularcentrism. They manifest the writing process as "shooting," viewing world, our time, as inter-views in which no one in particular is interviewed. By means of filmic distractions/distortions "the discursive moment returns as the repressed, as a cracked window through which we can get a glimpse of ourselves . . ." Yet, this re-turn is not discursive in a logocentric sense but rather in the wake of a psychic economy that touches on a concretely in-visible presence of the human heart. Kaiser and Leventhal show that coping with negativity is no longer possible by either metaphysical (theoretical) or empirical (practical) means. Beyond reflection and technopolis, there is the novel, electronic dreaming/voyaging/filming at the end of the film.

EXPRESSIONIST TOWERS OF BABEL IN WEIMAR FILM AND ARCHITECTURE

Janet Lungstrum

I

Architecture and silent film, the primary synaesthetic media of 1920s Germany, interacted uniquely during this period to emphasize the latent monumentalism of the kinetic image. Indeed, since the very first film theorist, Vachel Lindsay, there had been an urge to realize what Lindsay in 1915 referred to as a grandiose "architecture-in-motion" in the "art of the moving picture."¹ Both Expressionist architecture and film were responding to, and attempting to experientially resolve, the same dilemmas of German modernity: city-living and post-World War I identity for the masses. Both media were establishing via visual means a radically new three-dimensional syncretism of projection and reception. And, as in any good Babel story, the demiurge-tendency in the German architectural-filmic alliance provided its own seeds of destruction.

For a precursor to this debate, one may consider Pieter Bruegel the Elder's painting, *The Tower of Babel* (1563), the early modern paradigm of mankind's ultimate, imaginary building of self-deification. Intriguingly, the Babel that Bruegel depicts is one that fully incorporates God's interruption of the building process in *Genesis* with a scattering confusion of tongues.² Contained therein is the very opposite of a monolingual, global monolith: namely, innumerable composite labyrinthine parts, presenting behind the façade of outer monumentality a dynamism of pending collapse and growing motion around an inner core. Following on from Bruegel, one could say that the inhabitants of industrialized cities in the West became, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the components of a mechanized Babel of modernity, one that is yet more confused in its relations and activities than the ancient *Genesis* model, forcing people to adjust to the "shock" of increased population density and technologized tempo of activity and production. This is also, of course, the Benjaminian definition of the perceptual experience of film and city alike. The tensions of modern city dwelling were first indicated by Georg Simmel in his seminal essay of 1903, "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben."³ The modern city, according to Simmel, is organically structured such that it functions according to both the codes of self-immortalizing order and self-destroying chaos: it is *babelesque*, but creatively so.

Shortly before World War I and during the Weimar Republic, an image of New York and its skyscrapers began to figure in the German architectural imagination, taking over from Paris and London and their monuments left over from decades of international trade exhibitions, as the embodiment of what a city could and should aspire to be: in short, the “New Babylon.” After the Great War, competitions for skyscrapers, arising alongside a new artistic tectonics of the new building materials (namely steel, reinforced concrete, and glass), became a new variant of the late nineteenth-century crystal palaces boasting of capitalist capability. But it is fair to say that the German variety added a metaphysical, mystical, namely Expressionist twist, as in the entries for the 1921 Berlin competition for a skyscraper on the Friedrichsstraße. The national loss of empire in the war had negated the prewar spate of Bismarkian monument building. German Expressionist architecture arose in and around this void of monument and nationhood and sought to fill it with cultural renewal for the denizens of the modern metropolis.⁴ Even the spate of German *Amerikanismus* was hardly American, but had a definite infusion of a metaphysical substructure. The ziggurat-fantasies and skyscraper-realities of Expressionist architecture were conceived of as serving an ideal far higher than that of the *Zweckmäßigkeit* (functionality) that was to follow in the later Bauhaus years. They are the early twentieth century’s phallic indicators reflecting and deflecting the modern human condition of technologization and commodification. These towers strategically adapted Zarathustran spirituality for the city, in a will to overcome the *Angst* and alienation of the metropolis through rising above it, thereby turning the city’s negative conditions into a positive material embodiment. The spiral organics and conjectural deformations of the ziggurat in Expressionist architecture unconsciously echo this double condition of technologized life, depicted in Erich Mendelsohn’s Einstein Tower at Potsdam (1917–21), Vladimir Tatlin’s design of 1919 for the Third International, or Bruno Taut’s Glass House built for the 1914 Cologne exhibition.

For all its antiurban rhetoric, German Expressionist architecture was intrinsically a design of and for the city, infusing it with a postwar program of new communal identity. The neo-Nietzschean visionary architects of this movement saw themselves as artists with an absolute right to recreate the city-site of Babylon for the glory of its denizens after the spiritual apocalypse of war. Their aim was to streamline the machinic confusion of the metropolis into lines of purer expressivity. Such architects, notably Peter Behrens and Taut, consciously worked with the metaphysical and social power that monumental architecture can literally express and harness in the viewing subject through the effect of its construction.⁵ As socialist pacifists – and naively unaware of their own hypostatizations of the new technologized building materials – they wished to make a purified monumental center out of the pluralized Babel, to refashion “great buildings,” and recreate a lost Gothic age of “embodiments of a primal moment.”⁶ In addition to the skyscraper, they realized that industrial buildings were among the most potent Babel-symbols of the modern age, and so they sought to apply a new monumentalism to factories, gas-works, railroad stations, water towers, and war memorials – not by decorating but by letting

them be “pure skyscraper” (*eben Hochhaus*) – such was the heavy dialectical sublation involved therein, in which building for eternity became superimposed over building for life. In his book *Amerika* (1925), Erich Mendelsohn worshiped the functional essences of both the skyscraper and the grain elevator.⁷ The Expressionist tower of Babel, especially as it evolved in its most programmatic form under Bruno Taut’s guidance, was hence far from “babbling” – in the sense given by Derrida to translation.⁸ Rather, it evolved toward the monolingual. That which Nietzsche had defined as “monumental history”⁹ was being represented as a mythic-organic building format.

II

Bruno Taut was essentially *the* publicist (or tower, so to speak) of the Expressionist architectural group in Germany, becoming the first leader of the “Arbeitsrat für Kunst” in 1918 (that is, before Gropius’s tenure), and instigating a messianic exchange of chain letters among like-minded friends called the Glass Chain (*Die Gläserne Kette*, 1919–20), and editing the architectural magazine *First Light* (*Frühlicht*, 1920–22).¹⁰ Taut designed, in effect, the first civic centers, or *Volkshäuser*,¹¹ which would serve people’s needs via massive doses of light and color. The ultimate building in these projects was a tower-like “crown of the city” (*Stadtkrone*).¹² Taut explains his ideal construction as looming over the town thus in *Die Stadtkrone* (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1919).¹³

The enterprise as a whole is a cosmic approach, promising an imminent globality of formerly scattered souls, hence a correction of what he perceives as mankind’s present babelesque (urban burnt-out) condition. To some degree this is, of course, an obvious and often satiated architectural urge: in his unfinished Arcades Project (*Passagen-Werk*, 1927–40), Walter Benjamin notes how the rebuilding of Paris by Hausmann in the nineteenth century likewise planned such dominant towers or feudal monuments for each *quartier*.¹⁴ For Taut, the architect is no less than a world-builder of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The World Masterbuilder (*Der Weltbaumeister*),¹⁵ for example, was the megalomaniac title of Taut’s stage play of architectural scenes and music that he endeavored in vain to have filmed.¹⁶ Taut and company saw themselves as servants or mediums of a future paradise, enablers of a new world-view – “mediators” rather like the final intertitle for Frieder in Fritz Lang’s SF film of 1927, *Metropolis*.

Taut’s most sustained effort in this mediatory role is his most utopian picture book, *Alpine Architektur* (1919)¹⁷ – inspired by his late friend Paul Scheerbart’s poetics of glass architecture (1914). Here, his fantasy-designs of Babel strategically combine three building elements: mountain, glass, and Gothic. He sketches a technological-cum-Zarathustran topography, worthy of the natural monument setting of the Alps,¹⁸ to recreate the city’s ideal image of itself, far above its lowland swamp locations that Zarathustra also avoids. There will be in this land, he states, manmade mountains of glass, a godlike “Kristallhaus” (3), and the icecaps themselves will be sculpted into a prismatic clarity of form that is suggested by the Matterhorn itself (20). Glass¹⁹ represents, reflects, and encourages the new collective, public transparency of crystalline purity –

suggestive of an extreme form of Heideggerian being-in-dwelling. The paths to the alpine towers, and the interiors thereof, all indicate a secularized sacredness inclining the traveler/reader toward a *Zweck*-free worship.²⁰ In these self-reflecting, self-reflexively constructed glass temples, architecture expresses its own sublimity to itself through its own transparencies. The skyscraper-ziggurat is to dominate its area as the *Stadtkrone* – a centering effect that can also be seen in Taut's explicit architectural-sexual symbiosis, in *The Dis-solution of the Cities* (*Die Auflösung der Städte*, 1920),²¹ of phallus and vagina, entitled "Die grosse Blume." The metaphysical sublime that so defines Taut's imagery can be related to another architectural picture-book, Hugh Ferriss's New York-based dream city in *The Metropolis of Tomorrow* (1929).²² Both are SF fantasies in which man is totally fused with his environment through his new technologized art of building. Taut's pinnacles can be aligned with Ferriss's planned skyscrapers, a "center of control" for each topic area of urban life (111), such as finance, science center, business center, power plant, religion, or philosophy (each with an equivalent of a Tautian *Stadtkrone*).

Beyond this basic towering principle in Taut lies his radical attempt at *cinematizing* the architectural experience. The text *The Galoshes of Happiness*, his only filmscript, was distributed in 1920 as the final enterprise to the members of the Glass Chain letter group. It is a fairy-tale for the modern age, an exercise in communal identity for adults, and consists of a series of experientially awe-inspiring architectural images. Throughout this never-filmed script the buildings are literalizations of successive screen-projections: they are described as "growing," "built of flames," or are transformed from one thing into another (*CCL*, 120²³): namely, airship, cathedral, alpine building, glass domes, with time- and space-travel both intermingled. Despite his elitist disgust at the tactics of commercial mass appeal being used in most films (*CCL*, 118), Taut nonetheless regarded the cinema as the primary vehicle for portraying the three-dimensional, all-encompassing, tangible architectural experience that functions as a "release from the [still] picture."²⁴ Thus, in Taut's understanding of the new media, there exists a literal transparency that successfully brings glass architecture to bear upon the new panorama of film, and vice versa.²⁵

A particularly stunning example of the essentially cinematic viewing experience that is proposed for Weimar architecture by Taut is his fantasy-design of 1919 for a Monument of the New Law (*Monument des neuen Gesetzes*) (*CCL*, 24).²⁶ This diagram bears Taut's hallmark of combinatory written and designed (expressive and visible) text. Despite his call for an architecture of dynamism, one finds an increasing obsession with the creation of stasis: the picturized letter is to be a text to be read first by his fellows in the chain group, and subsequently by the viewing public of this ideal monument as an architectural hyper-reality. Taut's paper monument contains the tension of a universalizing, proselytizing mission, with the multitextual, citational presentation of a series of new inscribed "tablets," as in *Thus Spake Zarathustra*.²⁷ The rotational effect of the law-giving tablets is suggestive of the necessarily intermittent projection and motion of film images. Taut apparently wishes the pedestrian readers of the monument – the first letter-cum-tower of Babel, so to speak – to read and feed

upon the messages on the transparent, colored glass tablets against the light of the sun ("one reads against the sky"). The tower is to be electrically lit by night, as if beckoning to an audience who crane their heads upwards in a respectful position before the cinema screen's flickering light with its silent filmic intertitles.²⁸ No matter how apparently babelesque, Taut is intent on creating a "new law" of cinematic perception with his heavenward text.

This tendency in Taut's vocabulary of expression is also apparent in his scenographic technique of sunlight radiating from behind the central tower. It is a kinetic motion that serves to shore up the power-effect of the static core, and he repeats the motif in *Die Stadtkrone* (65, 67, 68) and in *Alpine Architektur* (10, 17). Appropriately enough, Taut even has a solar-energy power station in *The Dissolution of the Cities*. The technique of aurora borealis becomes even more effective in film: Fritz Lang uses it in Siegfried's approach to Brunhild's castle in *Die Nibelungen* (1924).²⁹ The Tower of Babel allegory in *Metropolis* is defined against (or as) the sun, just before it falls. This effective symbolism was simply continued by the Nazis: the image of the war eagle announcing the Nazi *Wochenschau*-newsreel also had a convenient sunray backdrop.

III

During the Weimar era of silent film, Taut's visions for film and architecture alike were to find their closest realization in the films of Lang (who likewise possessed an architectural background). The fundamental link between Expressionist architecture and silent film was at first a marriage of technical convenience, given the lack of synchronized sound. The creation of a visually universal "Esperanto" for film, a language of inner and outer space, was initially brought about simply as a vital interpretative appendage to the melodramatic mime, light-dark contrasting, intertitles, and theme music. A compensatory, meta-physical expressivity arose, then, from this need to accentuate filmic visibility, and it is essential to note that Lang's particular style of directing, his special talent of scenic hyperbole, benefited directly from the film's silent status. To a public taste trained on the theater sets of Max Reinhardt, the Berlin stage producer at the Großes Schauspielhaus Berlin, and with a group of Expressionist architects like Hans Poelzig and Taut who had made the stage scenery for Reinhardt, the transition of set design from stage (and theater architecture) to film (and cinema architecture) was a natural step to take. But Germany's cinematic debt to architecture also arose out of plain economic necessity: during the Weimar 1920s, otherwise unemployed architects jumped at the chance to work as architect-painters on the huge film sets at Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft's studios in the (aptly named) Neubabelsberg suburb of Berlin; and, likewise, the highest number of contracts for public buildings built during this era was for movie theaters.³⁰ Taut's own career during the later Weimar years was to lead him away from Expressionist fantasy and toward actual contracts in the rationalized style of New Objectivity, according to which he constructed many Berlin mass housing projects (*Siedlungen*).

To distinguish film as an artform, Lang, in his lectures of the 1920s (which may well have been ghostwritten by his wife Thea von Harbou), actively

promoted its intrinsic gift of a suprarrealistic monumentality and enchantment (a *Zauberei* in direct compensatory opposition, therefore, to Weberian *Entzauberung*). But it was, of course, early days yet for a distrust of film's ideological power as a mass medium that captivates the audience into an oneiric, willing suspension of disbelief. In contemporary film theory, however, the jury is still out on the Babel-aspects of film: that is, whether the film-apparatus *can* be – or is, as Jean-Louis Baudry conceives of it, *duty-bound* to be³¹ – mimetically regressive and literally more-than-real, providing a heightened sense of reality; whether the mechanism of film *inevitably* taps the human propensity to participate vicariously and narcissistically in its representations of a scenographic will to power in something greater than oneself.

Vachel Lindsay, for one, had had no such qualms, advocating the benefits of filmic monumentality, and calling for architects to be active “crusaders” or Julius Caesars in the medium of “photoplay propaganda,” to recreate the (American) nation as a utopia on the screen (*The Art of the Moving Picture* 244, 251). Lindsay wanted a “World’s Fair state of mind” for the screen (249); for him, film alone was “capable of interpreting the largest conceivable ideas that come within the range of the plastic arts” (250). And so he states: “If there is the old brute lust for empire left in any builder, let him awake. The world is before him . . . why not erect our America and move into it?” (251) It was a call to which filmmakers D.W. Griffith and then Lang responded.³² German soil was particularly fertile for these conceptions of a kinaesthetic monumentality, or epic “world film”; postwar sensibilities welcomed such a call for the symbolic rebuilding of communal identity. Taut’s ideas of a “world architecture” (*Alpine Architektur*, 13) or a “world picture” of Eckhartian mysticism were poetically indicative of this need (*CCL*, 159). Germany’s film scenarios of the 1920s contained – in addition, that is, to the Expressionist effects of internal, labyrinthine spaces in such movies as *Warning Shadows* (Robison, 1923), *Variété* (Dupont, 1925), or *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Wiene, 1919) – a good deal of external, far heavier monumentality, which effectively outweighed the latter. Scenes of gigantic utopianism proliferate, as in collective-feudal identity myths (*The Nibelungs*, *Faust* [Murnau, 1926]) and the uniquely German genre of mountain films. Indeed, Taut’s gothic glass domes of *Alpine Architektur* obviously serve as the inspiration for the dream sequence at the end of Arnold Fanck’s mountain film of 1926, *The Holy Mountain*; and Leni Riefenstahl’s film, *The Blue Light* (1932), stars herself climbing a decidedly Tautian Mount Cristallo, crowned with a treasure of glowing crystals. In both Lang and Taut, the aims of filmic empire-building are aligned with the Expressionist correspondence-theory of actor, costume, and gesture in order to attain a perfect synergy with the setting. While Lang, the pragmatic proponent of “distractive” (*Zerstreuung*), applied these effects of immensely crafted *mise-en-scène* simply to temporarily entertaining (settling the postwar “nerves” of) his tired mass public at the end of a hard working day (“Der künstlerische Aufbau”), Taut the idealist wished to transform people permanently. Despite this divide between the two, both adhere to the Lindsay-line of cinematic empire-building by prescribing an artistic “sublation” for their audiences.

Lang’s directorial addiction to architectural monumentalism during his

silent phase of the 1920s is most evident in his repetition of static, symmetrical scenes: the postwar Siegfried Kracauer was to condemn them as a protofascistic "triumph of the ornamental over the human" (*CH*, 95³³), while Lotte H. Eisner used the more neutral term of "geometric groupings" (*HS*, 160). The actors themselves are diminished into points of reference in the making of the monument, as in the scene of Death standing before his huge Wall in *Destiny* (1921), or the Incas' sacrifice ceremony before the temple in *Spiders* (1919). The work of Lang's screen architect Erich Kettelhut³⁴ is particularly in evidence in *Metropolis*'s totalitarian-style sports arena as it dwarfs its athletes, or in *The Nibelungs*' hierarchically grouped clans before the huge medieval castles. The figural dress of Kriemhild herself is, before Siegfried's death, an encoded monument of light – and thereafter of darkness.³⁵ The feudal scenario of height and center is simply technologized in *Metropolis*: notwithstanding the scenes of chaotic disorder after the fall of the machinic Babel, almost each scene continues to impose a centralized focus, one that guides and controls the spectator's gaze into a strict symmetry of attention. Even when the workers in Maria's allegory of the Tower of Babel storm the monument, they do so as its components surge forth upon the center, just as they had built it: namely, in columns of men. In short, as many of Lang's scenes as possible are architecturalized, so to speak, into a Babel formation. This monumentalism is sustained by a process of apocalypse and uplift, "Zerstören und dann wieder aufbauen," which is how Lang (or his wife) describes his inflated Expressionist technique ("Der künstlerische Aufbau des Filmdramas"). In actuality, his films tend to follow this principle by reversing its order from ascent into chaos, following thereby the traditional extreme hubris of Babel: in *The Nibelungs* this is programmatically cut into the film's two parts, from Siegfried's triumphal slaying of the dragon, mounting of Brunhild's mountain castle), and domination of the Worms castle, to his death and Kriemhild's revenge in the second part, which witnesses the destruction of misused feudal power (Hagen) and the burning of Attila's castle in the final scene.³⁶ Likewise, in *Metropolis*, when the cathedral sculpture of the Grim Reaper starts to move, it signifies not only the release of an untrammelled chaotic sexuality in the robot-Maria³⁷ (another "architecture-in-motion") but the literal smashing and flooding of the underground power plant (i.e., the Moloch that had previously killed the workers), the "base" that had supported the false consciousness, or skyscraper-"superstructures," of the capitalist city above.

One can easily undermine Lang's enthusiasm for scenic effect by contrasting his director's position with that taken by Nietzsche in his critique of the exaggerated fables involved in an excess of "monumental history" as a (Wagnerian) "collection of 'effects in themselves'" (*SW*, 1, 261).³⁸ Indeed, precisely this accusation has been leveled at Lang as a protofascist precursor that Riefenstahl and Albert Speer would both subsequently emulate in their monument building, in screen and stone, for the Reich. One can also say, with Lang himself, that he experienced a turning-point or *Wende* with *M*, his first sound film in 1931, as the conscious end to his monumentalism phase, because he began to see to which purposes such film techniques of grand visual gesturing could be applied. A more practical explanation of events is simply that sound offered

him a great variety of new directions in plot management. Until this point, however, one can infer that while Taut saw film as a means to express the essence of the architectural, Lang firmly believed in architecture as a means to express the best special effects of the filmic. Hitler picked up on both strands: Taut's word, *Stadtkrone*, was adopted as the term for Hitler vis-à-vis the State (EA, 206–7), and Goebbels asked Lang (unsuccessfully) to make Nazi propaganda films.

Throughout the 1920s, Lang consistently defines his directorial art as an architecturalized “tempo.”³⁹ The power of this effect he delegates in his role of “leader of the game” to the skills of his film-set architects and projectionists and to a host of lesser workers. Evidently he would relive his own Babel-building enterprise during the making of every film. What becomes, then, of the spectators of such an enterprise? What position does Lang have for them and for their perspective?⁴⁰ They are to behave like the enthusiastic crowds beholding the vertical assembly building and the emerging rocket in Lang's *Woman to the Moon* of 1929.⁴¹ The skyscraper here is a container that opens up to reveal the moving Babel within. As a theme within a theme, there is in this scene perhaps the very epitome of Vachel Lindsay's predilection for film as an “architecture-in-motion”: for the rocket moves through time and space, and even reaches the moon.

The Babel-effect on urban spectatorship was not just a question of the screen image but of the entirety of the audience's physical location in relation to the screen itself. The Ufa motion pictures, as they were presented nightly in the newly built Berlin “palaces,” helped create a new mythology of place for the working masses. For Kracauer's contemporary acerbic eye, they amounted only to a “Gesamtkunstwerk der Effekte”⁴²: in these grand “light-play-houses” (*Lichtspielhäuser*), the audience members were reducible to digits to be consumed in a consumer economy, occupying not a space of participation but an overprescribed, ordered living space before the screen-as-altar. Indeed, Kracauer's fears would appear to be justified in an unrealized project by Taut of 1924 for a movie amphitheatre (“Bildvorführungen für liegende Zuschauer”).⁴³ This improbable design, ostensibly intended by Taut for hospital patients who could not sit up and who would have to be wheeled into the auditorium in their beds, takes the logic of the letter-monument even further. It is an auditorium which rather tellingly reverses the angle of visual projection and relocates spectators to a supine position on rows of couches tiered *below* the screen, as if they were patients of a flawed modernity undergoing an intended psychological cure via the monumental viewing experience.⁴⁴ The efficiency of film for such purposes was clearly recognized by Taut, since it could, if used according to his philosophy (namely as a medium for the experience of a virtual architectural sublime), reach far more people than could actual buildings. In his inverted vision of movie-viewing, Taut has unconsciously given a true (hence grotesque) reflection of the effect filmic monumentalism, in its extreme form, would like to have.

IV

In this way, then, the “architecture-in-motion” of monumentalist silent films by Lang and the Expressionist Babel architecture of Taut can be seen as united in their efforts to bring about a sublation of the dialectic, a static or frigid viewing sublime, and a unification of mass spectatorship. By way of attitudinal antidote, and in order to engage a more truly pluralistic or *babelesque* Weimar representation of the modern metropolis and its technologized living conditions than is offered by either Tautian metaphysics or Langian pragmatics, one can alternatively seek out the non-sense of the Dada movement or other more topographical cinema like the montage-circuitry work of Walter Ruttmann in his stylized documentary, *Berlin, Symphony of a Great City* (1927). A powerfully clear reevaluation of the Expressionist Babel is offered by Benjamin. As a Marxist, Benjamin occupies a somewhat ambiguous position with regard to the bourgeoisie’s “constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production.”⁴⁵ After all, such apparently pointless revolutionary activity by the bourgeois obsession with overproduction has helped bring about technological advances, like the nineteenth century’s building with glass and iron, or the invention of photography, and hence vast changes in the materialist historical process of modernity; in short, overproduction has created the urban cacophony of existence that Benjamin, as the most faithful recorder of these shocks and noises, evidently relishes rather than condemns.

In his now-famous film essay of 1935, “The Work of Art in the Age of Technical Reproduction” (“Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit”), Benjamin provides an architectural commentary alongside his manifesto of encouragement for a proto-socialist aesthetics of film-spectatorship. Viewing desire consists for Benjamin of an enlightened wish by the masses to “bring things nearer,” to destroy the old distancing-effect of the auratic work of art.⁴⁶ He locates the archetypal interrelationship of architecture and film as a critical event for the public when he states: “Architecture has always contained the prototype of a work of art, the reception of which ensues by means of distraction and the collective” (I: 2, 504) – two aspects which for Kracauer are being exploited on the screen. But according to Benjamin, the crucial state of critical viewing is not outweighed by distraction, due to the fact that a habitual, or “tactile,” operation accompanies the more contemplative, or “optical,” experience of film and architecture alike, providing thereby a safeguard for both from the mire of reauratized “cult value” (I:2, 505).

Now, Benjamin was evidently presenting a best-case (or surrealist) scenario here as far as film’s other (i.e., monumentalist) proclivities are concerned. After all, that which Benjamin so clearly perceives as an “aestheticization of politics” (I:2, 508), the fascist abuse of mass scenic representation occurring in Germany even as he wrote and rewrote this essay, was a *Mabuse*-framework that was not born sui generis of fascism in 1933, but was an extension of something pre-existent in the recent history of German Expressionism. This is not to say, however, that the relationship of the Expressionist monument to German silent film simply amounted to a direct conspiracy to produce Riefenstahl’s *Triumph of the Will* of 1935.⁴⁷ Nonetheless, the fatal trick of the Babel-methodology in

Taut and in Lang is, to use Benjamin's term, an overly "optical" worship of the phallic symbol's size and mass – an erect stasis taking over from intended dynamism, and a disempowerment for the citizen occurring under the guise of scopophilic fulfillment (an objectification that becomes the fate of the viewing subject of a successful propaganda film). Clearly, Benjamin (particularly in the wake of Adorno's criticisms of the essay) was cognisant of this reverse-angle consequence. Referring to the "monster rallies" depicted in Nazi *Wochenschau*-films, he expresses his concern for the masses becoming subsumed by their own screen-image: "Mass reproduction is met head-on by the reproduction of the masses themselves" (I:2, 506).

Despite the contradictions emerging from his wishful thinking for film in its age of fascistic reproducibility, Benjamin offers, in his magnum opus *The Arcades Project*, perhaps the most refreshing antidote to date to the German Expressionist dilemma of monumentalism in film and architecture. The displacement of century and place that occurs in *The Arcades Project* from Weimar Berlin to Baudelairean Paris has everything to do with Benjamin's similarly displaced status in French exile during the years of writing. *The Arcades Project* is as a textual entity a tower of Babel in its own right, and was conceived of in this vein: it cites a babelesque logic by citing ad infinitum rather than explaining, and listing enough instances of social and technological urban development of nineteenth-century Paris until the incremental changes in the base reach breaking point, and expose, by implication, the new world-view of the 1920s and 1930s. Benjamin calls this technique of his a way of coming to view the whole, the greater perspective, through the smallest components. It is an architectural montage-effect through history: "... to erect the largest constructions from the smallest, sharply finished building components. Indeed, to discover the crystalized shape of the total happening by analyzing moments in their small singularity" (GS, 1, 575).

This miniaturization of Paris's monuments to industry and to itself offers a refreshingly alternative story line within the Babel thematic, particularly in contrast to that of Taut. Benjamin bequeaths a brilliant assortment of the previous one hundred years of monument building in the modern metropolis; it is, moreover, an intrinsically consistent effort to bring writing in line with its topic, in this case as a plastic, three-dimensional art of representation that is wholly part of the materialist historical process.⁴⁸ As Benjamin states, the montage-effect of literature was originated only after first emerging in the actual building principles of iron (GS, 1, 233). Unlike Taut's messianic, fantastic urges to change the state of monumental architecture for the future, Benjamin's investigation into monuments burrows, *à la* Kafka, in order to hollow out the structure; he engages in a genealogical investment with the textual-architectural past of Paris. Taut goes cosmic, while Benjamin goes underground, and yet both are investigating the *Baukunst* of Babel. Taut wishes to sterilize the plurality of the city by purifying it of its filth, its modes of production, its traffic jams, its prostitution – in short, its false consciousness. Benjamin, on the other hand, does not judge: rather, he relishes the chaos, shocks, and confusions of the metropolis, preferring to partake in the delusion-ridden state of lowly babble than to strive for any elitist heights.

Benjamin takes the infamous “Haussmannization” of Paris as his starting-point. He effectively inverts the monumentalism of Haussmann’s plan for the city, by showing that the voiding effect intended by the Second Empire to rid the city of the danger of future barricades by the working classes, by effectively destroying their neighborhoods and widening the streets (*GS*, 1, 56), did not remove the innate metropolitan tendency to recreate itself as babelesque organism. As in Bruegel the Elder’s painting, Benjamin’s Paris is full of holes. It is an allegorical, not a monumentalist, “architecture-in-motion.” Paris is a Vesuvius, a “threatening, dangerous mountain” (*GS*, 1, 134), and yet her babelism is not one of spectator control but one of explosive-expansive chaos (without any entropic flooding as in Lang). Benjamin produces a leveling effect (but not a demolition) with regard to the monument: for all of Paris’s collective architecture is monumental, in the sense of a “dream-house-picture” (*Traumhausgebilde*, *GS*, 2, 1012) – not just the Arc de Triomphe,⁴⁹ the iron-and-glass palaces built as display halls for the grand expositions, and indeed all the iron constructions of empire-building (*GS*, 1, 45) – but also the railroad stations and warehouses, and above all the collective areas like arcades⁵⁰ and gateways (equally of iron and glass), as well as cemeteries and brothels (*GS*, 1, 134–5). Like Taut, Benjamin appreciates the social transformations induced by the new building material of glass, but unlike Taut he bases his mythology on what has already been constructed and has effected material change in the lives of people, rather than on a visionary architecture of futurism.

Benjamin’s building plan for Paris is thus an overlay to that of Haussmann. Moreover, he generates an implicit film commentary throughout his text, one that is indirectly responding to the cinematic monumentalism of the 1920s. “Couldn’t a riveting film be gained from the map of Paris?” wonders Benjamin in a typical textual blend of the topographical and the cinematic (*GS*, 1, 135), as he muses on a Ruttmannesque version for the Paris that his text is rebuilding.⁵¹ The roving eye of the nineteenth-century *flâneur*, who experiences a century’s worth of buildings as he strolls, has now been updated by the technologized eye of the moving camera (*GS*, 1, 135). Via such references to film, Benjamin is constantly treating his text of nineteenth-century Paris with anachronistic irony. Film in *The Arcades Project* is always already architectural, for all “construction has taken on the role of the subconscious” (*GS*, 1, 46)⁵²; indeed, the buildings and passages of Paris that Benjamin repeatedly stresses are the direct precursors to the monuments and labyrinths of the Expressionist cinematic experience. It was in the arcades that people paid to witness their first mechanized, prefilmic representations in the “panoramas.” The monumental utopias of the nineteenth century were iron, states Benjamin, and now they are the transparency of Scheerbartian “glass architecture”⁵³ and the new panorama of film (*GS*, 1, 46).

From the destruction of Paris’s old myth by Haussmannian reason (or from the extension of the Expressionist monumentalism of Lang and Taut into Nazism) Benjamin thus resurrects modernity’s new arcadia from its own arcades: a new Babel, montage-style, a geography of “interrupted dialectics” (*Dialektik im Stillstand*, *GS*, 1, 55). This, a cinematic still that is altogether unlike the stasis of the Nazi monumentality being constructed at the time the

exiled Benjamin was researching in his Arcades Project in Paris.⁵⁴ For, in the final analysis, as Benjamin points out, the 12,000 monadological iron pieces which were put together under the name of the Eiffel Tower, a monument built to glorify the host city for the 1889 World Exhibition, are the same materials as those used in the arcades (*GS*, 1, 223). It is best, then, to bear in mind Benjamin's piecemeal version of the city as "trace" (*Spur*, *GS*, 1, 560) when one confronts the filmed images of Hitler and his architect Albert Speer on their colonizing "visit" to an empty⁵⁵ Paris in 1940 just to compare themselves auratically to the monuments.⁵⁶ In face of the reified staging of Hitler measuring (or merging) himself with the Eiffel,⁵⁷ Benjamin the collector, the *flâneur* with the movie camera of citational textuality, leaves his readers with the minor triumph of the montage-monument built only on the "yardstick of the 'smallest'" (*GS*, 1, 233).

REWIRING THE OEDIPAL SCENE

IMAGE AND DISCURSIVITY IN WIM WENDERS'S JOURNEY UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD

Volker Kaiser and Robert S. Leventhal

Das Echte – jenes Ursprungssiegel in den Phänomenen – ist Gegenstand der Entdeckung, eine Entdeckung, die in einzigartiger Weise sich mit dem Wiedererkennen verbindet.

Walter Benjamin¹

I

Where to begin? Where to start the consideration and analysis of an artistic product, in this case a moving picture, which not only pretends to be a post-modern, technological reproduction of a multiplicity of various classical myths (Oedipus, Narcissus, Ulysses) that have attained prominent status in either psychoanalytic or literary criticism, but of a movie which also professes to *be* what it narrates in its seemingly infinite journey “until the end of the world?” To raise this question about the beginning of an epic journey which – according to Georg Lukacs – would not even have been conceivable under the historico-philosophical conditions of modernity, to raise this question about the origin of a journey until the end of the world, and to raise it at least twice, is to ask for a topography of origins.²

From a topographical perspective, the quest for the origin is infinitely deferred to the journey until the end of the world. However, this point, the *telos*, the end, the final destination and apocalyptic revelation of the origin is never quite reached by the film either. Rather, it is simulated in the intentional destruction of a nuclear satellite which has led to a temporary suspension of all communication between the tropical as well as topical center of the movie and the supposedly destroyed world surrounding it. Moreover, at the moment we – as viewers – seemed to have reached the end of the world, that is the point of an epistemological uncertainty regarding the continuity of its existence, we are

reminded of the fact that the center of the movie has already been fractured and displaced by virtue of its multiple evocations at various different stages during the journey. This displacement takes place in the medium of the movie's rock music, which performs a multiplicity of mutually exclusive functions, stretching from the pole of disruption to the pole of mediation and transition.³ Thus, the movie's title *Until the End of the World* – itself a quotation of the song written by the Irish rock group U2 which we listen to at the end of the movie when Claire circles the planet Earth in a spaceship – has already been encountered well before the end, namely at the point at which Claire catches up with Trevor/Sam Farber, rescuing him from going blind, and at the moment of the supposed nuclear catastrophe. More important than the precipitous emergence of the end in the repeated citation of the title at crucial turning points of the story, however, is the effect this repetition and multiplication has on the very notion of the end, and, we might add, on the beginning of the story itself. For it “really” begins with the simulation, repetition, and deferral of its end(s).

Thus, it is no longer a surprise that the narrative of the movie originated both at the end of Sam's and Claire's journey and the suspended end of the world caused by the simulated nuclear catastrophe. The latter erases all the traces of memory that civilization – including the narrator of the movie – had stored up electronically. The fundamental catastrophe, then, consists in the complete annihilation of memory traces in one blow rather than the annihilation of the world as such. While electronic media may enable and facilitate the tracing of elusive subjects such as Sam, who is followed by Claire, and Claire, who is followed by four other parties, and while they may even engender the kind of storytelling which the first part of the journey *Until the End of the World* represents, they are nevertheless vulnerable to instantaneous destruction. Communicative networks (computers; telephones; televisions, etc.) which do not subject themselves to potentially distorting effects imposed by time and space have become subject to annihilation precisely to the extent that they seek to sublate the finite conditions of all communication in the first place: aside from time and space, scripture, or writing as the medium in and through which the historicity of a subject, a tribe, a people, or even humankind can be encountered and articulated.

At the critical moment in which the nuclear catastrophe causes the erasure of all traces of memory, the writer, narrator, and lover Eugene, who has so far experienced a writer's block, discovers and borrows an old, neglected, and forgotten typewriter on which he begins to record the events that comprised the journey until the seeming end of the world. Thus, it is from beyond the end of the world that we embark upon the journey until the end of the world; it is the traumatic experience of the loss of all memory traces that sets the process of memorization and writing into motion in the first place. The origin of the movie, its journey, and its script can and must therefore be read as the result of an imaginary rupture of the continuous flow of time, space, and memory, of an *Ur-sprung* in the sense that Walter Benjamin ascribed to the term in his study on the “*Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels*.” Benjamin writes,

Ursprung, wiewohl durchaus historische Kategorie, hat mit Entstehung

dennoch nichts gemein. Im Ursprung wird kein Werden des Entspringenen, vielmehr dem Werden und Vergehen Entspringendes gemeint. Der Ursprung steht im Fluß des Werdens als Strudel und reißt in seine Rhythmik das Entstehungsmaterial hinein. (UT, 28)⁴

"Addicted to the Rhythm" is the name of one of the songs that accompanies Claire on her aberrant journey, and it is the rhythm of becoming and passing away from which origin springs forth as a signifier ("Im Ursprung wird . . . Entspringendes gemeint"), signifying what simultaneously springs forth and away from the rhythm into which the origin nevertheless draws/tears all the stuff of emergence (*Entstehungsmaterial*). Origin is thus designated as something that is located both in- and outside the rhythm of "Werden und Vergessen," a rhythm that determines the duplicitious structure of origin itself as a primal scene of signification. It is inscribed, Benjamin insists, in the dialectics, "die dem Ursprung beiwohnt . . . Aus ihr erweist in allem Wesenhaften Einmaligkeit und Wiederholung durcheinander sich bedingt" (UT, 28).⁵ This dialectics operating in the innermost core of the origin, from which it is imparted to "all essentials" (*allem Wesenhaften*) of all phenomena, marks, as Samuel Weber has argued, the origin of historicity as well as the historicity of the origin:

The Ur-Sprung is the irremediable split or crack that marks the movement of restoration and reinstatement by which singular beings seek to totalize themselves in their extremity. It is this irreparable fissure or crack that impairs the possibility of history ever being written in a full and authentic manner, but that at the same time constitutes the historicity of origin – and above all the origin of historicity itself.⁶

Wim Wenders's movie around and until the end of the world begins with precisely such a crack, such a fissure. It can be seen as the crack of the screen of projection before any sound has yet been articulated, even before the cosmic light of the sun has enlightened the sky. And it can be read as the trajectory of the falling star which traverses the melancholic song sung by Elvis and Claire entitled "Summer Kisses, Winter Tears." One could argue that, *in nuce*, this song contains, anticipates and comments upon the "central" topics of the movie and their structuration by the film itself. Its third and fourth stanzas, both repeated in the song, read as follows:

Fire of love, the fire of love
can burn from afar,
nothing can light the dark of the night
like a falling star.

Summer Kisses, Winter Tears
like the sky may fade away
leaving me to spend my lonely nights
with dreams of yesterday.

If the falling star in this song can indeed be related to the crack that divides and fractures the very first “image” in this movie as the *Ur-sprung* of its pre- and posthistory – since, according to Benjamin, the history of that which has been seized in and by the idea of the *Ur-sprung* is recognized in terms of its essential being, i.e. in terms of its pre- and posthistory (*UT*, 28)⁷ – and if this ordinary crack, fold, and fissure is demarcated by the quasi-apocalyptic erasure of all memory traces as the secondary origin of the movie’s script whose creation we witness after the fall, i.e. after the traumatic erasure of the traces the journey until the end of the world had left in the unfinished novel of the writer/narrator Eugene, then it may be possible to conceive of the movie’s preoccupation with the notion of the fall and falling in terms and structures other than that of the melancholic narcissist preoccupied “with dreams of yesterday” and the technological reproduction of these dreams in perfect images of one’s childhood.

II

What is dangerous is not technology . . .
the essence of technology is the danger.

Heidegger

In the beginning was the word, in the
end the world without end.

Joyce, *Ulysses*

Hans Blumenberg’s *Arbeit am Mythos* tells us that myths function in order to protect us from the anxiety-producing fact that the world is, in large measure, given over to chance and contingency.⁸ That is no less true for two modern myths – psychoanalysis and technology. Psychoanalysis, at least in Freud’s writing, guarantees the possibility of the transmission or transference (*Übertragung*) that will lift the symptom and produce the narrative, while technology promises the rulership over the random event, and seeks to eliminate the noise, jamming, and distortions intrinsic to our electrical circuits. Psychoanalysis and technology share this belief in the possibility of the transmission, although both are implicated in a discursive process that questions the clarity and presence of direct transmission. Psychoanalysis, as Lacan suggested in “Psychoanalysis and Cybernetics,”⁹ must rely on the (chance) linguistic relays or circuits that themselves endlessly condense and displace the trauma. And technology, as Heidegger demonstrated, always obscures its own danger, elides its own “essence,” the danger of the failure of its own mastery.¹⁰

Wim Wenders’s *Until the End of the World* stages the disturbance of the techno-psychoanalytic transmission, and transmits for the eye an interruption that can only be articulated in a discursive medium. In so doing, the film inverts the customary relation between the visible image and discourse: whereas the metaphysics of the visible sought to produce presence, direct and unmediated access to the things themselves through the ocular representation of the gaze, Wenders repeatedly undermines the clarity and distinctness of the image, demonstrates its entwinement in the technological devices we utilize in

order to see, and its intrinsic distortions and manipulations. Conversely, discourse and text provide the spacing necessary for an articulation of the image that has been ruptured by Oedipal imaging itself. Reading Wenders's film, the attempt will be made to spell out this inversion as the blurring of the median between myth and technology, discourse and image, between "the writing process" and "shooting,"¹¹ as Wenders puts it in an interview. In addition, it can be shown that the film produces a discourse-analysis of psychoanalysis and techno-media seen as the final, originary myths: as the spaces in which the rupture between what can be represented and the technical media of tracing and reproduction occurs, that is, the space of the delimitation of such technologies. And because we can only read this problematics through the already distorted image of media-technology – the battery of monitors and video artifacts – the discursive moment returns as the repressed, as a cracked window through which we can get a glimpse of ourselves being seen by precisely these technologies of the image. This dilemma corresponds to Wenders's explanation of the ending of the movie, when he refers to his own childhood experience of seeing himself distancing himself from the addiction to the image and to traumatic experiences: "And then I realized that whenever I was troubled as a child, or had experienced some grief, or there was some overwhelming problem – I had a *technique* whereby I would try to imagine myself, perhaps in a religious sense, from above. *As if* God were watching me."¹²

The film begins on a borderline, with a divergence, and in a jam. Claire Tourneure is driving on the border between Italy and France when she encounters a traffic jam she decides to escape by turning off the beaten path into the unknown. The narrator tells us that by doing so, Claire changed her life as well as all of our lives. In short, it is this jamming and the falling from dream that engenders the epic journey that is *Until the End of the World*. The crack of light we witness at the outset, a boundary that separates night from day, myth from technology, writing from film, provides the space in which the narrative epic journey will emerge. This boomerangs at the end of the film, where Claire declares "le trou" – the hole, gap, or crack – as one of the three aspects of life in the regime of media-technology, the other two being time and solitude. Of course, the escape from the "original" jam only gets her into more complicated networks, and thus the "second beginning," which is always already prescribed by and indebted to the first, repeats and heightens the sense of indeterminacy and randomness that jolts the film. In fact, it is the chance accident on the highway that brings Claire into the technological circuit of the apparatus that is being utilized by Sam Farber (William Hurt) in order to record pictures for his blind mother to be able to see. "It's my eyes," Farber states, and as Claire looks into his eyes for some explanation, she states: "I can't see anything." This scene revolves around the issue of the invisibility of the visible, its opacity or intrinsic noise and distortion. They listen to music of pygmy children from Camaroon, recordings made by the Mother, incomprehensible chants played back upon one another that resemble a digital sound overlay.

The eye, too, is a technological device whose images must be coded, enhanced, distilled, clarified, and projected: the eye is "a microphone," the narrator states, and the pictures of the camera, or of the eyes displace the

biological sense of perception and relegate such perception to digital recording and videofaxing, which is how the characters communicate with one another in the *Ent-fernung* of the world in 1999. Claire rescues Sam from the Videogame as he becomes blind, and the detectives (the narrator and the bounty hunter) utilize their Matsui in order to track down Farber and the much desired technological apparatus that "takes pictures blind people can see." Sam is collecting images for his mother to see, and, in a classical Oedipal configuration, "for my father to know that I love him."

Now this camera-computer records what one sees, but it requires a great deal of labor in order to reproduce the images for the blind mother, and, as all digital devices, there is no space between the 0 and the 1. Specifically, this is where, as Phillip Winter says, "computer programming ends and the real detective work begins." For it is not just the images that must be reproduced for the blind mother; the person who has recorded them, namely Sam or Claire, must also simultaneously remember the memory, i.e. reconstruct what is referred to in the film as the "bio-chemical event of seeing." Farber relates this in the following statement: "The camera records what you see, but it also records how your brain reacts in response to what your eyes see." Before Sam and Claire can bear witness to the mother through the image, and before the decisive transmission or *Übertragung* can take place, they experience a blackout of all electronic components from which they infer the end of the world. Presumably, the Indian rogue satellite has been shot down, causing a chain reaction of nuclear blasts. As all computers fail, and "all the memory is wiped out," 35 languages are erased, and the novel, which is the film itself after all, is itself erased, causing our narrator to borrow a typewriter from a member of the Mbantua Tribe in order to write the story. The nuclear blast is dubbed "the end of the world," but it is also a "second beginning," and it is the rupture introduced by this catastrophe that causes the discursive narrative. And just as the "hand-cranked engine saves the day" when all electronic circuitry has been destroyed, so too it is the novel in the final analysis which rescues Claire from the closed narcissistic circuit she has been folded into by the technology developed by Dr. Farber which permits people to actually project their unconscious dreams and fantasies onto portable video monitors, to which then all of the figures become hopelessly addicted.

Upon arrival in the aboriginal tribal landscape of the Mbantua, the stage is finally set for the transmission or transference, this union between the mother and the son, preshadowed by Peter Gabriel's lyric "In the Garden of Eden, there is a woman and a man." The scene in the cave, the site of this transmission, can occur after the blast because, as Sam's father Henry Farber states, "the digital tapes remain." Tape, although originally an analogue medium, rescues the information from oblivion. Consistently, archaic forms deliver the survivors from incommunication and dysfunction. And here in the cave we are reverting back simultaneously to the most advanced and the most archaic of media: the pre-Oedipal transmission in reverse, the son giving the mother images, under the aegis of the technology of the father. Henry tells Sam "the second scene can wait," but the son is too eager to unite with the mother, to perform literal television symbiosis, and he states: "Are you ready, my mother; then let's do it."

In the transmission, which requires the focus of the sender to recall the bio-chemical event of perception,

It wasn't as simple as just putting in a tape and playing it back. The person who initially recorded the images had to see them again. The first time, the computer had recorded the act of seeing, now it was reading the act of remembering. In theory, these two grids of information, together with the actual videorecordings of the event, enabled the computer to translate these images into brainwaves again, and to reproduce them in the blind person's visual cortex.

Noticing the lack of concentration, the noise and distortion of his son's images, the father intervenes and calls out to Sam: "Empty your mind." But, as we know from psychoanalysis, this is not an easy task, especially with the father monitoring the son's brainwaves. The transference fails, not merely because Sam has too much fatherly noise in his head, and a noisy, intrusive father to contend with, but because the ultimate transmission, the transference of the image of the son's face, cannot occur, not because of any contingency, but in principle. For the person who operates the apparatus cannot appear in its image, as the subject cannot appear to itself as Other. In the interstice between what is first seen in the act of seeing, and reading the act of remembering, there is an irrevocable loss, another rupture that cannot, in principle, be healed. At least in the Oedipal circuit. Sam's mother Edith Eisner states: "I'd rather never see a single face than lose him again. His is the face I most wanted to see. And that's the gift you didn't think of giving me." What appears on the scene is a mass of digital bars: "We're not going to transmit that." And this is why Claire must step in and complete the transmission. Not as supplement, or peripheral technology, but as the very vessel of the image itself, the beloved Claire is able to generate images and remembrance of striking clarity. As Henry declares: "She's a natural." Claire is able to create the internal space necessary for such remembrance precisely because, as we found out at the beginning, her dreams mimic and mirror the nuclear blast: they have the structure of a contingent spacing that interrupts the continuum of narrative. The homology between Claire's dreams and the specter of the nuclear blast makes her an ideal transferential medium, but one that is vulnerable to the addictive propensity of the media image.

The moment of transmission articulates and discloses not the face of the son, but rather that of the daughter: "Colors – blue, yellow, red. A person sitting by a window. Yellow dress. She's sitting hands folded. Could she be our daughter, Henry? Look at her face." The transference delivers a digitalized picture of our seeing, which, as Manfred Schneider has shown, operates according to a scanning process that mimics the grid utilized to produce video: "Während unser Fernsehbild nach der CCIR-Norm in 625 Zeilen und rund 500,000 Pixels zerlegt (zerstreut) wird, arbeitet die optische Wahrnehmung des menschlichen Auges mit einer noch höheren Auflösung. Jedes Auge verfügt über 125 Million Stäbchen und Zapfen, über die alle Signale verarbeitet werden."¹³ In a word, perception literally simulates TV and vice-versa.

As the figures engage in the new technology of projecting the fantasies and dreams of the psyche, the narcissistic circuitry is shut down completely, there is no Otherness in the hegemonic reign of the digitalized image, and only the text, more precisely the novel, or sleep-dream therapy, can rescue them. Claire and Sam see themselves seeing, perceive their own internal psyche without the defensive censorship that keeps the fall into this narcissistic projection at bay. But the blast of the eye of the camera, opening up the space of discursivity, can function exactly as the space-bar on the typewriter, punctuating the continuum and allowing us, as Benjamin put it, to blast apart the enclosed world of the privatized individual and undertake trips in the dispersed ruins of modernity: "Da kam der Film und hat diese Kerkerwelt mit dem Dynamit der Zehntelsekunden gesprengt, so daß wir nun zwischen ihren weitverstreuten Trümmern gelassen abenteuerlich Reisen unternehmen."¹⁴

III

Now Claire has a lot of problems,

and when I tried to figure out the ending, I thought of this childish thing – that she takes the largest distance possible. Of course, it's really funny that she takes it so literally.
(Wim Wenders, *Revelations*)

Technology, to the extent that it reproduces perfect images from the past to which the narcissistic subject falls prey in its cathexis, simultaneously reproduces mythical structures of narration which dissimulate the temporal cracks and spaces in allegories of self-reflective, i.e. imaginary constitutions of subjectivity. However, just as the collapse of time and space in the images that are transmitted onto Sam Farber's blind mother have an overwhelming traumatic effect on her, ultimately causing her death, so the allegorical language written on an archaic typewriter – as it were, after the fall – by the narrator/lover Eugene, reintroduces and contains the originary split

within immediate experience that characterizes the traumatic occurrence itself. It is the fundamental dislocation implied by all traumatic experience that is both its testimony to the event and to the impossibility of its direct access.¹⁵

If the imaginary collapse of temporality, space, and difference is deadly for the psyche of the subject, it is the traumatic event of the erasure of all memory itself, the fractured end of the world, that causes the production of an allegorical script which is ultimately capable of halting and turning Claire's melancholic fall into the "abyss of the bottomless depth of sense" (*UT*, 206) by substituting it with the work of mourning, which – according to Benjamin – is located in the *Ur-sprung* of allegory. It is from this *Ur-sprung* that the healing power of the words written in Eugene's manuscript and subsequently read by Claire is derived.

The spaces of time which are reconstituted in the psyche of the disintegrated

subject by the final turn of melancholic contemplation into allegory (*UT*, 208) find their literal reflection in Claire's new journey around the planet Earth through the space of the universe. Her removal from the bottomless depth of melancholy to the lofty heights of the spaceship orbiting the planet reads like the cinematographic equivalent of the final turn taken by allegory as defined by Walter Benjmain,

All das zerstiebt mit jenem *einen* Umschwung, in dem die allegorische Versenkung die letzte Phantasmagorie des Objektiven räumen muß und, gänzlich auf sich selbst gestellt, nicht mehr spielerisch in erdhafter Dingwelt sondern ernsthaft unterm Himmel sich wiederfindet. (*UT*, 208)¹⁶

However, since allegory ends up "empty-handed" (*UT*, 208),¹⁷ it cannot be surprising that Claire's mission and transposition under the sky via allegorical inversion has no "real" redemptive quality. It is limited to monitoring the pollution of the planet Earth and to the playful reproduction of allegorical images, for example those which appear on the multiple divided screen of her monitor when she celebrates her thirtieth birthday in space. But this time one of the smaller screens is no longer subject to the projection of an image, or, rather, one image remains empty: it marks – in its absence – the empty space on Claire's screen which the technology of reproduction cannot erase. Perhaps, at the very "end" of the movie, after all images have been erased, the static screen and Claire's ambiguous gestures (her faint smile, the empty gaze, and the slow, almost protective motion of her hand) signal the movie's successful symbolic/technological integration of the engendering negativity of traumatic experience, of the rhythm of *Ur-sprung*, of absence and loss.¹⁸

Wenders's *Until the End of the World* holds this failed image – which, because its disturbance is intrinsic and constitutive of the transmission, the technology of reproduction cannot erase – with its noise and babble, with its absence and blastual silence, for us to read: at the end of the film, Claire circles the world, sends and receives the mixed messages of media technology. She can only monitor the contaminants, pollution, and noise on the surface of the earth. The interruptive technological medium of film is the second beginning of narrative, which reemerges to tell the story of nothing other than film or the fall into the image itself. In the final (discourse-) analysis, which would precisely be its own failed auto-analysis, film stops and preserves (*anhalten*) what psychoanalysis could only allude to in the *techné* of the transference: the myth of the recovery of the text as a redemptive medium without any actual redemption, which, after the Oedipal fracture, can only record the empty space of desire itself.

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PART FIVE

**CRITIQUES OF
CONTEMPORARY IMAGE
CULTURE**

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INTRODUCTION

BEYOND A PARADIGM

Supplementing the filmographic readings of the visible, this final section explores newly expressive, archival possibilities by means of a certain recourse to history, poetry, and photography. The last two chapters of this volume will not attempt to anchor these disciplines in a novel principle of sufficient reason. On the contrary, (and) unsurprisingly, they will disclose the relations between the visible and the expressive beyond the aura of identification. The authors will demonstrate that these relations present themselves as no longer belonging to philosophical discourse. Hence, they offer the reader a complex, displaced site for thinking, a nonlocus to be exact. More concretely, without intending to correct the mistakes of the dialectic, they point to a locus where thinking begins to pursue a sublime absence of the Self. Moreover, this section invites the reader to think archivally, beyond a dwelling place, where images still linger without ever becoming autonomous.

In Chapter 12, "Imagism and the Ends of Vision: Pound and Salomon," Lisa Zucker challenges the claim that the absence of the paradigmatic signifies decadent imaging. Detouring the exemplary signs that interface the texts of Pound and Salomon, she allows for a gazing of the in-visible while viewing indecent exposures. An eye on the image, outrunning time, signifies for Pound "a gleaming ideogram" that yields to the problematic (w)hole. Without conceding Pound's "conservative" politics, Zucker affirms his spectral economy of desire offering signs of inconsistency and disappearance. She is fascinated by Pound's philosophical interest in the blink, the eternal present, "an instant of writing as voice uncontaminated by the linguistic agency of signs." This "aesthetic" refuge in delightful viewpoints ultimately reveals a desire for limitless purity, imaginal excess beyond dignity and tragedy. Limitless but debased, the desire for the in-visible, seemingly not entirely unlike Diotima's elucidation of eros in Plato's *Symposium*, intensifies an imaging inside banal bodies. An ecstatic nihilist, Zucker claims that philosophy's task is to blink or wink not once but recursively beyond any mirroring of *natura naturans*. On this view, she shows that Salomon, a German Holocaust refugee, regards the image not merely as what is seen but rather as something that illuminates the prevailing "kakatrope" in the electronic web of relations. Intensifying this view, Zucker expounds Pound's "spectral (theoretic) complicity" with the "electronic illuminations" of today's hyper/cybertextualities. Thus, she believes that what

remains to be thought is that which in the imaging of images no longer images the Self.

In Chapter 13, on a more socio-critical level, James R. Watson introduces "Mediums of Freedom in Photogrammic Frames: Some Exposures of Bound Transcendence." He examines the precarious notion of putting ethical limits on cultural forms of visibility. In an era of "easy images and easy answers," the visible is immediately institutionalized and framed into a narrow common sensical polis, compelling us to take sides. This reactionary measure, according to Watson, determines the abusive appropriation of Hegelianism on the left and the right today. Exploring the viewpoints and pictorial texts of Sturges, Mapplethorpe, Kruger, Kiefer, and his own extraordinary photographs, Watson advances a creative "photogramming" that attends to uneasy images without being seduced by the "restored normality" of "mythic identities." Making visible the in-visible, therefore, does not mean unleashing a permissive ethical mood that will determine the meaning of Art. Contrarily, on Watson's account, it means a "photogrammic" intensification of the violent and the erotic. Exposing photogrammic frames or images that are *visibly* unbound and unconstrained, clearly deconstruct the invisible concepts of unbound transcendence. Watson refuses to narrow visibilities to a dialectical duel of pros and cons. He astounds the reader by suggesting that the genuinely in-visible is precisely the meta-flow of pictures we tend to designate as "messy." Better messy fun than serious messiness such as an imperial ethics. Drawing our volume to a close, Watson regards the privileging of photogrammic frames as the posthermeneutic task of reading not primarily *what* we see but *how* we do not see that we are where we presume not to be.

IMAGISM AND THE ENDS OF VISION

POUND AND SALOMON

Lisa Zucker

If the Imagist movement may be characterized by an interest in superimposing the "sister arts" of poetry and painting, it may also be characterized by repeated evidence of attempts to internalize mimetic difference as it occurs not only between genres but within the structure of the sign. So Ezra Pound, in the *Cantos*, celebrates the painter Vlaminck as "a great brute sweating paint,"¹ and insists repeatedly that "Le Paradis n'est pas artificiel" (C, XXIV, 468). However, the Imagist's ambivalence over the problem of mimetic duplicity remains: "I don't know how humanity stands it/with a painted paradise at the end of it/without a painted paradise at the end of it" (C, LXXIV, 436).

Pound's agenda for Imagism is heavily calculated yet "off the wall," agitating over its faulty interiorization of the secret spacing which inhabits the compacted image. Imagism's design is that of calcifying or reducing to a sculptural hardness what is seen as the fluid and female expressive excesses of romanticism² and to violently driving the "vortex" of contradictions which result up "the great passive vulva of London."³ In this chapter we will trace the Imagist design to calculate the image with totalitarian severity, and its equally remarkable obsession to regulate the image's liquidation and contamination. Then we will examine the marginal work of German Holocaust refugee artist Charlotte Salomon. That avoids the naive expressionism denounced by Pound yet stresses the decompositional elements which Pound perceived as "contra naturam" and sought so violently to control. In remarking exemplary signs which intersect the oeuvres of Pound and Salomon, we may touch on the decomposition of certain ideological exclusions which underwrite modernism's account of expression and vision.

In "The Recurring Decimal," Pound describes tolerance for usury as "the kakatropic urge in economics," and notes that London's poetic world is steeped in an economy of boggy corruption: "From this angle London is a mere bog or clog in the world's sub-sewage."⁴ In turn, the usurious bog is laced with excess fat: "We have a whole swill-pail and swamp of vulgarian

virtuosi who can take the quality OUT . . . and substitute barber's hair oil." Pound's declared task as a poet is to remove this fat, which in turn presumably reduces the excess of the "kakatrope": "By the first anthology *Des Imagistes* I was able to start a process partially to desuetize (de-suet-ize i.e. take the cold fat out of) current poetry." Paradoxically, however, Pound's notion of desuetizing as defatting involves the etymological excavation of a verb which currently means to place into disuse, to place into a state which comes curiously close to being dead matter. Further: if the extraction of cold fat to the point of desuetude produces the best work, it is also oddly linked with the recursion present in the essay's title: "Civilization becomes admirable when people begin to prefer a little of the best to a great deal of the pasty. One of the rights of masterwork is the right of rebirth and recurrence." Masterwork has the right to periodic defatting and moribundity, a right which paradoxically conditions its rebirth.

In Canto LXXIV, Nietzsche's Superman, Zarathustra, is "now desuete," with "no vestige save in the air" under the olive trees. But Zarathustra's vestige of fat in the air is like the silvery gleam of the olive leaves, an oily gleam of revelation and disappearance: "olivi/ that which gleams and does not gleam/ as the leaf turns in the air" (C, LXXIV, 438). Can we say that this vestige of a gleam periodically appears and disappears in the turning leaves of *The Cantos*? Are its recurrent rebirths "the rights of masterwork," that is, the rights of the Superman to draw a gleam or "finish" from the boggy corruption of the text? The removal of "cold fat" seems to have just a little in common with the removal of "a cold thing like economics" mentioned elsewhere (C, LXXIX, 481), a removal of the problem of debt which compounds itself to produce its opposite, the barest vestige of a fatty gleam, the "recurring decimal" which inflates its (ef)fraction to infinity.

The optics which underwrite the gleam of Pound's "kakatrope" and its concomitant drive to defatting are the classic optics of the heliotrope, of the immaculate and unremitting "tensile light" of the sun⁵ which stretches but never breaks down to reveal a blink or a blackout but rather illuminates the classical perspective/vanishing point of the Egyptian pyramids and all other masterworks which can be recuperated from the past and "superpositioned" upon the continuous present of modernist poetry.⁶ The eye as Imagism's model of cognition stares unremittingly at the masterworks of history and seeks to guarantee their recovery in the present without mimetic loss. In this heliotropics, the copy is continually invoked as what Aristotle might have called the "proper essence" of the original, continually repeating the presentation of what are for Pound the same historical lessons in an eternally renewable present. However, the paradoxical formulation of the propriety or property of essence indicates the compromise which is at stake in Imagism's optics. The eye as logical guarantor of the copy's transformation into the original will have had to blink, however repressedly, at the trace of mimetic duplicity implicit in the transformation, a trace which is always capable of reappearing with the relentlessness of a "recurring decimal," as it does in Pound's violent depiction of history as a vortex, with the past and future spiraling around the present, continually agitating over their own autonomy: "all the past that is capable of

living into the future, is pregnant in the vortex, NOW.”⁷ The logic at the eye of the vortex is that of a centrality of self-presence, versions of the recurring decimal as vanishing point and viewpoint, mirrors of infinity which, in the classical contract, “belong” so much to each other that they are collapsed and preserved, internalized and posited as the present uncontaminated by past or future, an intersection of the present which is so infinitesimally brief that it remains sheltered from time.⁸

At the contract of the eye of the vortex, in the agitated urgency of its blink, is the spatial or metaphoric myth necessary for Pound to outface time. In the attempt to outrun the recurring decimal, Pound writes in a telegraphic style and urges speed, “the greatest possible despatch,” if writing is to transmit meaning with the iconoclastic energy of voiced language.⁹ In the vortex is “All MOMENTUM, which is the past bearing/ upon us, RACE, RACE-MEMORY, instinct charging the PLACID,/ NON-ENERGIZED FUTURE” (*B*, 153). At the eye of the vortex is an instinctual eclipse, a blink which obliterates past and future by internalizing them in the construction of an eternal present, an instantaneous moment of presence, a “NOW” which is to be the irreducibly calculated micrological shelter for an instant of human identity seen as present to itself, and for an instant of writing as voice, uncontaminated by the linguistic agency of signs, by the iterability of the decimal, by the usurious ruin of “kakotropic” economics.

With the eye squeezed shut, Pound forecloses the entry of all that is “kaka” into the classic purity and self-identity of his temporal haven, and finds in the crazed velocity of his efforts toward idealization that he has inadvertently calculated a strange optical screen for the staging of writing and the contamination of signs – not a screen which complies with the promise of predictability in Euclidean geometry but one which agitates with an unacknowledged spatiality, off the wall. Where Pound has sought uniqueness, he finds recursion; where he has sought immediacy, he finds himself closing his eye to the duplicity which fissures the present. Seeking to sanitize and recuperate the ruins of antiquity, he finds sanitation and sanity out of his reach, the vision eerily translated into something unrecognizable, or recognizable but useless, the mad trace of the recurring decimal.

The image, according to Pound, is “a vortex or cluster of fused ideas.”¹⁰ Caught up in a “RACE,” the image is “bearing/upon us” and “charging” the future, with a design to outrun time, yet it is also “the DESIGN of the future in the grip of the human vortex” (*B*, 153). In heraldry, to charge is to place a bearing or figure or design upon someone – thus it is a sort of “superposition” used as an index of presence, even if the gesture of labeling presence inadvertently eviscerates it. The image or vortex thus produces an impacted flatness which is also the site of inflation; its bearing is, in Pound’s terms, a kind of “rebirth and recurrence.” Born out of the circulation of debt, the bearing is violently aborted but also uncannily makes a reappearance, its absence translated as the vestigial image or ideogram, which Pound seeks just as relentlessly to defat. The poet notes the discrepancy: “Errors, i.e., wanderings in search of truth have their rights” (*RD*, 252), the rights of masterwork. At the eye of the vortex is the evacuation of the (w)hole, the possibility of usurious debt, a lack

which is reiterated as typographical superposition and remarked with an ideogrammatic gleam.¹¹

The gleaming ideogram is a bearing which alternately inhabits and exceeds its matrix. A mark of incompleteness, the bearing is simultaneously born and aborted, a blockage in London's great passive vulva. In turn, the *Cantos* function as bearings by way of usury, the process which defers fulfillment while perpetuating the rights of masterful investment. Abortive productions, they ceaselessly deflect or blink at their own closure or complete consumption of meaning. So the image swings between desuetude and a fatty vestige, a minimal deposit which periodically makes its gleaming appearance in and as the text.

Pound's entire oeuvre is haunted with abortive bearings or veils. Pound deals with the feminine in the "Homage to Sextus Propertius," by keeping woman's bodily shape ambiguous, in a state of arrested development. She is one of the Coan ghosts of the poem's opening who embody and are metonymically displaced by a fine, white transparent silk, called "Coan" for its origin in the Aegean island of Cos. The garment is referred to as a shirt, which masculinizes and thus further displaces the ostensibly nonthreatening delicacy of its vaguely veiled identity, an identity which in turn may be unveiled once more. The poet avows that if she plays with him with her shirt off, they will construct many *Iliads*.

Artistic representation does not simply hinder or replace possession of the desired object; it is its very condition. The virgin life which breathes and speaks is displaced by something even more precious: the veil as the negation of impoverishment, the essence of luxury and love, the origin of a certain translucence and gleam which preserves the antithesis of opacity and transparency. Yet to be possessed it must be transformed, turned into a shirt, denuded to become an *Iliad* – and with this transformation comes loss – which is why Propertius eventually comes to fantasize the death of his mistress Cynthia (Section VIII) who, by virtue of her association with the feminine veil, is as changeable as the moon. So the luxurious translucence of Coan, the "gleam of Cos," alternately referred to as "a slither of dyed stuff," is all too capable of slithering into the lubricious image of the *con*, the prostituted (w)hole which "is" only as the sign of inconsistency and disappearance. In this context, the fantasy of Cynthia's death is anything but innocent. And when she appears in the wake of this fantasy wearing a crimson nightcap, the bloody image signals the submerged form of a mutilation or murder: the elimination of (the possibility of) lack. The suggestion of the dead mistress, the lost luxury (but also the lost threat), displaces the living virgin which it corrupts, destroys, and hoards as its referent. The "slither of dyed stuff" has been safely transformed into a slither of dead stuff.

Here indeed is an *Iliad*, the production of a vagabond imagination which entails a certain luxury: the luxury of a veil, a vestment permitting the speculation of an imaginary investment to occur. The vestment as artwork allows both time's murder and its monumentalization, thus deflecting the question of death by turning it into a mere representation, a hoarded veil or abortive bearing. While the "Homage to Sextus Propertius" ostensibly eschews the conventional genre of martial poetry, its subtext circulates in a perpetual revolution around war matters of an archaic nature.

Murdering in order to create, dying in order to live: these are the figures that inscribe Pound's economy of desire. The veil will emerge again in the "Silk War" of Canto XVI and in the figure of the Frenchman who is "bawled out" ("engueulé") for having hidden in a factory and "missed" the war: "T'es un con! T'a raté la guerre" (C, XVI, 73). In keeping with Pound's distinction (in the Sigismundo sequences) between direct action and paralyzed action, the Frenchman depicted here only "fights when he has eaten" (C, XVI, 73). A heartless *con*, he is charged with lack of commitment to the war cause, of a piece with his fellow automatons in the factory: "Il était dans une fabrique" (C, XVI, 74). The *con*, in the form of the Coan shirt which displaces femininity, or in the form of the Frenchman's feminized (because untrustworthy) masculinity, is a phenomenon apparently without cause or motive. The *con* seems to be phenomenality itself, producing its own abundant medium ("What he could have collected!") (C, XVI, 74), a slither of dyed or dead stuff whose "fabrique" no one else can have because it is not to be had: the dream of a desire invested in the veil of life – a "gleam of Cos" invoking a glance and a *Glanz*.¹²

The sign as *con* is no less phantasmatic than the figment (*Gespinst*) of which Marx wrote and which he traced to the spectral objectivity (*gespenstige Gegenständlichkeit*) of the commodity. In a revealing metaphor, the economist hints at the elusive, and illicit, femininity of the commodity: "The objectivity of the value of commodities differs from Dame Quickly inasmuch as we never know where it is to be had."¹³ The desire of a certain labor pursues the chimera of a *con* who is not to be had, and yet whose femininity seems to found the very idea of possession and production itself. The ambiguity recalls the poem "Yeux Glauques" in which a model, "Jenny," is represented in a painting by Edward Burne-Jones of the pre-Raphaelite sodality. Like her Coan confederates, Jenny has a safely vacant gaze, but her name concatenates with the title of one of Rossetti's poems about a prostitute, and its epigraph, cited by Pound as "Ah, poor Jenny's case" is uttered by Mistress Quickly in reference to the girl's lubricity. Thus the context of the *con*, its slippery economic circulation, reemerges in concentric references which are themselves inconsistent.

Even in the final Canto, ambivalence over the putative unity of the text persists. Paradise can only be periodically reconstructed as a representation or superposition: "again is all 'paradiso'/a nice quiet paradise/over the shambles" (C, CXVI, 796–7). Underneath the painted surface is a crumbling ground which cannot be directly walked on but may only be periodically viewed from a distance: "to 'see again,'/ the verb is 'see,' not 'walk on.'" The position of distant or mediated viewing is the careful semiotic position taken by Augustine in Canto XVI, "gazing toward the invisible" (C, XVI, 68). It is a position which depends on the failure to perceive plenitude because of humanity's inherent limitations: "I am not a demigod" [C, CXVI, 796]. (Perhaps implicit also is the hope: Might I not be an omnigod?) Pound asserts in the final Canto that paradise "coheres all right/ even if my notes do not cohere," (C, CXVI, 797) and there is after all "the record/the palimpsest – /a little light/in great darkness –" (C, CXVI, 795). But this meditation on coherence is enveloped in the same Canto by less optimistic utterances: "I cannot make it cohere," and later "I cannot make it flow thru" (C, CXVI, 796, 797).

Like the abortive bearing, the palimpsest or superposition promises plenitude by affecting to encompass everything, by capitalizing on the indebtedness or impoverishment of two-dimensional representation which internalizes the past and future mythically, without residue. Implicit in this movement, however, is the work of denial of the crumbling ground, a labor which must be perennially re-presented in a series of superpositions, even though each layer of the series paradoxically takes the inflationary appearance of an eternal or unitary event. Ultimately, the slippery sign of the *con* returns us to the debt implicit in the dysfunctional birth of the vortex, and to the surplus of energy which is invested in its blockage. "Usura slayeth the child in the womb" (C, XLV, 230).

If the *Cantos*, as well as many of Pound's early poems, stand in tribute to the plenitude which preceded the Renaissance, they do so in protest against the impure effects of usura as well. For Pound, the sodomites and usurers rightfully occupied the same circle of Dante's *Inferno*.¹⁴ Similarly, in the Hell *Cantos*, we find the pervers of language "plunging jewels in mud,/ and howling to find them unstained" (C, XIV, 62). This passage seems to recall the *con* of Canto XVI who is charged with prostitution for metaphorically plunging his jewels in the mud and managing to emerge unstained. But ironically, Pound is the howler here, the one who has bawled him out ("engueulé"), thus implicating his own *gueules* in a strange metaphoricity, with apparently no ill effects. And in "The Condolence" of Lustra, we learn that it is "Our maleness lifts us out of the ruck" C, XIV, 63).

The maleness which saves the day, which rescues Pound from the "tawdry cheapness" that makes the age "grimace" in "Maunderley," is an insistent reference to the figure of the mirror and its inverted identification of the mother as the sign of masculinity. The ambiguity of the mirror figure may explain why *gueules*, the gaping mouths of snakes, traditionally appeared on the heraldic bearings awarded to knights of outstanding merit. The bearing is the shield or mirror within which *gueules* conflate images of both the phallic whole and the maternal hole – the reiterated (com)promise of a gap or voice which, in its bawling self-erasure, traces the sign of originary plenitude.

The Hell *Cantos* represent "an adjuration of the great sin contra naturam," an adjuration of sodomy as the prime sin against natural abundance. But also, the Hell *Cantos* are a usurious bog, "specifically LONDON, the state of the English mind in 1919 and 1920" and as such recall the solution of the vortex, a bearing to be rammed into London's placid orifice (I, 233). Ironically, the solution to London's usura would seem to be to raise its speculative stakes, to invest in a usurious charge spiraling around a central debt, unavoidably associated with the work of art and the fetish, as well as with a hellish horror which can only be escaped metaphorically, through the medium of the mirror. In hell, Plotinus and his men wade through a "bog-suck like a whirlpool" and petrify it by holding their shields to the ground. In the mirror of the shield are the snakes of the Medusa which not only harden the ground but devour the maggots of the bog: "Prayed we to the Medusa,/ petrifying the soil by the shield" (C, XV, 66).

If the promiscuity of economics allows woman to be cast into the twin images of Madonna and Medusa, the solution is to tame her inconsistency by flattening the two images into a superposition in the imaginary image of the

mirror. These two images can only be reconciled in the moment of *gueules*, the gaping snakes which manifest both gender images (whole and hole) with obsessive repetition, a conflation which "lifts us out of the ruck" and protects "our" jewels. Ultimately, woman is the host of the parasitic activity of the filial *con* who collects his jewels metaphorically by hardening the maggoty soil of the fecal father, a furtive act of theft which leaves the responsibility for the collection in the (m)Other's hands.

The son as *con* artist in the domain of metaphoricity lays himself open to the possibility of a similar metaphoric robbery, yet there are certain security measures at work: "As Arcturus passes over my smoke-hole/ the excess electric illumination/ is now focussed/ on the bloke who stole a safe he can't open" (C, LXXVII, 465). In the "safe" is the usurious security which ensures that, if the son himself becomes the victim of filial theft, the futility of this "crime" is illuminated with neon clarity by the very metaphoricity which underwrites it. If this is sodomy, it is so only within the usurious domain of the metaphoric, a domain which focuses an excess of "electric illumination" on an act which is equally excessive, a usurious exchange founded on nothing, which reduces genders and generations to near equivalence. Canto XXXVI invokes Scotus Erugina's notion of "sacrum, sacrum, inluminatio coitu" (C, XXXVI, 180) as the illuminating expression of the sacred mystery, but here the son's furtive gains are lit only with the cheap glare of neon. In the struggle to precede the origin and eliminate all difference is a heretical mode of the Trinity in which the son is his own father and the father his own son.¹⁵

If Pound was inspired by Fenollosa's notion of the ideogram as a vivid "shorthand picture of actions or processes" (CWC, 9), it was because these processes were telescoped, done in "shorthand" so that the relations of agency were impacted. And if epic poetry is referred to in Propertius as a "large-mouthed product" (Section V), perhaps it is because it has a paradoxical exchange value: it is a large-mouthed product which extends to incorporate its own end, bawling as it thrusts its jewels and *gueules* into the metaphoric "bog-suck," and howling at the prospect of coming out clean. The purity of the epic image is the purity of a property whose legality and legitimacy depends on retraction from its bearing on maternity, (dis)closed in its promise of bearing on paternity – a contradictory (com)promise of bearing which charges the viewer with (self) transgression. The pure image is a bearing which slows down development to a crawl and exposes teleology as revolution in which people are unable to act: "And you can't make 'em,/ Nobody knew it was coming" (C, XVI, 75). Revolution, then, partakes of the desuet economy impacted in the maternal image. The sign of the (m)Other is the site of a war zone, rendered safe by metaphoric detour through the mirror or the shield. It is the sign of the revolutionary struggle of a certain productive consumption, the struggle within the stomach of nature to give birth to oneself, to be one's own origin and to eliminate all difference.

Inevitably, the theme of cannibalism is inextricable from this warring economy. Unlike the well-fed French *con* who represents paralyzed will, and only "fights when he has eaten," the starving soldiers doing active duty eventually begin to feast upon themselves: "Why? ['Pooh quah?'] My faith, we attacked so

we/ could eat.' [Translation mine] (C, XVI, 73). The usurers who have "brought whores for Eleusis" are themselves "promiscuous companies" (C, LXX, 410), blurring the distinction between blockage and overproduction. The *con* and his French-speaking interlocutor emerge in spectral complicity. Humans turn into animals and ends disclose beginnings. Direct and paralyzed action are conflated in a series of consumptive utterances which are parasitic upon each other. The point is made allegorically in the image of the rusty supply train's slow "advance" which perpetuates malnourishment. Teleological development has been telescoped into the flatness of the image, and the slower the corroded image "advances," the louder, paradoxically, it sounds: "And they creaked, they grated, one could hear them five kilometers away./ (That's what finished the war.)" [Translation mine] (C, XVI, 73). The slow advance of the corroded image is the slow advance of craft undercut by usury. ("Usura rusteth the chisel/ It rusteth the craft and the craftsman") (C, XV, 230). Yet oddly enough, the corroded train which perpetuates starvation is an image capable of applying a fetishistic "finish" – both a gleam (like the "gleam of Cos") and an abortive end – to the surface or bearing of the war. For the French *con*, the train still advanced too quickly, and the grease used to facilitate its movement constituted a kind of unpleasant excess, minimal as it was: "He tells you, well yeah, everything stank of oil." [Translation mine] (C, XVI, 73).

When Pound translated *The Great Digest and the Unwobbling Pivot* of Confucius, he could not resist injecting the following: "The unmixed functions without bourne/ This unmixed is the tensile light,/ the Immaculata. There is no end/ to its action" (GD, 429). This desire for limitless purity extends itself elsewhere to race. In Canto XXXVIII, we hear a prewar party line speaking out against Vienna's cosmopolitan mixture of races and a propagandist scheme of using Pound as resident poet-prophet, a sort of unwobbling pivot who would "stay and be Bhudd-ha" (C, XXXVIII, 189). In relation to schemes of this kind, Jews are above all wanderers, exiles who infiltrate national boundaries and mix up the immaculate clarity of a nation, as well as its economy. As Gelpi notes: "During the 1930's Pound's tone would become shriller and his diatribes more virulently anti-Semitic as he increasingly identified the diabolical cabal of bankers and capitalists and munitions makers with the Jews" (AR, 105). According to Gelpi, Pound perceived usurious contamination not only in the milieu of bourgeois capitalism but in the realm of art as well: "And his obsessiveness stemmed in part from his Whitmanian insistence that art not be marginalized and that the prophetic poet be responsible to the crises of his time." When art is marginalized it has become a mere exchange value, a sign of excess, and the solid line of prophetic discourse is lost in a circulation which is limitless but debased, a heretical mirror image of the pervasive Immaculata, "without dignity, without tragedy" (C, XIV, 63).

Above all, obfuscation of linguistic boundaries is effected by the nomadic and usurious habits of information gathering typical of the Jew: "he will gather up information/ faute de . . . something more solid" (C, LXXIV, 443). The "something more solid" would seem to be a more controlled line of inquiry, an "unwobbling" pivotal point of meaning rather than the random packratting of intellectual scraps. But the hell of usura is the hell of "lost contours, erosions"

(C, XIV, 62). The Jew as habitual infiltrator of national boundaries and as the sign of intellectual and fiduciary greed is apparently what is responsible for the blurring of punctual meaning and the corrosion of language itself. He is the toxic admixture of reading and breeding which contaminates Vienna and renders Austria "overbrained" (C, XXXVIII, 189). According to Pound, the Semitic is excess and the excess is specifically a spicy extract, taken from too many sources, a certain "saltiness": "the yidd is a stimulant, and the goyim are cattle in gt/ proportion and go to saleable slaughter/ with the maximum of docility. but if a place be versaltzen?" (C, LXXIV, 439–40).

Deriving his intellectual stimulation from too many sources, the Jew tends to become "versaltzen," slowing down his train (of thought) with salt corrosion, like the French *com* who consumed too much, and who thought the supply trains' minimal progress was still too rapid. Like the *com*, too, he will end up selling out his neighbors until, presumably, the whole place has become encrusted out of proportion. Yet doesn't Pound's crosscultural pastiche in Canto XVI have just a little bit in common with the murky boundary crossings of the Jew? And aren't the poet's very descriptions of the Jew sprinkled with salty foreignisms?

To the end of his life, Pound would become increasingly obsessed with economics. Citing Major Douglas, the poet links the elusive body of surplus value with the impoverished language of modernity, seeing in the impoverishment of credit slips the incapacity "to conjugate ANY of the necessary verbs of a sane economics."¹⁶ According to Pound, the capitalist seems to be able to manage a collection of himself which is not only linguistic but somehow also fecal, producing a blockage: "There are constantly more goods and constantly fewer and fewer valid certificates, which same leads to constipation" (ABC, 251). The malady is described in further detail, paradoxically in the context of a certain furtive flow: surplus value is something which was never accounted for by capitalists. Rather it "was wormed down a sort of tube . . . flowed continually down into the ground, down into somebody's pocket" (ABC, 251–2).

Within the sphere of circulation appears the sodomous phantasmagoria of money begetting money, by way of mass production and also by "lending/ that which is made out of nothing" (C, LXXIV, 440) – the spontaneous generation of value: capital. As Gelpi notes, money breeds "not out of nature's fertility but out of its own misvalued nullity; in Canto 46, 'The bank makes it *ex nihil*.'" (AR, 205). If labor, and the process of production in general, were originally determined as human energy expended for the satisfaction of needs, for the maintenance and production of human life, the needs and life which effectively determine production in a capitalist society are the needs and life of capital, collecting itself as the transcendental subject-object, conserving and negating the exhausted labor of the past in its unrelenting production of new "life," in the form of surplus labor. This is a process which productively consumes both the laborer and the purchaser, creating a tension between individuals acting as though they were autonomous subjects, conscious of what they were and wanted, ends in themselves, and the truly effective subject that is not an individual but the law of value. Another name for this ubiquitous law is usury,

that spectral paradox metaphorized by Pound as constipation on the one hand, and an irrepressible fecal flow on the other, a surplus of production *contra naturam* which is "wormed down a tube . . . into somebody's pocket." Alternately, the paradox is figured in the "kakatrope," the encrusted image produced out of desuetude which returns with the insistence of a recurring decimal as a fatty deposit or gleaming finish. In this regard, even the soldiers laboring in the war are paying with their lives' blood for the usurers' fictionalization of war as a pretext for investment. War becomes play, "theater of war," turning on itself to produce economic inflation from out of its deathly nullity" (C, LXXVIII, 477).

In the "ABC of Economics," Pound attempts to separate the spectral metaphor of capital from the "real" commodity of property. But characteristically, his desire to find a correspondence between commodity and value occurs in the context of an insistence on the possibility of a natural or directly knowable language, uncontaminated by implication: [I]t would be possible to attack the "rights" or "privileges" of capital without attacking the rights or privileges of property. Once again, please do not imply. Please do not think I mean one whit more than what I have written. When I want to mean something further I will say it" (ABC, 233). In the attempt to avoid fetishizing language, the *Cantos* frequently blur the connection between sign and meaning, producing instead a spectral worm, something sort of trashy but hidden. Inevitably, the spectral life of surplus value constitutes a sodomous activity that is somehow also literary. Creating something out of nothing is the primary interest of the "buggering bank" and "we are not yet out of *that* chapter" (C, LXXVII, 468). Yet if the black sun of literature is irretrievably contaminated by usury, how is it possible to eschew this usurious contamination of language and nevertheless to go on writing? "I go on writing because it appears to me that no thoughtful man can in our time avoid trying to arrange those things in his own mind in an orderly fashion" (ABC, 247–8). A touchy business, it would seem, since this arrangement is implicated with spectral structures revolving around lack. As such, they require an increase in the intensity of regulative measures: "One risked one's life for a shovelful of dirt,/ Must be nice and square, just right." [Translation mine] (C, XVI, 74).

If there is a risk in cutting fecal bearings, it is the risk of investing in an almost totally collapsed economy, a risk which paradoxically constitutes the "safety" discussed earlier. The fecal bearing is safe, protected by its innocuous appearance in the register of "natural" language, "which means that nothing will happen that will/ be visible to the sergeants" (C, LXXVIII, 483). But if so, then signification is unable to rise above appearances in the metaphoric register: "The chess board is too lucid/ the squares are too even" (C, LXXVIII, 477). Blocked between arrangement and excess, fixating on the urge to gather up that collection that is continually escaping into the earth, Pound seems to represent speculation itself, a paradoxical cycle of desuetude and recursion, a bearing on mastery which eventually leads the master into fascism. Attempting to write paradise, Pound confronts the prospect of remarking hell. In the end is "the record/ the palimpsest – / a little light/ in great darkness – ." The palimpsest and the question, "as to who will copy this palimpsest?" (C, CXVI, 795, 797).

In 1944 and 1945, legal indictments were put forward in order to determine not whether Pound had committed treason with his fascist writings but whether he was competent to stand trial. What the court was demanding was that Pound give the final word on the question of his madness, the final, reasonable Logos which would prevent him from being committed to St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Should this move succeed, he would eventually be tried for the motivatedness of his fascist statements and political support of Mussolini. The legal exigencies were, first: assert the *determinable* conscious intentionality of your discourse in general (so as to avoid psychiatric incarceration); and second: assert the *arbitrary* ground of your fascist radio broadcasts (so as to avoid criminal incarceration); evince the status of the broadcasts as what the legal community calls "mere words."¹⁷

Would Pound have found speaking to the question of his madness as mad? Would it be even more mad to admit the paradoxical relationship between the groundedness and arbitrariness of his discourse? Pound's request for incarceration at St. Elizabeth's in 1945 reduced the status of his discourse to "mere words," that which should have grounded his innocence on the fascist charge. Nevertheless, he resisted all efforts to obtain his freedom unless it could be demonstrated in the grounded language of the Logos that the discourse of his *accusers* had been "mere words," and that the court would clear his own name with hygenic absolution.

What sort of agitation inhered in the politicized silence which spoke for Pound's insanity when his voice would not, yet at the same time refused to convict him? What sort of agitation drew him to impose a mirror image of his own linguistic dilemma upon the discourse of his prosecutors? Then what of the reversal of the law's implicit linguistic judgments in 1958 when the questions of Pound's treason and sanity were dismissed and the *technical* figure of his innocence (lack of definitive evidence) but not his definitive moral innocence was legally put forward?

Pound did not consent to the dismissal of his case, insisting upon a discursive purity which would never materialize. The poet who had agitated hysterically all of his life over the incipient contamination of the Logos now found that logopoeic contamination, if anything, was what was "saving" him, even if at the same time he believed himself to be invaded by harmful microbes. In Pound's request to enter St. Elizabeth's, the determinable, conscious Logos was declared dead, and the determinable, conscious poet died with it, yet managed, figurally, to live on: the master of Logopoeia surviving himself, but immobilized, desuet, like the abortive bearing which haunted all of his writings, and which he had embodied as a *tableau vivant* when incarcerated in the cage at Pisa.

Pound spoke less and less, eventually said nothing at all, taking on the lapidary appearance, as some biographers said, of the sculpture made of him by Gaudier-Brzszka, or of "a dead man, with a fleshless head such as one might see on a slab in a morgue,"¹⁸ the figure of that in which he would be overcome. What spoke more and more loudly, what "bawled" in the bearing of Pound, was no longer the word of Pound proper but the strange spectral volume of a *gueule* which bespoke nothing but the impossibility and effacement of the word surviving on the kakatropic traces of its own drifting density. The Logos had

declared its own undoing and inscribed its own caricature. Which is perhaps what Pound was hysterically drawn to when he died in his sleep with one eye firmly squeezed shut.

Charlotte Salomon (1917–43) grew up as a Jew within the dominant discursive régime of Hitler's "Jewish question" and the approach of its "Final Solution." In the early 1940s, while Pound was raving with the anti-semitic and allegedly fascist radio speeches which would incur his incarceration in a cage at Pisa and ultimately lead him to trial, Salomon was hiding underground in the south of France (1940–2), and devoting the remainder of her days before deportation to Auschwitz to painting a massive series of autobiographical palimpsests entitled *Leben oder Theater: Ein Singspiel* (Life or Theater: A Musical Comedy). A classical dictionary entry would typically define the palimpsest in the following manner: "A written document, typically on vellum or parchment, that has been written upon several times, often with the remnants of earlier, imperfectly erased writing still visible, remnants of this kind being a major source for the recovery of lost literary works of classical antiquity." Salomon inscribes this model differently, treating the palimpsest not as a therapeutics which seeks to recuperate, record, and pay homage to a prior original but as a prosthetics which repeats and remarks the condition of the copy as disfiguration.

The Salomon Singspiel is a narrative series of some 750 numbered watercolor gouaches, trashy, graffiti-like, seemingly designed to decompose quickly, an autobiographical catalog which is also framed as an avant-garde piece of staging, casting its author as one theatrical character among others described in the third person. Taped onto each of the first 250 gouaches is a tracing paper painted with autobiographical narrative, additional graffiti or cartoons, Nietzschean digressions, and nervy directions for musical orchestration to accompany the paintings – a trashy second skin or veil of writing deployed in and as the fragmented body of the text. The corpus is dedicated to ruin, the Nietzschean genealogy of the eye/I disseminated into a thousand veils drawn to outfacing death.¹⁹

The character of a Nietzschean voice master named Daberlohn takes up the role of mentor in the narrative, teaching Charlotte the art of masks and veils. He advocates choosing the master's body as a privileged site for emulation, the deepest point of contact between master and disciple. "Strangely enough," he notes, this principle is "intimately related to the sun. Like the sun hidden behind clouds, gold, too, lies buried in the deep shafts of the earth." He finds Charlotte to be a "fertile object" for these theories of the Overman and of eternal return, and begins to theorize by focusing the intensity of his stare on the arrangement of her face (*LT*, 467). He does not focus on the dividuality of his carnal calculate, on the way in which the erect eye stretches out and multiplies with too many rigid insights in the deadly attempt to regulate other faces or masks in identity or submission to itself. Above all, the mask or image which is sought is anticipated "out of the spirit of music," out of the dream of the mystical fusion and effusion of Dionysus, a dream of carnation which overlooks the deadly dividualities needed to appropriate the instantaneity of human time. Art will proceed from the paralysis of time as a disjunctive tense bound

up with the amorous Dionysian attempt to draw out and dialectically overcome Appollonian resistance. Love will occur in the untimeliness of this tense, in the spacing of music as the orchestration of human expression.

The character of Charlotte, portrayed as the master's disciple, is an ardent modulation of ignorance, a pliant series of skins or veils, of soundless volumes, eternally given up to repetition. The very best and worst that the master can say of her is that she is utterly denatured, out of place, that she knows absolutely nothing at all. Oddly enough, he reads in the impenetrability of her soul a resemblance to the souls of the masters: "Certain great men, such as Nietzsche, have a boundless yearning to surrender themselves to a particular object. And this yearning for beauty is clothed in such a tender emotion that natural fulfillment seems to them, as at first to most young girls, more often than not something to be avoided" (*LT*, 452). Young girls are "so closely intertwined with themselves" that they resemble "nothing less than the creator's soul being touched from the outside" (*LT*, 450). Yet the excruciating introversion which pushes the maiden's soul to the outside, the denatured veiling which arises out of the young girl's passionate self-intertwining, is always able to divduate further from the human plane. And it will be those maidens "who so readily seduce themselves and let themselves be seduced" who will lead the master out of the shadows. Exodus is to be found in the maiden given up to the body of veils as that which crosses out in representation, a crossing out which takes place below or beyond the confines of singularity. It will be the body beside itself in the extremity of its self-effacement, the extroverted introversions which constitute the disciple as the limit of "expression," a series of theatrical veils, awkwardly out of place and out of measure, always ready to be orchestrated, to be surrendered in ignorant fragility to the word of the other, unable or unwilling to take account of the singular itself.

Yet in a vulnerable moment, the master acknowledges his own susceptibility to the fatality of self-entwinement, and we see him painted into a V-shaped mark which converges between his legs. Speaking of another woman, another veil, he says: "So actually I only love myself in her, and when I look deep, deep into her eyes, all I see there is the reflection of my own face. Isn't this a sign that, whenever we believe we love each other, we are merely our own subject and object?" (*LT*, 274). Like the maiden, he too finds himself intertwined with his own nature, his soul cloven in the attempt to internalize its own contradiction, and the failure to resolve the cleavage reproducing it with greater intensity. In one painting, he finds himself sitting in a pool of blood, muttering "We should, as the creator of self-reflection, deny it. It limps, it has a devil's hoof" (*LT*, 276). Finally we see him suspended from a tree, speaking of his "child," his "dream" (*LT*, 277). He reiterates the emblem of the aging patriarch in the medieval tale of January and May who attempts to maintain his wife in the paralytic ignorance of perpetual youth, cloven from the knowledge of her own desire. Here, as there, we find him suspended, his head lost in branches, the carnation of his dream having taken its own autonomy and become adulterated without reserve.

Daberlohn develops a narrative for the genesis of his theories of expression. A stretcher-bearer in World War I, he found himself trapped at one point under

the bodies of dying soldiers, hearing their tortured voices which, in the trial of the soul, exceeded the normal limits of range and volume. He takes music lessons to experiment with this mystery of vocal extremity, seeks out the therapeutic of a sound stemming from the soul which could encompass heights and depths hitherto unachieved by the human voice. But he seeks also a therapeutic for his own faulty resurrection, his awakening to partial amnesia, fated like the ignorant maiden not to know who he was (*LT*, 244). Later he awakens to the acknowledgement that it was his masking by the other corpses which saved his life. Above all, he acknowledges death and life as two contradictory souls cohabiting within his breast (*LT*, 248), and he exerts the will to envelop both of them with love, ignoring the residue of pathos which escapes in the theoretical internalization of contradiction, blind to his reinvestment of the abyss of his own denial. He makes a pact with the cloven, draws protection from the warmth of the deserted, seeks resurrection as the de-parted and the de-ceased: "So you see what the perfect creature of the modern era looks like. It is the pursuit of happiness, it is the Faustian man who, driven by desire, staggers toward sensual pleasures and in those pleasures languishes for desire" (*LT*, 249). Curiously, the tiny arrow pointing out the "perfect creature" points to the face which in the series is most masklike and which deviates the furthest from the constraints of beautiful form, its human features all but obliterated. For the disciple, the mysterious experiment to stretch the voice must inevitably decline into the bawling volume of its own genesis, the volume of the veils of the *Singspiel*. The birth of the soul "out of the spirit of music" would be a stretcher-bearer, the mute bearing up to the excessive extension of overcharged instances of its own extremity. The spacing-out of volume would be bald, awkward, out of place, bawling silently in the carnal theater of its own extinction.

Salomon's Nietzschean persona, like Pound's, is indebted to the tale of "The Vision and the Riddle," in which Zarathustra, suffering from the "internalization of man," the Platonic moment of the blink which interiorizes difference, descends to the "pregnant" ocean while telling the story of a mountain climb to a gateway called *Augenblick*.²⁰ Along this strange journey which conflates gravity and levity, he is obliged to "bear himself" with his double, the dwarf-mole "lamfoot," sitting on his shoulder. If in Platonic optics, the viewer occupies a voyeuristic position seen as purely cognitive, masterfully distanced in geometric space from the object which is viewed, here Zarathustra bears the figure of his own voyeur parasitically peering over his shoulder who calls attention to his status not as master of cognition but as the emasculated carnated body with rudimentary eyesight, prey to the appropriation and levity of the gaze of the other.²¹ Zarathustra has difficulty bearing up under his burden and suffers from a weakness in the legs; understanding is carnally inscribed as standing under.

These optics are to be viewed to the "tune" of "I had a faithful comrade, a better you'll ne'er find" (*LT*, 118). After which comes the commentary, "But then he was killed in a fall." In Salomon's painting, the *Augenblick* which allows the identification between viewpoint and vanishing point in classical optics is both recovered and remarked as disfiguration. By calling attention to the dissimulative laws of figuration, Salomon's palimpsest transforms the classical field of vision and its account of such vision. We may say that the painting

figures the unblinking and all-knowing Eye of classical subjectivity with a giant iris at its center. However, the sense which is calculated in the central stare is prey to the inbuilt interruptions of other senses. The figure of Charlotte appears in the iris as camera operator behind the lens, and we, as additional viewers, have "pulled back" behind her not only to incarnate her as voyeur (she appears as viewer framed by our own lens) but behind the series of voyeurs who succeed her and remark on the carnality which has moved to the center of vision. While the figure of Charlotte may have taken only one shot of the "fall," we as viewers continue to "shoot" the scene, and if our respective "cameras" are simulacra of each other, then these shared optics straddle both sides of the frame, dismantling the distinction between the animate and the inanimate, between life and art, between plenitude and the trace. (This process is played out in the upper left corner where the stick figure alternately climbs and falls in keeping with the allegory of Zarathustra's voyage, but also exceeds these binary constraints to become deployed over the entire painted field as the disseminated line of drawing/writing.) Similarly, the figure who has taken a fall reincarnates in the foreground as a voyeur, seeming to seek his vanishing point, the goal of his vision, between the legs of the camera and of Charlotte indiscriminately – both optically impenetrable orifices, the one carnal and the other geometrical limits to vision. The viewing point of the voyeur is also densely carnal: the thickened, opaque gaze of the body that has been declared dead, returned to the limits of its materiality. If, according to the unblinking geometry of classical optics, the vanishing point is to be grafted to the viewing point, then here the eyes and vulva find themselves connected with a capital rudeness, allowing not sight but a return of the gaze to the dense carnality which frames its assumptions: carnality as the mirror image of cognition. Or as Lyotard has commented on Duchamp's pornoscopic peephole experiment, "Con celui qui voit" (He who sees is a cunt).²²

Subjectivity is displaced from the faculty of cognition to the carnal body. It is the density and opacity of the viewing subject, the interruption of the other senses, the blink of exclusion which precondition our access to sight. The carnal viewer is caught in the chiasm of identification which connects Zarathustra's mountain climb with his descent to the "pregnant nocturnal dismay," a voyage of carnal gravity and cognitive levity leading him to become prey to the intervention of the Other, to the displacement of other senses no longer recuperated in the privilege of an indifferent space. Here, the optic of understanding is capitally connected to standing under and to a certain weakness in the legs, struggling to bear up under the grave levity of the other. The iris, deflected, invokes a certain risibility, and it is perhaps this risibility which laughs or musicates in the painting. What musicates from the open throat at the center of the visual field, beyond the movements of the camera which poke in and out of it, is the incipiently risible song which orchestrates the painting, the story of an (in)animate body, killed not in a fall, but in a (German) *Fall*, a situation. What kills the body is to arrest it in a single situation. What sings in the allegory of the painting is the possibility of communication and animation through the sense of the other, through the interruption and capital investment of other senses, in which nothing may be reduced to a single orientation or "ism" and

nothing is exclusively *contra naturam*. Something blinks or winks not once but recursively in and as the capital rhythm or agitation which is essential to the mark. For Salomon, drawn to painting a way out of the gravity of extermination, this will mean that no word, not even that of the Holocaust, can ever contract with sacred finality.

So the supplementary veils of the risible body draw relief in the heliotropic eye of the vortex, and repeat it anaglyphically as the strange, lunar levity of the Singspiel. In the palimpsestuous, veiled luminosity between life and death is the contingent expansion-contraction of Iris, the pulsing curtain of the eye, encompassing yet perforated by the pupil, the blind spot as well as the point of image formation where sight glitters, reflecting at the border of possibility. What agitates in Iris's contract is not the Image as such but rather its interruption, an interruption which may always be accompanied and remarked by a cataract, a fungible visual blockage or a veil of tears, not uncommonly risible, floods of water streaming from the eye/I which remark the ruin of the monocular glare and of the presence of the soul to itself, drawing out the adulteration and migration of the souls of the world, figuring a glimpse of a certain theatricality, an indecent exposure, the chance and offering of the invisible which surfaces in the light of the banal, beyond the amnesiac formations of culture. The Nietzschean rule of death drawn to the conquest of the Overman here encounters a strange archive of trashy flimsiness whose agitational excess raises the spectre of intertwining accidents prior to the formation of calculated strategy, where the souls of the world twine and mingle in strange new inscriptions of existence.

There would seem to have been little room for accident in Pound's final solution to the "kakatropic urge in economics," as voiced in the radio broadcasts of the early 1940s:

[Y]ou will have a very large population, no land space, unless you make some arrangement to ship a good deal of it out to Rhodesia. The question remains whether you will take measure to SELECT the stock that is to remain in old England. To see to it that the ENGLISH remain and the Yiddish go forth to Bolivia or wherever . . . you will have to study new hygiene, you will have to give back their naturalization papers to the sweepings of Europe. Let the Jews BUY a national home somewhere in your ruins.²³

What agitates in the cataract is drawn to the pound as the dense site of carnal confinement, an enclosure for the capture of small game or fish. Yet in that same space of constriction, something massively floods the iris, a cataract of senses apart from vision, which overflows the enclosure and floats the pound, where something fishy swims, like a salmon or a carp.

MEDIUMS OF FREEDOM IN PHOTOGRAMMIC FRAMES

SOME EXPOSURES OF BOUND TRANSCENDENCE

James R. Watson

War is hell on bodies and their *Umwelt*. With the technological and philosophical superogation of the traditionally well-defined and separated battlefield, defending one's homeland and killing the enemy becomes a constant of the war called everyday life. Total war, the only certainty, pits all against all with only temporary, strategic divisions into the good and the bad. Total, all or nothing, war aims at the impossible – total domination by complete control of the cultural apparatus, its codes and procedures of identificational recruitment. Since World War II and after the demise of the Soviet Union, the United States has become the strongest of states contending for this command position. Now a leader in the development of a healthy, productive subject population, it marshals energies and rallies its troops around the battle cry of “traditional family values.” The most recent theater of operations was first set up by Ronald Reagan, the “Great Communicator.” Debilitated by their repressions of the Vietnam failure and increasing losses to the rebellious youth of popular culture, many parents warmed to its gerontological resentment and nostalgia. So willingly did they go . . . “Save me, sweet Jesus!” . . . to be carried away and into the mythic identificational plays of this new theater.

This theater of operations within the total war is now called “the culture war.” The evil side is composed of the nihilistic *bêtes noires* spinning off the Nietzschean turntable of irrationalism.¹ The other side, the good one, is a veritable army of “Reagan kids” who give new meaning to ruthlessness, greed, and the end of philosophy. Reagan kids are both young and old but generally older than their enemies. They are well armed, packing carefully prepared easy images and easy answers for the repression-weary many. The new “revolutionary” administrative agents supply their antinihilist troops while they attend to the hard business of surgically removing weaknesses from the body of their meaner and leaner, strong state – welfare, Medicare, open borders, and the

liberal creed that "all men are created equal." America is returning to its pre-1960s normality. As symbolized by Reagan's visit to Bitburg to help the German cultural-political apparatus settle accounts with its troubling past, it is a return to the repressed, to a time of "hands-on" healing, "white" consolidation, and the wisdom of concentrated capital. The dark horizons of nihilism are being conquered and replaced by the bright lights of a truly revisionary and redemptive project. The good side of the culture war is adjusting our past to what it should have been. The good side is thus also responsible for the coordination/*Gleichschaltung* of all social elements within this revision.

MTV, for example, was brought into line and *Beavis and Butthead* emerged as a cynical parody of critical popular culture and its effects. Still, coordination remains a difficult task when faced with the persistent and deliberate outrages committed by marginal artists after being provided with public funds for the opportunity to bring themselves into the mainline art establishment. The revisionists had indeed provided sample cases of successful and humane coordination. Anticipatory compliance is expected. *American Royalty* is an image of one such success.

Elvis Presley began by showing kids that the lower part of their bodies could be as articulate as the upper parts. But this subversive, antihierarchical teaching was revised/appropriated in the process of making Elvis into "The King." All is redeemed at Graceland, where Elvis rests in peace.

Photographs are strange, and often unsettling. Thus many metaphysical attempts have been made to coordinate the many practices of photography which are both pivotal for the cultural apparatus of hierarchical oppression and the resistance to that unfreedom. The "born again" society is composed and regulated by the instruments which induce nostalgia for what never was but should have been, and thus must have been before the irrationalists and anti-realists destroyed it. Photography would be one of coordination's most effective tools if its polymorphic perversity could be excised. A successfully treated, revised, and univocally rendered photographic instrument would be a very powerful device for appropriations, coordinations, and revisions. And this was accomplished in filmic Hollywood during the McCarthy coordination days.

Successful coordinations of photographic practice have demonstrated that this is an especially useful instrument for the cultural composition of a mythic-paranoid social body ruled by a restored phallic law and its refined cruelties. Employing realistic codes within the ontological mappings generated by the framings of restored phallic law, coordinated photographic practice as reproduction of the real rewrites/draws the history of the culture war as the reestablishment of a normalized social object-libido over the anarchic, narcissist-libido of the counterculture. The current culture war is thus a series of battles between those who understand what the cultural apparatus needs by way of codes and instruments for the purpose of restoring phallic-oedipal law and its socio-ontological orders of rank and those whose practice and thought prevent the totalization of social coordination.

From the standpoint of restored normality and identity, it is not necessary to know how to define obscenity: normalized consciousness is transparent, a

perfectly clear matrix of proprietary inscriptions. Offering no resistance, it sees clearly without the recoil of a thinking unreconciled with its material unfreedom.² Nothing is clearer than cases of photographic abuse and obscenity for the normalized consciousness of the "point and shoot" culture industry. Without the recoil that allows a nonappropriated thinking to understand this reconciled unfreedom, rebellion is always seen as perversion. From the effortless and comfortable position of nonrecoiling pointing and shooting, those who persist in misusing the gloriously restored perceptual conventions of mimetic representation and the cherished newer techniques of realistic reproduction for the purpose of publicly displaying patently offensive figurations within our otherwise calm and orderly quotidian life are nothing more or less than perverted ingrates. The consequent is clear, drawn effortlessly: when border-crossings are unregulated, the wrong elements enter as destructive elements. These are the unbound libidinous agents of chaos mocking the natural order of things. The popular matrix reconditioner Rush Limbaugh warns us about these destructive agents dragging their private perversions into the restored rational order of public life. His lesion, repeated ad nauseam: what was hard won is being mocked by a subversive and tax supported proliferation of hard-ons (attached and detached) and come-ons.

Robert Mapplethorpe, together with others having sufficient recoil for instructive humor, have refigured the on-tos of the newly erected yet supposedly restored social generality. This refiguration has also generated considerable anxiety. The moral guardians of the social good are now asking the preparatory question for any truly fundamental social ontology: "Why isn't there nothing rather than this stuff?" That, at least, is what they were and are planning for the NEA and NEH. After the "seminal" 1973 Supreme Court case *Miller v. California*, the guardians of social normality took on the formidable task of protecting the "born again" society from the corrosive effects of obscenity. The *Miller* ruling tells us that obscene material is not protected by the First Amendment if "the work, taken as a whole, appeals to the prurient interest of sex; portrays, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct . . . ; and taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political, or scientific value."³ Perhaps those special few endowed with the powers of a Judge Bork can truly discern the intentions of the Founding Fathers. But whatever those intentions might have been, it must be noted that these wise patriarchs omitted any qualifications about seriousness and/or artistic value for the free speech they sought to protect.

Whatever the intentions of the Founding Fathers, it is clear that our present-day guardians compose a concerted class of very diligent overseers of liberal social experimentation. North American Culture has become for our patriarchal guardians what it has always been for women, blacks, and Native Americans — a battleground.

Yet, a postmodern cultural shift is underway. Culture and its wars always involve very high stakes. The investments are so high in fact that this series of battles best not be understood in the manner of games that can be won. The postmodern cultural shift is away from the normative matrix of "All or Nothing," away from strategies of total war, and toward another way of gaming in

which the gaming itself forecloses on the possibility of winners and losers. While the guardians of social normality struggle against illegal border-crossings, there are crossing ways which, having been made, render the side or sides of legitimacy and normality a very confused and uneasy determination. And with that indetermination, begins a power different in kind from the power of hierarchy, privilege, and stable mythic identity. What radical cultural politics is attempting is nothing less than a sustained playing of this indetermination. There are of course different tonalities, different keys, and thus different games, but they all share the characteristic of playing at something they neither each, nor all collectively, can determine within the bounds of the playing. This bound transcendence is that of Plato (before the neo-Platonists), Kant (before the neo-Kantians), Derrida, and Lyotard.⁴ The following episode belongs to this postmodern gaming within the current cultural war.

After exhibiting 175 Mapplethorpe photographs at the Cincinnati Contemporary Arts Center (CAC), director Dennis Barrie and his Contemporary Arts Center went to court, each charged with depicting minors in a state of nudity and pandering obscenity. On October 5, 1990, after the jury decided that pictures don't have to be pretty to qualify as art, Barrie and the CAC were acquitted. Earlier on April 25, 1990, after a watchful photo technician at a local lab called the Feds to alert them to Sturges's photos of nude young women and girls, the FBI raided Jock Sturges's studio. For "safe-keeping," they took his cameras, negatives and prints, files, address books, records, computer equipment, and all darkroom equipment. So, while Dennis Barrie and the CAC were "free" to reflect and argue within the complex power relations of State and the institutions of Art, Sturges's life work was suspended in an FBI "evidence file."

Obscenity charges, raids on artists' studios, revocations of NEA and NEH grants, Dan Quayle's attack on mothers without husbands, and then the apparently endless allegations concerning Bill Clinton's wild libido, all form a pattern of fear and hate consolidated around attempts to undermine and mock the First Amendment by flexing it against itself – another hard-on on-tos. The preservation of social normality always seems to require an unbound transcendence.

The guardians of truth, propriety, and good taste are moved by that singular will needful of the necessity of legal and moral standards for the regulation of our mediums of freedom and their framed apparitions. For these concerned citizens, who are by and large men of good will, the power of our mediums of freedom must be regulated by unimpeachable norms. All enigmatic manifestations must be submitted and reduced to approved, easy, and untroubling forms of appearance. Not only would this abolition of the anarchic frame repudiate our entire modern philosophy of the subject, it would also reduce art and its supplements to an almost totally transcendent-reactionary worldview. If the attempts to abolish free expression by restricting it to either local and/or federal standards of decency continue to be successful, then, and only then, will we be able to say that art has come to an end, i. e., that art is the same as kitsch.

The stakes are very high indeed. But what makes this game so very difficult is that we are not always sure which side we're on, or which side we're against.

Worse yet, we sometimes forget that the matter of sides is a reactionary trap. A good part of our difficulty concerns the agonies and confusions of a postmodern condition denied by the twelve-year reign of Reagan-Bush mythism. But even if we want to deny the death of God and all correlative metanarratives, theory can no longer feign an independence from the collapsed objects of the sick culture which spawned it.

The postmodern condition, in other words, is not a condition that comes "after" modernism. On the contrary, the increasing objectivization and functionalization of cultural works is accompanied by another modality which increases the intricate complicity of subjects critically mediating these reduced works. Postmodernism did not destroy the distinction of high and low art. That is a tendency of modernism itself, to which the post-modus tendency responds. The critic-commentator-theorist is no longer independent or immune from the processes which reduce or substantiate our mediums of freedom into the various forms of nonenigmatic appearance. When Jock Sturges's photographs are suspect as instances of "kiddy porn," so is his and our subjectivity, as well as the subjectivity that does the suspecting. That intricate connectivity is precisely the postmodus play of modernism, the play of bound transcendence that implicates everyone. If modernism has the profound tendency of hierarchical exclusion, it also has another, equally profound, that plays differences without privileging any of them. But playing differences this way also means the loss of innocence, naiveté, and all other forms of exculpation. We become in this play the many Nietzsches who said they were every name in history. Postmodernism does not exclude the timid or pure of heart. It certainly tests such defensive postures but without the terrorism of grading.

The play of bound transcendence is, I repeat, an intricate set of connections and thus an intricate complicity, desperately denied by more than a few modernist critics, commentators, and theorists. Sturges, under considerable pressure, also denies his postmodern condition:

I aim for a subjective truth in my work – an understanding of who the individuals I photograph are as well as an aesthetically successful image that reveals my particular sensibilities. In recent months, artistic truth in general, and with regard to some of my work in particular, has become something that certain poisoned minds in federal bureaucracies can no longer tolerate. This was manifest most horribly and invectively to me during the extraordinary destructive raid on my home and studio on April 25, 1990 (in the course of which, for all intents and purposes, my life's work was confiscated). These "art police" harken back chillingly to the Germany of the mid 1930s. Two years ago, I would have read such a sentence as melodramatic hyperbole. Today it represents the scales fallen from my eyes. The malign underbelly of a government that has lost control of its perspective and a sense of its priorities (especially concerning constitutional rights) was revealed to me in one hideous convulsion of repressive justice.

There is no harm or crime in my work – just innocence. When

innocence is judged obscene, the obscenity is in the eye of the beholder – is the eye of the beholder.⁵

But is it just “innocence” that provokes our suspicion here? Is Sturges’s photograph *C, Paris, 1984* something totally other than prurient interests, harm, and crime? How could obscenity not be the eye of the beholder when that beholder belongs to an exploitative and horrifically greedy society that sacrifices its youth, its future, for the sake of easy imaging/living? Wouldn’t it be better to be young, better to be obscene, than judged and identified as “innocent” by those who would prohibit portrayals of who we are and what we do? The pretension of innocence is a denial of complicity that makes us more complicitous with the cleansing powers that attempt to conceal this complicity and its effects.

There is a theoretical variant of the denial of complicity which concerns the photographic image. Are photographic images so easy, so transparent, that they read clearly and unequivocally? Kendall L. Walton has proposed such a reading of the photographic image:

to perceive things is to be in contact with them in a certain way. A mechanical connection with something, like that of photography, counts as contact, whereas a humanly mediated one, like that of painting, does not. Perceptual contact with things has rather less to do with acquiring knowledge about them than has sometimes been supposed.⁶

Walton contends: “Viewers of photographs are in perceptual contact with the world,” independently of the beliefs of the photographs’ makers.⁷ The photographic image is technically pure, independent of photographers’ subjective intentions. What we see in photographs is a direct and unfiltered perceptual contact. If Walton is right about this, what exactly are we in contact with in and through Sturges’s *C, Paris, 1984*?

Walton says that if we interpret photographs correctly, we get the facts, and Sturges tells us that the “art police” have poisoned minds that interpret innocence as obscenity.

Together, complicitly, Walton and Sturges reiterate the modernist formulation of the contested body: we all see the same things but interpret them differently. What can we do then when we find ourselves lost in the relativism of conflicting interpretations? Sturges suggests falling back upon the silent call of conscience, while the officials of social normality echo the loud voices of authoritative truth – even though we all know that the really big consciences have a way of remaining silent when State power commits crimes. During and after Auschwitz, for example, most of them were deadly silent. By the time the authorities got around to echo “truth,” those silent complicities were never mentioned in authoritative versions of what “really” happened. Just ask any high school student what really happened in Vietnam. Given this shameful performance of conscience and authority, how can we reasonably hold that conscience and authority are anything other than what Nietzsche called “the bad intellectual conscience” now warning us about dirty and corrupting

pictures? Which is more obscene, the dirt or the warnings? We can't help but recall that it wasn't the systematic annihilation of Jews that disturbed the higher Allied powers of World War II, but rather its becoming visible. Only transcendental "modernists" deny their complicity within this framing of events.

Thus it is hardly surprising that photographs of nude children now evoke too many memories and charge too many fantasies. To portray anything or anyone today without understanding the history behind these "direct" perceptions is to act as dangerously as those who do understand and wish to add further atrocities to this still largely unwritten history. Himmler had a pretty good understanding of how "purists" and "idealists" can be used for the most inhuman tasks because they are precisely the ones who will most easily believe that they are in this corrupt world but never of it.⁸ Silence, invisibility, and closed door privacy all form the oscillating Ur(ab)grund of contemporary authority. Public purists like Jimmies Swaggart and Baker are drawn to it like flies. It is simply that which no decent person talks about, except, that is, through the dissimulations of prime-time repentances.

Since postmodernists are anything but decent, let's consider some "dirty pictures." Robert Mapplethorpe's *Self Portrait* 1978 is both "dirty" and disturbing. Assuming, with Walton, that we can see through this Mapplethorpe photograph, what are the facts we "get" if we interpret its/our things correctly? Do we "get" what Mapplethorpe "is getting" as he gives it to us? What can we give back in response to Mapplethorpe's query? Do we want to look at him looking at us while we draw back from this drawing-in? Or is there both resistance and seduction in our recoil from Mapplethorpe's portrayal of his own recoiling? Let's also consider Mapplethorpe's *The Slave* 1974. What do we "get" in this photograph of objectivized photographs and an aestheticized knife and book? Both a "still life" and a "self-portrait," its simultaneous materialization of photographs and dematerializations of knife and book destabilize realistic readings in and through a framing that ironically reiterates the frame-up of slavery. We see a "real" book of photographically represented stone sculptures bound to a piece of "real" plywood, all surrounded by a "real" frame, which thus makes these real and represented things into a work of artistic representation about an artist called "Mapplethorpe," whose signature here is also an ambivalent representation. This is a postmodern portrayal in a photogrammic frame. Here, and only here, is "Mapplethorpe" free – a bound yet transcending polyvalent subject. The way into Mapplethorpe's world is through the frame, the limit of his world until others enter it and make new frames.

Guardians like Jesse Helms never enter this framing in pursuit of the polyvalent "Mapplethorpe" – a refusal and lack of understanding that seems to have pissed off one of these Mapplethorpes. His world still waits for us, invites us to enter and join in its imaging against the powers of the strong state. "Mapplethorpes" are recruiting but few want to be identified, even if they dare to enter. It is, after all, an illegitimate border-crossing. But then to ease the pain of reentry much could and should be said about the rim of the strong state and its negative attraction. Mapplethorpe got it, and so do we every time we

withdraw from photogrammic frames to accept instead (and from behind) the easy images of hierarchical power's identificational recruitments.

Afraid of the complicity and confused by the polyvalences of bound transcendence, we are pulled backwards to easier images of stable identity and normalized contexts. Withdrawing from the power of being-with back into the clutches of the powers-over us is the price we pay for the propriety which enables us to "get" the facts right. Even then, however, we are drawn to these dirty pictures, suspicious of something not quite right about our rightness. Much depends upon this suspiciousness of frames. Maybe instead of snapshooting the kids we should try photogramming ourselves à la Mapplethorpe.

But we must be suspicious: is all of this an exposure of bound transcendence, or, perhaps, a misreading of the facts (texts/images)? Even a tenuous "maybe" regarding the former possibility is risky because once bound to the frame and only free in that binding, the act of seeing and the seen become combined in a play without winners (or losers). Plato called this combination an Idea, the name which he also gave to the "truly just," "the good," and "the beautiful as truly existent." The Idea, which was Plato's focal experience in the photogrammic frame, has an intuitive origin – which is to say that concepts alone are never adequate for the expression of an idea.⁹ Thus, he penned Socrates contesting every definition of justice, truth, beauty, and the good. But not because his teacher and friend was too stupid to grasp "universals," but because Plato placed him in photogrammic frames so that he would never lose his sense of philosophy beginning and always returning to the wonders/thaumata of enigmatic manifestation. That was how Plato took his revenge on the Athenian men of good will – at least that's what his *Apology* says. And one should always be indecisive when asked whose defense that really was. The *Apology* is an ongoing photogramm. Certain decisive ones have brought charges against us, one of which is that we have misinterpreted images, including Plato.

In his introduction to *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, editor-in-chief Paul Edwards says: "We believe that there is no philosophical concept or theory of importance that is not identified and discussed in the *Encyclopedia*, although not every concept or theory has a separate article devoted to it."¹⁰ Indeed, there is no separate article on transcendence in this encyclopedia. Instead we find many index references to its treatment in other topical essays. One of these, by H. D. Lewis, and concerned with the history of the philosophy of religion, briefly discusses Plato's notion of "the good." Lewis notes that this notion "is the first explicit formulation in Western thought of the idea of transcendence as it came to dominate much subsequent thinking."¹¹ Oddly, however, the *Encyclopedia's* index listing for "Plato" has no sublisting for "transcendence." Instead we find a sublisting for "universals," referring us to an article, under that title, which informs us that the word "universal," "used as a noun, has belonged to the vocabulary of English-writing philosophers since the sixteenth century, but the concept of universals, and the problems raised by it, has a far longer history."¹² Thus transcendence is here displaced by the concept of universals. Such is the work of what Heidegger calls the "onto-theo-logic" tradition. Yet the "onto-theo-logic" at work in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* gives rise to a specific manifestation, still enigmatic in that it hides as well as reveals, that then

attempts to conceal the fact that what it indicates – universals – differs from the appearances which do the indicating. Thus, “the concept of universals, and the problems raised by it, has a far longer history.” This attempt at a concealment of enigmatic manifestation, what Heidegger calls the happening of truth, is an attempt to objectivize the content of manifestation by separating it from its frame. In this (good) manner of retreating from bound transcendence, Plato’s Idea is properly established as a concept. That at least is how *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* snapshots the image within images the editors have decided belongs to the proper name Plato. And, indeed, who today doesn’t know that the history of philosophy is a family album!

Much has become commonplace, including the bureaucratic administration of oppression and suffering. In his *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty disturbs the Idea-become-commonplace by noting that perception so occupies us that we are unable to perceive what is disclosed while perceiving ourselves perceiving it.¹³ Then, in a later essay, “The Philosopher and His Shadow,” he says:

I know unquestionably that man over there *sees*, that my sensible world is also his, because *I am present at his seeing*, it is *visible* in his eyes’ grasp of the scene. And when I say I see *that* he sees, there is no longer here (as there is in “I think that he thinks”) the interlocking of two propositions but the mutual unfocusing of a “main” and a “subordinate” viewing.¹⁴

The intersection of perceiving and perceived which Merleau-Ponty speaks of here is the world’s flesh, a compresence of visible and invisible, which old Plato restricted to the society of friends. Carnal self-other awareness, the body as both constituted and constituting, the world as flesh, is Merleau-Ponty’s focal experience.

So suspicious readers of the commonplace *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* might well ask, can the Idea and world as flesh be transmitted through the lines of the history of the concept of universals? If philosophy is intuitive experience, is it also an intuitive experience that can be conceptualized and transmitted by way of concepts?

EXCLUDED PRESENCE

Can the essence of the concept be conceptualized and transmitted in and by the family history of that conceptualization? Or does the interconnection of perceived and perceiving, visible and invisible, bound transcendence and its enigmatic manifestations, itself retreat in the very attempt to collapse this intertwining into either the pure intuition of essence or the specific spatial-temporal datum of manifestation? Is this not what Hegel attempted as the project for the unification of historical and ontological dialectics? In a massive philosophical work that has not received the attention it deserves, Michel Henry explains:

It is both true and false to say that there is in Hegel no philosophy of original temporality. Doubtless, authentic time is not grasped by Hegel

in and for itself. The reason for this is that *in Hegelianism the for-itself is not a property of the origin*. The origin remains fundamentally obscure, as such it is nothing other than the *movement toward light*, toward that which Hegel calls reality. Original time does not have its own reality, it is this movement toward reality, namely “*realization*” *as such*. That such a “realization” is a “fall” results directly from the fact that which is produced by such a movement is given-reality; it is the *vorhanden* time wherein original time loses itself in order to realize itself. Time is nothing other than this movement of losing oneself. Therefore, the “fall” is time itself.¹⁵

Original temporality is negativity suppressing itself in manifestation, thereby accomplishing itself as *Vorhanden* time–phenomenon. Which means, of course, that in Hegelianism the concept as self-accomplishment in the other must necessarily both find and alienate itself in the forms of its objective manifestations. Women know about this necessary movement of mastery through the breaking of vessels. Oh, the steeling discipline of the Concept!

Hegelianism, then, speaks of a future and necessary reconciliation – the end of history/alienation. Self-accomplishment is the violent consumptive negation of alienated Spirit in the movement towards unbound, unrestrained expression – the Truth. The power of the Spirit, its power to express everything, is, however, a result of its confused but necessary violence mastery of matter. The unbound transcendence of Spirit in the self-accomplishing Concept is the transcendence of earthly matter, including and especially the human body. Even the resistance of alien bodies is the work of the Concept.

Reconciliation in the aftermath, however, remains a promise in the secularized Christianity of Hegelianism, one which we now recall moved all of us children of Marxism and neocapitalism to fanatic extremes. Essential to this extremism in defense and pursuit of secularized dialectical reconciliation is its refusal to admit any contribution from the side of Spirit’s Other: Spirit remains self-alienated in the very matter it holds captive to its design. Marxism is as Hegelian as industrial capitalism in its refusal to acknowledge what Camus called the absurd – the tension between our desire to unify and the irreducible opacity of the world. The freedom promised by industrialism is perpetually frustrated by its own unyielding mastery. The mutilated and fragmented body remains a scandal rather than a disgrace when this dialectics of mastery presents itself as weakened and apparently reconciled with its own vulnerability. Even as it admits to irredeemable sufferings and unearned joys, it persists as an irrepressible attraction to what it cannot but should be able to master. Within the tortured and torturing figurations of frustrated reconciliations, the self-appointed warriors of the Concept carry on their bloody labor with recalcitrant in-themselves fallen into partial-false apparitions. This is what the Serbs are teaching the Bosnians, and it is the central contestation of modernism and postmodernism.

The reconciled but irredeemable body bears the marks of unbound transcendence and its assaults, which would culminate in a silly kind of dialectical nihilism were our bodies nothing other than the wounds of this horrendous history of mastery and victimization. For example, Joel Peter Witkin’s *Woman*

Once A Bird (1990) says at least two things that, perhaps, do not contradict one another. On the one hand, there is the image within an image – an image within Plato's image of the soul in the *Phaedrus*. Witkin's Woman had her wings brutally removed and replaced with devices for making her more urgently desirous, more attractive to the homoerotic community of phalocrats. Turned away from us, presenting, as Sade's "Dolmancé" teaches, only the side preferred by all true Socratizers, she faces a stained sheet, a linen not quite wiped clean. The truth coming to set her free will write over stains. Dialectically set into the process of healing, her wings will regrow. Out of the horrible wounds, the holes in her being, will come the transcendence made possible by a long series of impregnations – intimations of redemption. Forced to relive the stories of the stained linen, the mighty pen of man will now reiterate the many rapes and sacrifices composing the coming-to-be of Truth. Before the forced labor of the self-accomplishing Concept can give birth to itself in her otherness, however, it is absolutely necessary that she has been prepared for this service. Having met that requirement, she is ready for the operation that will remove the stain of her original sin. It is of course absolutely essential that during this remedial procedure she regulate her breathing.

On the other side – and we should not fail to notice that she has no arms – we see a sheet used so many times before as to be hardly suitable as a promise of things to come. Within this palimpsest setting, the heavenly light of transcendence bears the marks of man – his fabrications, his alibis, his lies, his cancellations, his broken promises. Facing the "cave," she sits in the womb of philosophical man. Plato took us back to the place where we first dwell and drew it as a den of deception. The cave-womb is here a symbol of *techné* and *poiesis* without the truth, and both lacking and resisting the law of the father.¹⁶

Only when filled with the blinding light of the returning son will the cave become the circumscribed polis of law and justice. Such is the philosophic text which supplements this figuration of incest and rape. Plato's son returns immune to women's seductions and as a warrior on a pedagogical mission. The cave must be opened up, exposed, filled with the overpowering light of the true sun. The son of woman liberated by the mysterious intervention of the forms returns to reverse the values of "his" body-dwelling place.

Barbara Kruger's, *Untitled (Your body is a battleground)*, 1989, remarks this solarization, or reversal of values, by an intense overexposure of her own making. Reversed on one side by the overexposed make-up of the other, woman has no identity other than this schizophrenia fabrication in the school for wives. An ideal image combines with a reminding image and a textual supplement that reverses the ideal image into its "truth." Where else could one learn this dialectic if not in the solarized den not quite wiped clean of all illegible seeds? But these illegible seeds are precisely the traces of an appropriated history that has never told the "truth."

So, is Sturges's *C, Paris* as innocent as he says? Can any of us scions of the dialectic, its terrors and corollary promises, make such a claim about our representations? Perhaps this is one of the nasty effects of censorship: now we feel we have to lie about having histories and having undergone the tortures of culturalization. Jesse Helms and the FBI threaten censorship, loss of livelihood, the end of

academic careers, and the like, and suddenly we feel a need to be innocent. But is guilt the opposite of innocence? An innocent being would have no past, no culture, no complicities and complexities to confess and unravel amidst the variety occluded by the Truth. Culture has us in chains while realist functionaries read us variations on a theme by Plato until we're cooked real good. Auschwitz, Heidegger's Parmenidian flames, Truman's atomic bombs, and Bush's pyrotechnic antiozone policies are all Culture. How much longer before the grand fest of spontaneous combustion?

Is it innocence that either poses or candidly selects and frames a pose that evokes one of the most powerful of all patriarchal onto-theo-logical images? How does this superimposition work? Is the crucifixion of Jesus the overlay or the underlay? Is Sturges suggesting the innocence of Jesus with this superimposition or, rather, the stain of original sin that must be atoned through sacrifice? Perhaps, the superimposition makes clear the feminine body of wound and sacrifice? Or, all of this simultaneously? Whatever the case(s) here, Sturges's image is not innocent. If it were, it would not be an exposure of a bound transcendence. Uneasy images are never innocent, never without histories, never unbound: our freedom is always expressed in the photogrammic frames of our bound transcendence. What Jesse Helms and the FBI would like is that we pretend of old to an unbound transcendence which represses our histories and struggles – our framing. The Strong State wants subjects without memories, without pasts and futures. The frameup of innocence conceals an unacknowledged complicity.

Photogrammic frames are counter images to what is now a pervasive sociopolitical puritanism. The cleansing of sinful and demonically possessed bodies and minds is every bit as intensive as it was during the Nazi cleansing operations. And the current reaction to this is, as it was then, an "innocent" indifference carrying on with its business as usual. Internalized terror and concerted attempts to "get one's mind right" make possible the continuing anacritic efforts of the Strong State. This is not the place to enter into a lengthy discussion of the Strong Oedipal State and its fetishization of subjects as purified objects of consumptive desire, but if the expression of freedom in photogrammic frames is to have any public life at all, much depends upon not acting out the fantasies of purity and asexuality so necessary for those who want to "screw" us. A. D. Coleman is right when he says:

Probably these photographs would never had been created had Sturges or his subjects suspected where they would lead. So, just as their unawareness of their social context made the pictures possible, the pain and grief of their disillusionment is the price they've paid for what they attempted to say. The only way to thank Sturges and his friends for their efforts is to struggle towards remaking the world in their image – that is, to work toward creating a culture in which such brave, forthright investigations are seen as normal, and their repression is the aberration.¹⁷

Our bodies, all bodies, like all matter, are excessive, overflowing the determinations of those who would capture and purify us – which is why we

are all marked for death in the hellish annals of state power. State power and the mastery of nature are equivalents – which is why Heidegger is right when he says that metaphysics reaches its end in the scientific-technological determinations of life. What Heidegger did not say, however, concerns the political-aesthetic configuration of these determinations.

Heidegger said little about the body except as presented in works of art. Unlike most philosophers, Heidegger allowed himself to be carried away into works of art – at least, certain kinds of artworks. Why? Because certain kinds of art, for Heidegger, are originary; they are the way truth happens as determinative for a historical people underway in the ecstasis of truth's movement. Carefully distinguishing the work of art from aesthetic-cultural appropriations, Heidegger pointed to the displacement of ordinary life brought about by the thrust of the artwork.¹⁸ However, given the importance of the artwork for Heidegger, it is extraordinary that he offered no analysis of the culture industry's appropriation of art. Instead Heidegger tells us that the happening of truth today requires a reflection upon the essence of art that "cannot force art and its coming-to-be."¹⁹ So, would Heidegger have taken note and then reflection on Jock Sturges's and Robert Mapplethorpe's photographs?

The implication of Heidegger's reflection on art is that either "great" art, which could carry us into its happening of truth, is nonexistent, or it is concealed by the distortions of the appropriating culture industry. In either case, it is the task of thinking to which Heidegger turns. That is another story, but suffice it to say here that thinking for Heidegger was the province of a chosen few who somehow escaped the distortions of the culture industry. Strange as it may seem, there is kinship between Sturges's desire for innocence and Heidegger's retreat into what "namelessly" calls for thought. Perhaps body excesses or, more precisely, a surplus of bodies are behind this retreat. Heidegger also claimed his innocence. Both Heidegger and Sturges made mistakes concerning certain movements and political leaders, and both wanted their work perceived a certain way in the aftermath of their mistakes. In no way are these two cases morally equivalent, but they are similar in the way they retreat from certain political determinations of the body politic.

One of the nasty effects of neopuritanism and political totalitarianism is the compliant tendency to think of artworks with respect to the socio-historic contexts they create.

ETERNAL RECURRENCE OF UNBOUND TRANSCENDENCE

When state power attends to art, it appropriates art. There is something in and about art that state power desires, something very similar if not identical to what has been said about the power of photography: state power prefers "point and shoot" technologies. It also has a preference for "noiseless transmission" devices and all kinds of "records" whose syntax is invisible. If a presentation can be made that bears no signs of its production, the signature of the maker is eradicated by the anonymous, invisible processes that make the presentation possible. Such presentations mark the replacement of the individual, social subject by the universal subject.

Realism-idealism and state powers reinforce one another in the establishment of the idols worshiped by their recruited and loyal citizens. Unlike uneasy images these fixed images do not undermine identification and identity. Face-to-face with believers, the idol does not deconstruct itself. The Oedipal state, whether in fascist, capitalist, or socialist form, is realist and idealist. What seems "real" is always an idealized fixed image, something which comes to stand before the sign – the referent to which all subsequent signs must bear tribute. For the Oedipal state this referent must be protected and disassociated from all disrespectful representations of its originary power, a power that always remains hidden from view. State power is thus studied through its effects.

The iconoclastic prescriptions of the Oedipal state are aimed at representations of the referent that undo its reality: that is, reveal it as never having been there before. In "The World is a Fabulous Tale," Yve Lomax puts it this way:

Gone is the referent which came before and was the past of the sign. Gone is the prior reality which stood steadfast and remained independent of the image. Gone is the essence which awaited to be discovered whole behind the front of appearances. The singular truth is fallen, anteriority is no more and gone is the unity of the one.²⁰

We postworld mutants tell stories that differ a bit from the carefully rehearsed ones of the Oedipal state. What naked women reveal to all of us is the absence of anything real behind the powers of men. There is no gaping wound, no "lack of an object," imaginary or otherwise. We the presumably real become an uneasy representational play without essences. Which is why and when the recruited echo their guardians' cry – "most foul!"

Uneasy images are never innocent, never natural, never unposed, and never without numerous impositions. Despite identifications and issued identity cards, our proper names become improper in multiple frames of things and people, each and all exceeding comprehension. Our temporal transcendence is finite, always bound by some frame, although not always the same one. In every complex assemble of images, with the possible exception of the most abstract and formalistic of compositions, there is some feature or features which elicit identificational recruitment, but not necessarily for all viewers. Anselm Kiefer's *Jeder Mensch steht unter seine Himmelskugel*, 1970, portrays our bound transcendence in two ways. The identificational recruitment element is the small saluting figure within the translucent purple dome. It is the element with which we identify and recognize our Nazi selves – a framework which Kiefer himself accepted not as a state-imposed idol but rather in an effort to understand how such an imposition works. Such identity can be explored, but not without a self-recognition. Unbound or detached observations can never understand the idolatry which binds them to the deceptive pretense of innocence and objectivity. The self formed by the identificational recruitment of idolatry is without the dimensionality of the multiple-self bounding within frames. The unity-self is the captured self insisting upon its unbound transcendence – at least, until it is disturbed by images/readings that unsettle its unity.

The unity-self might well see the saluting figure under its dome of heaven as a ridiculous figuration of Nazi identificational recruitment, but then it will also be disturbed by the recognition that Kiefer's framing is what makes that possible. Kiefer's art, in other words, captures at the same time as it discloses; or more precisely, it discloses only because it first binds us. Within this uneasy imaging, Kiefer not only brings us to the Auschwitz apocalypse and its mockery of human transcendence but frames us so as to be inextricably implicated within the *Gesamtkunstwerk* project of National Socialism. The unity-self begins to unravel as the line separating art from propaganda begins to dissolve. Art allows us to see what we do not ordinarily see, what we do not usually want to see. Yet it does this only by binding us to what it discloses.

Art would be a "capturing" if there were such a thing as Art. Art is a concomitant effect of the unity-self, which has always insisted upon its rights to self-representation. Art is patronage reflecting itself by carefully regulating the techniques used to accomplish this mirroring: thus art institutes, academies, museums, and galleries.

The political model of National Socialism is the *Gesamtkunstwerk* because, as Dr Goebbels very well knew, the *Gesamtkunstwerk* is a political project, since it was the intention of the *Festspiel* of Bayreuth to be for Germany what the Greater Dionysia was for Athens and for Greece as a whole: the place where a people, gathered together in their State, provide themselves with a representation of what they are and what grounds them as such.²¹

The strong state emerges within the artwork that never appears as such to those whose identity is created and sustained by their gathering. Unbound transcendence is bound by the delusion of Great Art in which the true believers do not see or hear the forces of their recruitment.

Every unity-self is threatened, however, by whomever and whatever prevents the more or less continuous creation of identity. The Art-Unity-Self must remain collected together by an invisible force immune to even the slightest oscillations of otherness. The power of Art for National Socialism was the Mythos mystically selecting and gathering its people. For National Socialism the Mythos is the gathering Frame, a racially selective aesthetist force of unification. Truth is the realized beauty of the unified/purified collective body politic. Therefore, whatever threatens to render visible the invisible framing must be invisibly annihilated as if by the mystical power of purifying gathering itself.

The annihilation of European Jews was an Art censorship program that evolved within the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of National Socialism. It was an invisible censorship visible to only a carefully selected few. There was to be nothing personal, nothing idiosyncratic in the administration of this task. Those threatening margins, those on the edges so close to the frame, partly in and partly out, had to be coolly annihilated precisely because they constituted the most fundamental of threats. The *Gesamtkunstwerk* of National Socialism is an effective total work of art only if its incorporation and consolidation of the people is accomplished as a total identificational recruitment of the incorporated social

body. The total or final solution/*Endlösung* of the German identity crisis in and through the *Gesamtkunstwerk* of the State requires, therefore, an invisible censorship mechanism affectively linked to the mystical power of purificational gathering.

This is, I believe, the affective link that captivated Heidegger to such an extent that, even after the revelations of Auschwitz, he would continue to insist upon the radical difference between his own conception of the gathering power of things and the *techné* of mass annihilation. His turn to essential thinking in the figures of myth and poetry after the war does not break with his own identificational recruitment. It is rather an intensification of that recruitment by means of a further mystification of the "saving power" of meditations on technology's essence. For Heidegger there is no Exodus, no Event other than the one of Appropriation/Ereignis – that is, no nonproprietary event. The seemingly uneasy images of Heidegger's destruction of the history of Western ontology only seem that way to those outside the recruiting fold. And this is precisely why the 1953 published edition of his 1935 lectures *An Introduction to Metaphysics* will retain his affirmation of the National Socialist movement as that which possesses the greatness in which he participates. Within that greatness, his destructive images are much more at ease.

If, faced with the increasing threats of censorship and severely limited free expression of ideas, we retreat from the complicities of our bound transcendence in desperate attempts to plead "innocence," then the greatness of the movement holding Heidegger's thought away from the horrors of Auschwitz will indeed also draw us into further disasters. Bound transcendence cannot retreat from complicity, but neither can it join with those who desire to win over the forces of evil.

EPILOGUE

THE PARADOX OF PHILOSOPHY'S GAZE

Wilhelm S. Wurzer

The expressive is not accidental to the visible. Indeed, the essays in this text have shown that the visible needs the expressive in order not to become solely visual. But, as Kant reveals in the *Critique of Judgment*, the expressive cannot be confined to a pure, determinate discursivity. It must be dynamic and open beyond the dome that metaphysics spreads over the visible world. Our text demonstrates that the visible is distinctly singular but not individualistic. It is neither the whole picture nor a particular image. Entwined with the expressive, the visible is freed from art proper and allowed to become uniquely expressive as a kind of philosophy-at-work – quite plainly, a responsive, nonidentitarian, panoramic critique.

What fascinates here is that critique arises out of the very paradox of philosophy's relation to art, both ending yet invariably becoming intimate during the end. Within the paradox of this singular intimacy, critique sets limits upon the order of the visible and the expressive. The limitations of philosophy and art, however, are simultaneously their possibilities. Where one ends, the other begins. Still, there are no authentic beginnings or endings. This is indeed what the contributors of this text regard as the crisis of philosophy today. It is not a crisis in the dialectical (Habermasian) sense. Rather philosophy is held accountable for not responding to its own absencing, its disappearance into difference and its indifference to time. Hence, as Burch and Watson suggest, we need a judging, a *kritein*, or a deciding that is neither indifferent to society nor to philosophy's visible indifference.

All of the chapters indicate that there is ultimately no separation between vision and expression. Vision expresses the invisible language of thought, and expression regards the inexpressible language of art. Neither exists without the other. Philosophy and art blend into each other with the disappearance of models. This is precisely what allows for critique: the interlacing of an imageless imaging and a nonexpressive expressing. The reader encounters, therefore, a singular post-Hegelian panorama of art, marking the postmodern power of critique. Metaphysics cannot deal with this paradox. Its ocularcentric genealogy divides thought and reality, expression and vision. Its textuality is unrelated to the amorphous indeterminacy of a critique that refuses mimesis.

The “idea” of going beyond representational thinking is played out in all of these chapters as the timely/untimely gesture on the part of the authors to highlight the expulsion of mimesis. They engage in a general strategy of disinstalling a philosophy that is not doing what it ought to do. None of the contributors argue that this “ought” ought to be restrictive. Nor do they believe that it ought to be linked to specific structures. On the contrary, for the most part, they are inclined to let philosophy be less philosophical without making it less rigorous. It will actually be more rigorous, more responsive to how time makes itself visible. Lungstrum, Kaiser, and Leventhal have credited philosophy’s turn to art (beyond art) with a very strong expressive, i.e., filmic, charge. In its deconstructive detour, philosophy’s path is no longer clearly visible. They demonstrate that by itself, philosophy is not competent to “judge” or express our time. Art, too, when detached from reflection, disfigures temporal images. Without thought, art, merely replicating world, becomes too mimetic (and popular) to make time critically visible. Art, therefore, needs thinking just as philosophy needs art in order to become how each “ought” to be. This “ought,” then, conjoins philosophical expression and artistic vision.¹

The contributors to this volume recognize that if philosophy remains twice detached – one, from society, and two, from its task of constantly going beyond itself – it will linger, *sub specie aeternitatis*, in its own solemn seriousness. They are confident that its natural eloquence will be most “meaningful” in conjunction with art, in the very intimacy of the necessary differences between the imaginary and the discursive. In turn, they introduce a singular reading of philosophy-and-art as panoramic critique. The reader encounters philosophy once more but now quite differently: no more easy images, no more happy concepts, but the intrigue of a new constellation. Beyond exemplarity, critique introduces philosophy as if it were art and art as if it were philosophy. Transgressing their former identity, there is no equivalence here. If there were, each would merely mirror the other. This would be absurd in a world where there may be nothing to imitate.

The views expressed in this text, notably in the first section by Tomiche, Nagl, and Hollander, come close to Jean-Luc Nancy’s attentiveness to a certain compulsion for freedom from the exclusive discourse of representation. The critique these authors, including Carrera and Lilly, have projected allows for an intimacy where philosophy and art collide relentlessly, making possible, to use Freud’s word, a *Durcharbeitung*. In short, panoramic critique is *Durcharbeitung*, working through the multiple intensities of vision and expression. It is the bridge where thinking is on the way to art and art is on the way to thinking, without the precarious assumption that we can ever take the whole picture of our time adequately. What we can (and ought) to do is paradoxically, simultaneously *panoramic* and *critical*. This necessary interface limits the philosophical impulse to appropriate the whole again dialectically while it affirms what we can (and ought) to regard as comprehensively as possible.

After Hegel, panoramic critique as Burch, Baross, and McWhorter indicate, is always ready to resist the spell of false identity. It refuses to regard the visible as merely sensuous or immediate. Nor does it see the expressive as theoretical or eidetic. There is no immanent or speculative home for philosophy’s “being.”

Beyond identifications, James Watson suggests that this critique ought to look at philosophy's "cultural" failure. This lies in *not expressing* the manifold visibilities of world. Philosophy "must" be open to a new economy of the imaginary – artworks that reveal expressly how "we, now" are.² Transgressing the mimetic, art, not merely viewing itself, sets out uncanny guideposts that philosophy ought to embrace. In this strange affection for each other, they spontaneously resist the spell of cultural identity. This resistance, Watson infers, is still faithful to a post-Kantian feeling of life, if only in the privilege according spirit a singular dwelling in certain images. Unlike Heidegger, Watson does not treat thinking poetically or with a sense of awe. It is, after all, arguably merely critique.

The readings in this book do not treat thinking devotionally (*andenkend*). Nor do they relate to thinking as standing still historically. Has this not been the state of mind of Western philosophy in general? On the other hand, they are not simply faithful to Marx. The mood of this text accords more with a manner of thought that grants art a certain privilege with regard to philosophical discourse. Still, this privilege is not one-sided. Art is philosophy's visible medium of expression. We have a complex philosophy-art collage that does not neutralize the desire for rigorous reflection. By bringing art nearer to philosophy, thinking is no longer sealed off from the outer world. After all, art is the latter's most intriguing visibility. Clearly, we are dealing with an ironic juxtaposition, a collision of the figural and the discursive. Neither one nor the other will surface again as dialectical vampires sucking out differences for the same absolute pleasure. The two are interchangeable in an economy beyond exchange. They do not converge at a single point but almost as in a dream they flow into one another, or, as in a fugue, they dissolve in the same, but not identical, rhythm.

This volume illustrates the fluidity of panoramic critique in contrast to the metaphysical stability of logic. Ludwig Nagl, in particular, explores this fluidity from the standpoint of "a new fusion" of the visible and the expressive. He argues that this fusion is already brought to light by Kant's aesthetic displacement of imagination. More importantly, however, he shows how Derrida, Barthes, and even Levinas supplement Kant's constellation of imagination (in art) and understanding (in philosophy). He admits that the philosophy-art merger is precarious precisely because there is an "ambivalent double-bind" at work. Neither philosophy nor art is free to engage in the old mimetic gaming. However ingenious the montage, a referent is not domesticated. Otherwise philosophy is dialectics again and art is reduced to the familiar space of aesthetics.

While securing imitations is not the issue in the complex philosophy-art collage, Nagl highlights in reading Barthes's text that there is, nonetheless, an emphasis on "the unavoidable presence" of expression in the form of articulated language. Even in the most down-to-earth juncture of sport and entertainment there is always recourse to "speech." This unavoidable linguistic practice determines to a great extent the intertextuality of the visible and the expressive, becoming more obvious (as Barthes articulates) in styles of fashion. Accordingly, the visible, Nagl argues, is intimately linked to a language-centered

“institution.” So, the very heart of the image is invariably a reimagining dependent upon the desire to express meaning. It is perfectly clear for Nagl that reimagining the philosophy-art collage paradoxically subverts the identitarian sovereignty of consciousness in Husserl’s epoche while simultaneously intensifying a postmodern reading of epoche.

As Burch and Watson also point out, an old secret heritage in Husserl’s epoche comes to life again – a certain speculative reduction. Having gone through the extremely complex turns of Derrida’s philosophy, the Husserlian epoche is no longer assigned to expression via consciousness. The epoche is not the condition of panoramic critique. In a post-Husserlian mode, the epoche happens during critique at the (in)visible intersection of philosophy and art. Thus neither philosophy nor art casts off the illusion of a purely spiritual identity. Only a new encounter between the visible and the expressive – for Kant, between the beautiful and the sublime – will make critique genuinely responsive. Hence, it is not world or time that is placed under epoche, but the entire history of philosophy, including Husserl’s epoche. The contributors have developed their own interpretive response to philosophy’s consistent dislocation. They show that philosophy is never one with itself, and that its desire for a new visibility expresses not who we are but how we are situated.

Historically, philosophy as metaphysics has set up a specular mechanism that culminates in the conventional interpretation of visibility and expressivity sometimes called “the dialectic of theory and practice.” If we look at this matter more rigorously, there is no theory on one side and practice on the other, just as there is no vision here and expression there. Nor do we have a mere assimilation of both. The names “collage,” “montage” with regard to an unexchangeable critique offer a distinct giving, indeed, a sending and receiving of philosophy and art, thereby exposing a new epoche. Philosophy is being sent and received as if it were a work of art. Upon its reception, there is a resending (a sending back), and this new exchange happens during the critique, i.e., thinking. Undoubtedly, what is sent back is visibly different from what was originally sent. Philosophy is now attached to – it belongs to – a singular sending, as if art were ending and departing from its previous originary sites.

It appears that the question of art is bound to the question of philosophy’s gaze. Where will it turn to? What will it see? How will it look? Derrida insists that it will take on “the structure of the archive.”³ It will therefore be of an archival nature, of a spectral dimension, “neither present nor absent ‘in the flesh,’ neither visible nor invisible, a trace always referring to another whose eyes can never be met” (*AF*, 84). Beyond the aura of art and its former sovereignty in aesthetics, philosophy reveals a new critique. Faced with the apparition of its old self, it resends something *visibly different* from the first sending. The expressive stability of logic withdraws. Regarding the paradox of philosophy’s new gaze, Heidegger writes: “What we call feeling or mood, here and in similar instances, is more reasonable – that is, more intelligently acute – because more open to Being than all that reason which, having meanwhile become *ratio*, was misinterpreted as being rational”⁴

Beyond the origin of art in philosophy and far from the origin of philosophy in art, the exchange, that is, the spectral *Gestalt* of the archive, the critique at

work is transformed again. This presumably unlimited view of a wide spectrum of things seems always to be transformed into an invisible (mostly silent) visibility, except, perhaps, for the soft tapping of keys ready to send another sending, and awaiting a new receiving, to be exchanged and to undergo a resending, expressly different, a new *epoche* too, again and again. As Zucker strongly indicates, elegant interpretations of traditional texts no longer suffice. If philosophy is to be more than "pure repetition," it must be free for the very dangerous, the contamination of new expressions in electronic archives. Nothing is less clear today than the precise nature of the ephemeral exchange at the unstable limit of the human and the electronic. In-between the visible and the expressive, then, is an ineluctable archiving, just the desire, as Derrida suggests, to let the *arkhe* go! How are we to think of this novel archival opening of the future, what Heidegger names "the freely open"? Derrida's focus on the archival as futural is irreducibly messianic: "The question of the archive is not a question of the past. It is a question of the future, the question of the future itself, the question of a response, of a promise and of a responsibility for tomorrow" (AF, 36).

A new visibility – the archival – marks the ends of the sovereignty of the West. Philosophy's urgent task is to respond to this event. Clearly this does not mean practicing another mimetism, such as mirroring "a democratic model of government." In a time beyond paradigms, electronic relations and not political ideas regulate the process of infinite acceleration. Quite intriguing in Derrida's more recent reflections on philosophy's responsibility, as Burch highlights, is precisely the idea of democracy as archival future beyond being and government. The call to interview "a new international" is more fruitful than the call to a unique site of Being. For Derrida, and, according to Watson, for our era in general, both being and government are too nationalistic. There is still too much unicity here. With the arrival of new forms of expressions and a panoramic critique that is continually vigilant, the stakes are different now. Concepts such as state, superstate, and citizenship are no longer sufficient. Seeing a present inadequate to itself, we are faced with a present beyond itself. In a time out of joint, it is necessary to rethink the task of thinking from within the unprecedented archiving of our electronic relations. This rethinking, Derrida suggests, must not be postponed. Critique as we are naming it here, therefore, expresses the singular visibility of thinking wanting to become something other than what philosophy has always been – the expression of the affinity between a certain desire for an originary site and thought itself. Quite simply, critique is not a question of adapting spirit to useful goals. Nor is it a question of regarding spirit as reading its own time. That would merely ease the social and cultural tensions into a false state of synthesis. The chapters of this volume underscore, among other things, that critique, if it is engaged in a new *epoche*, is neither photology nor ideology. It is reduced neither to an art of the visible, nor to a philosophy of the expressive. Instead, it becomes visible in dislocating the old dialectical site as something unique. Granting dispersions, critique is open to Derrida's archiving, something that happens between the invisible exchange of sending and receiving.

What lingers in this project, and what Nagl and Watson have begun to focus on, is that philosophy's new expression of archiving is more than a "spectral messianicity" interlaced with a singular promise. Spectral archiving is still burdened by the umbilical cord of an "archival" singularity not unlike a devotion to religion. Regardless of the deconstructive strategies formulated on its behalf, it sounds too much like the resonance of Nietzsche's "unknown God," or Heidegger's "last god." The freely open is still too figural. In addition, the signatory of this archival project is drawn in, indeed engulfed, by a future that is too expressive. Frankly, we do not know that much about it! We can merely regard archiving as responding to tomorrow without yielding to promises. Messianic "modalities" do not mark the electronic relations of sending and receiving. The question of promise still sounds too "humanistic." Beyond the promise(s) lies an attempt to read how we are situated. Derrida concedes that archiving exceeds the idea of *archeion*, a political unicuity or a unique gathering. Still, he is not willing to break the link with the preamble of promise, a fragile and enigmatic allusion to an in-visible religion. A "sending forth" of sorts (*promittere*), archiving invariably involves a receiving. Derrida admits that receiving sendings cannot be clarified by the concept. "We only have an impression, an insistent impression through the unstable feeling of a shifting figure, of a schema, or of an in-finite or indefinite process" (AF, 29). However, he also argues that the impression of archiving marks the very promise of philosophy. What is problematic, despite the emphasis on the fluidity of impression, is precisely that philosophy is still tied to a promise: in this case, one that presumably reflects "nonphilosophical" relations of exchange.

Granted, Derrida does not bind this promise to a proper name or a "meta-physical" filiation. Nonetheless, he prefers a certain inflation of hope, a "religion without religion" – perhaps, even, the thought of "religion" as the future. Derrida is tempted to "see" philosophy as expression of this kind of "perhaps." The "messianic perhaps" that archiving signifies is philosophically irreducible. Derrida's consideration of this "perhaps" may be courageous, but is it not archival in an archaic sense? He points out that Nietzsche claimed to recognize the thinkers of the future by their courage to say *perhaps* (AF, 49). Perhaps, it is necessary for philosophy to take the risk of a more decisive gesture, one that does not presume to "confine" thinking (the future) to irreducibles. Such a strategy might be archival in the sense that it keeps us waiting longer than what deconstruction "allows."

Today, after September 11, critique ought to be even more panoramic lest thought were to fall prey to another "easy" (theoretical) reading of this event. We do not need to make another documentary archive out of this nor do we want to let it be inscribed into a hermeneutic aesthetic, delightful to readers and authors for the sake of fresh insights. Instead, we prefer to let it linger historically beyond our imaginative readings and reflections. For better or worse, September 11 ought not to become a good read that one may want to indulge in. Accordingly, our focus on letting critique begin anew with unlimited regard for the given continues to demand that things be otherwise. It does not narrow the picture of our time to a fuzzy dialectic of left and right. Perhaps, it is time to affirm more decisively than ever an archiving that exceeds

the discursive gesturing that has left philosophy and philosophers in an ahistorical fantasy. The historical consequences of September 11 prompt a radical rewriting of the strategies of hermeneutics and deconstruction. No matter how we read the social and cultural texts, we ought not to take the liberty to separate our reading from a world in upheaval. The luxury of freely interpreting our intertextual relations is gone. The pre-September 11 mood in academic/liberal arts circles is one of princely, vapid *Gelassenheit*. September 11 has clearly intensified the shift from "deconstruction" as gilded readings of time-texts to a transformative, panoramic critique of the present. In this new atmosphere of constant infrastructural vigilance, i.e., in this anxiety of war disposition, the intriguing *jouissance* of dynamically diverse readings of events or a given subject is considerably less powerful than before. Suddenly, presence is not as nostalgic as Derrida might claim. Indeed, the very idea of freedom and presence is intimately related. Panoramic critique opens up ways for a new site (sight) of thought, that regards more comprehensively with no less consideration for singularity. This turn to a more rigorous regarding marks a decisive transformation for cultural theory in general and philosophy in particular. A surprisingly challenging mood of a certain being-unto-death indicates a double theory of regarding, one of presence and one of thinking as novel powers of vision.

In this era of technolust, the power of vision is expanding daily with intense digital speed. The phenomenon of the visible is "liberated" from the conventional opposition of public and private. Suddenly, the private belongs to the public realm and the public realm turns into a picturing that takes precedence over a panoramic seeing of things. When this happens *picturing* or the effective techno-use of the visible becomes more important than reflecting and judging. In turn, the visible is understood as the overpowering representative structure of all things. This solid, yet dubious, footing of perception accords reality a value only insofar as it is capable of being pictured. All things (including God) are therefore seen from the point of view of television. A strange, distant visibility occurs: morality, politics, education, art, and religion are under the spell of a very narrow vision. It is as if the world suddenly became a bizarre techno-picture. Everything can be filmed and overshadowed by the contemporary desire to draw ideas, values, and feelings into the net of our reasoning: invariably, a filming or picturing of how things are. While certain social forces renounce this gaming, public discussions are too often indicative of this funny visibility. Quite striking here is the unexamined (media-visual) identification that seeps into every corner of our intellectual, artistic, and technological achievements. We are not suggesting that such grand visualizing is always the norm. However, this sympathetic identification is troublesome when it nourishes a conformist attitude while opening our private and scholarly activities to a public sphere of visual escape or tranquilization. A panoramic critique might well prevent frustrations with the "system" from turning into a quasi-mystical acceptance of today's comforting time-visions. Novel forces of surveillance, be they moral or cultural, do not demonstrate signs of self-criticism. Instead, they may be regarded as time-planners, strategically close to the current endeavor to control space with ultimate technical and military means by which visibility is "totally" exposed.

The arrogance of our transparent time, the new surveillance world, which Heidegger already named the *gigantic*, confines the visible and the expressive to a domain of picturing often decidedly thoughtless yet highly value ridden. No desire to resist the absence of a critical will or an adequate reflection is evidenced in the continuous repetition of inflating the typical evaluations of Western culture. The gigantic, in turn, includes what has become fashionable in academic practice, namely excessive “deconstructive” readings of the teleological order of history. A certain trust in that kind of reading seems out of kilter for as long as it does not address the new rhythms of power but paradoxically participates in the endless play of pure picturing and “funny” representing, an eternal return of exaggerated (often newly intensified) moral, political, and philosophical world-views. The new speed with which this is done conjointly, that is, on the political, ethical, and pedagogical front is astonishing. A magical newborn *Gesamtkunstwerk*, the leading edge of liberal arts, the elegant style of deconstructive expressionism is hooked up with the politics of our culture. This techno-academic-economic artwork marks a distinct style of throwing light on an easy interface between old and new, traditional and contemporary, religious and secular. This interfacing is problematic precisely because of the ease with which it is performed. A new norm of *Vorstellen*, of imaging the mundane and the divine in one, welding together the ethico-political as well as the academic, the current visibilities as well as the sublimely expressive, leads to a desirable admiring identification of our *Zeitgeist*, a bewildering encounter with the gigantic. A ready functioning transforms what had often been ghostly, abstract, and unreal about the sublime world of ideas into an electronic genealogy of the liberal arts reduced to an easy everydayness. This tendency of the gigantic, wherein things are taken easily and made easy, belongs to the circus of an enchanting inauthenticity. The enthralling absorption in texts and things provides an intriguing dance of “deconstruction” and ontic “construction.” This bizarre expressionism shows a soft and effortless interweaving of tradition and technology, reason and faith, the spiritual and the material, the old customs and the new cognitive content of contemporary reality. Things and texts, intermingling joyfully, including God, education, politics, and morality not only stand at our disposal, they suddenly turn into cultural products available in the gigantic grocery of our precarious existence. Time dissolves into the shadow of the gigantic. The relations of past, present, and future are carelessly transformed into a smooth, cosmic picturing of human life.

What may go unnoticed in the very business of funny visibility is the inordinate planning, reading, and interpreting of the problematic extensions of certain perceptions of world and how this locks people into the captivating links of interests and goals. It is as if we are encouraged to open our arms to an aesthetic machination of texts in which customary beliefs and principles are not withering away but are rather intensified and inscribed more expressively into the diverse visible landscape of society. Relatedly, there is the sweetness and perplexity of taking pictures and supplying extended meditations instead of the painful effort of thought and critique. The gigantic is a novel regarding of world from the standpoint of an intriguing theater of trusting one's own

feelings and abilities of interpretation. This may be unthinkably dashing, resiliently faithful to tradition in innumerable new styles while forgetting our utterly strange, hauntingly sublime gods of reason and experience. Under the yoke of our fascination with funny visibilities and textualities, invariably securing, organizing, and picturing life while simultaneously decentering and dismantling it, the Western tradition is essentially reduced to a web of planetary productivity. To no one's surprise, beinglessness (and arguably being less than before September 11) coincide with an indifferent absence of thought. What appears not to come into play in this delightful gaming of picturing and deconstructing, of cultural visions and academic expressions, is ironically what some philosophers have always regarded as "truly great," quite simply, critical (panoramic) thought. In a time bereft of questioning, in love with answering, we may need to take notice of the most human of all the arts: namely, thinking, a doing more necessary than ever, even if this panoramic critique turns out to be no more than a silly end to a goofy world.

In sum, the thread that binds all of the fascinating chapters in this volume is the desire for a different archiving, for an unprecedented vigilance of philosophy, for attempts or strategies to "file" philosophy without naming or expressing a particular or universal promise. With regard to this "filing," the reader is left to interpret the distinct relation between the texts of the history of philosophy including deconstruction (namely the old and new expressivity), and texts exterior to these texts such as the event of September 11. World and time become visibly apparitional, continually withdrawing from expression yet lingering in an archival mode. The contributors in general recognize that the *relation* that arises out of this inter-view between expressive and visible textualities is akin to, but not the same as, Kant's *Lebensgefühl*. This feeling for life no longer accepts the sovereignty of academic *Schadenfreude*, a kind of scholastic pleasure derived from interpreting historical moments of suffering at a comfortable distance. It is Kant's "post-idea" of letting critique be felt extensively that *Panorama: Philosophies of the Visible* addresses. There are no promises to think of. Perhaps, there is only "another perhaps," Lyotard's sublime hope that thinking may feel not only itself but also how we are and ought to be today.

ABBREVIATIONS

- ABC* Ezra Pound, "ABC of Economics," in *Selected Prose, 1909–65*, ed. William Cookson (New York: New Directions, 1973).
- AF* Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. E. Prenowitz (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995).
- AR* Albert Gelpi, *A Coherent Splendor: the American Renaissance, 1910–50* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).
- B* Ezra Pound, *BLAST . . . Review of the Great English Vortex*, I (20 June 1914).
- C* Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (New York: New Directions, 1968).
- CC* Luce Irigaray, *Le Corps-à-corps avec la mère* (Montreal: Editions de la pleine lune, 1981).
- CCL* Bruno Taut, *The Crystal Chain Letters*, trans. Iain Boyd Whyte (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).
- CH* Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947).
- CJ* Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett, 1987).
- CR* Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).
- CWC* Ernest Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, ed. Ezra Pound (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1935).
- D* Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend*, trans. G. Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).
- DF* Jean-François Lyotard, *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971).
- DI* Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987).
- DR* Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Droit de regards. Avec une lecture de Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1985).
- E* Paul Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967).
- EA* Wolfgang Pehnt, *Expressionist Architecture* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1973), 63.
- EX* Jean-Luc Nancy, "Exscription," in *Yale French Studies: On Bataille*, ed. Alan Stoekl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990).
- F* Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983).

- FFCP Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. and trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Penguin Books, 1979).
- G Rodolphe Gasché, "Deconstruction as Criticism," *Glyph* 6 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979).
- GD Confucius, *The Great Digest and the Unwobbling Pivot*, trans. Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1951).
- GS Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1980).
- H Martin Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1950).
- HD Martin Heidegger, *Was heißt Denken?*, 3 Auflage (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1971).
- HG Jacques Derrida, "La main de Heidegger Geschlecht II," in *Psyche: Inventionen de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987).
- HS Lotte H. Eisner, *The Haunted Screen: Expression in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, trans. Roger Graves (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969).
- I Ezra Pound, *Impact*, ed. Noel Stock (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960).
- IC Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993).
- IK Friedrich Delekat, *Immanuel Kant. Historisch-kritische Interpretation der Hauptschriften* (Heidelberg: Hanser Verlag, 1969).
- IN Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman: Reflections on Time*, trans. Geoffrey Bennington and Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).
- LM Jacques Derrida, "Les Morts de Roland Barthes", *Poétique* 47 (September 1981).
- LR "Reality and Its Shadow," *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
- LS Gilles Deleuze, *Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1981).
- LT Charlotte Salomon, *Leben oder Theater? Ein autobiographisches Songspiel in 769 Bildern* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1981).
- LVP Jacques Derrida, *La Vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978).
- LW Geoffrey Bennington, *Lyotard. Writing the Event* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1988; New York: Columbia University Press, 1988).
- MA Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires d'avengle. L'autoportrait et autre ruines* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1990), 46ff. *Memoirs of the Blind. The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. P.-A. Brault and M. Naas (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 41ff.
- MB Jacques Derrida, *Memoirs of the Blind*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- MF François Ewald, *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992).
- N Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche II*, 2 Auflage (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961).

- NRP *Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse*, 46 (Paris: 1970).
- OWA Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art" in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1977).
- P Jacques Derrida, *Points . . .*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995).
- PF Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991).
- PG *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 6 Auflage, Hrsg. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952).
- PL Hans Jonas, "The Nobility of Sight," in *The Phenomenon of Life* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966).
- PS Georg Wilhelm Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).
- QP Jean-François Lyotard, *Que peindre? Adami, Arakawa, Buren* (Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1987).
- RA Michel Tournier, *Le Roi des Aulnes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970).
- RD Ezra Pound, *Guide to Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1970).
- S Jean Baudrillard, "I'll Be Your Mirror," in *Seduction*, trans. B. Singer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979).
- SE Georges Bataille, *Story of the Eye*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987).
- SEF *Sigmund Freud, Die Verneinung*, trans. James Strachey et al. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1964).
- SF Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre femme* (Paris: Minuit, 1974).
- SG Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1978).
- SI Hermann Heidegger, "Comments on *Der Spiegel* Interview," in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*, ed. G. Neske and E. Ketterling (New York: Paragon House, 1990).
- SL Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982).
- SM Fritz Lang, *Fritz Lang: Die Stimme von Metropolis*, ed. Fred Gehler and Ulrich Kasten (Berlin: Henschel Verlag GmbH, 1990).
- SU Luce Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Minuit, 1977).
- SW Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben," *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari. (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag/de Gruyter, 1980).
- SZ Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 12 Auflage (Tübingen, Niemeyer, 1972).
- T Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting*, trans. G. Bennington and I. McLeod (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).
- TP Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe*, trans. J. Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983).
- TR Georges Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1989).
- US Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 4 Auflage (Pfullingen: Neske, 1971).

- UT Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978).
- VA Martin Heidegger, "Die Frage nach der Technik," *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954).
- VI Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968).
- VP Michel Tournier, *Le Vent Paraclet* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977).
- W Martin Heidegger, "Plantons Lehre von der Wahrheit," in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967).

NOTES

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

BETWEEN THE VISIBLE AND THE EXPRESSIVE: AN IN-VISIBLE EXCHANGE (WILHELM S. WURZER)

- 1 Jacques Derrida, *Points . . .*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 8. Henceforth cited as *P*.

PART ONE: POSTMODERN VISIONS

CHAPTER 1

REPHRASING THE VISIBLE AND THE EXPRESSIVE: LYOTARD'S "DEFENSE OF THE EYE" FROM FIGURE TO INARTICULATE PHRASE (ANNE TOMICHE)

- 1 Jean-François Lyotard, *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971). Henceforth cited as *DF*.
- 2 Jean-François Lyotard, *Que peindre? Adami, Arakawa, Buren* (Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1987). Henceforth cited as *QP*.
- 3 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Inhuman*, trans. G. Bennington and R. Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991). Henceforth cited as *IN*.
- 4 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend*, trans. G. Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Henceforth cited as *D*.
- 5 See Rodolphe Gasché, "Deconstruction as Criticism," *Glyph* 6 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979) (henceforth cited as *G*) and Geoffrey Bennington's chapter on *Discours, figure* in *Lyotard. Writing the Event* (Manchester, England: Manchester University Press, 1988). Henceforth cited as *LW*.
- 6 Sigmund Freud, *Die Verneinung*, trans. James Strachey et al. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1964) XIX. Henceforth *SEF*.
- 7 For a detailed analysis of Lyotard's confrontation with Lacan, see Peter Dews, "The Letter and the Line: Discourse and its other in Lyotard," *Diacritics* 14, 3 (1984) 40–9.
- 8 Jean-Françoise Lyotard, "Anamnese du visible, ou: la franchise," *Adami*, coll. Musée National d'Art Moderne, Paris: Centre Georges Pompidou, December 1985.
- 9 As Lyotard writes in the opening pages of *The Differend*: "Do we, identifiable individuals, *x*, *y*, speak phrases or make silences, in the sense that we would

be their authors? Or is it that phrases or silences take place (happen, come to pass), presenting universes in which individuals *x*, *y*, *you*, *me*, are situated as the addressors of these phrases or silences?" (11)

- 10 See "Emma: Between Psychoanalysis and Philosophy," in *Lyotard: Philosophy, Politics, and the Sublime*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York and London: Routledge, 2002). Here Lyotard is explicit about this shift in his reading of Freud: "I tried, about fifteen years ago, to drown the thesis of the unconscious under the flood of a general libidinal economy . . . I was [then] led to that which, in *Le Différend*, is exposed (rather than conceptualised) under the name of phrase . . . From such an angle I feel capable of approaching (as a philosopher) that which is the psychoanalyst's material . . . I do not intend to 're-write' the unconscious, but to open a little breach in the metaphysics of forces" (*Nouvelle Revue de Psychanalyse* Vol. 46: 56). Henceforth cited as *NRP*.
- 11 Although the official translation of the Freudian *Nachträglichkeit* in English is "deferred action" (see Jean Laplanche and Daniel Pontalis's *Language of Psycho-Analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith, New York and London: Norton, 1974), I use here "later shock" because the French translation of *Nachträglichkeit*, "après-coup," literally "after the blow" or "after the shock," allows Lyotard to stress the relationship between a "premier coup," the first blow, the original shock that hits the psychic apparatus, and the "après-coup," the later shock, which is a deferred blow, a deferred shock.

CHAPTER 2

VISIBILITY, "BILD," AND "EINBILDUNGSKRAFT": DERRIDA, BARTHES, LEVINAS (LUDWIG NAGL)

- 1 See Rodolphe Gasché, *The Tain of the Mirror. Derrida and the Philosophy of Reflection* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1986), especially Chapters 7 and 8 ("Abbau, Destruktion, Deconstruction"; "Deconstructive Methodology").
- 2 Jacques Derrida, *Recht auf Einsicht* (Droit de regards) (Graz/Wien: Passagen Verlag, 1985).
- 3 Jacques Derrida, *The Truth in Painting* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987). Henceforth cited as *T*.
- 4 Ludwig Nagl, *Charles Sanders Peirce* (Frankfurt/New York, 1992, Chapter 1, "Semiotik."
- 5 See Ludwig Nagl, "Das verhüllte Absolute. Religionsphilosophische Motive bei Habermas und Adorno," *Mesotes* 1994, 2, 176–93.
- 6 Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gahatri C. Spivak (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 158.
- 7 See Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1967), 171.
- 8 Jacques Derrida, "The Deaths of Roland Barthes," trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas in *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy Since Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1997).

- 9 This was recently pointed out by Stanley Cavell in his analysis of Derrida's deconstructive reading of John L. Austin. Even though "truth" and "force" intermingle in Austin's analysis of the "illocutionary force" of speech acts, truth, so Cavell says, can only be assimilated to (a Nietzschean reading of) force, if, in a deconstructive move, the difference between "will to power" and the "illocutionary" structure of speech is blurred by Derrida. See Stanley Cavell, *A Pitch of Philosophy. Autobiographical Exercises* (Harvard University Press, 1994), Chapter 2, "Counter-Philosophy and the Pawn of Voice."
- 10 Roland Barthes, *The Fashion System* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1983). Henceforth cited as *F*.
- 11 "Reality and Its Shadow," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 129–43. Henceforth cited as *LR*.
- 12 This is a core problem in Ludwig Wittgenstein too: "Ein *Bild* hielt uns gefangen," *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, Par. 115.
- 13 On Jürgen Habermas's assessment of aesthetics see L. Nagl, "Habermas and Derrida on Reflexivity," in *Enlightenments. Encounters between Critical Theory and Contemporary French Thought*, ed. H. Kunneman/H. d.Vries (Kampen, The Netherlands: Kokpharos, 1993), 61–76.
- 14 See Alex Schmid, "Die Blendung der Sprache. Über hermetische Poesie und das Sehen bei Celan," *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 5, March 1993, 49.
- 15 See Friedrich Delekat, *Immanuel Kant. Historisch-kritische Interpretation der Hauptschriften* (Heidelberg: Verlag Koenigshausen, 1969), 82 ff. Henceforth cited as *IK*.
- 16 Friedrich Kaulbach points out that *Einbildungskraft* is "einerseits anschauungsgeladen, sofern dieses Vermögen objektive Bilder hervorbringt, andererseits aber zeigt sich in ihm die reine, spontane Bewegung des Verstandes, insofern er nicht darauf warten muß, von gegenwärtigen Gegenständen affiziert zu werden." "Ursprüngliche Einbildungskraft" thus turns out to be "productive." See F. Kaulbach, *Immanuel Kant*, Kap. 10, "Die Einbildungskraft" (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 1969), 142 ff.
- 17 See *IK*, especially 85.
- 18 After the "great narratives" of classical utopianism came to an end in the late eighties, ethico-political reflections shifted toward a politization of legal discourses. This holds true not only for Jürgen Habermas and Critical Theory (*Faktizität und Geltung*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1992) but also for Derrida's deconstructivism (*Gesetzeskraft. Der "mystische Grund der Autorität"*, Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1991). For a short description – and critical evaluation – of this new development see Christoph Menke, "Für eine Politik der Dekonstruktion. Jacques Derrida über Recht und Gerechtigkeit," *Merkur*, 1, January 1993, 65–9. Menke also analyzes some of the (ethico-political) shortcomings of early deconstructivism in his book *Die Souveränität der Kunst. Ästhetische Erfahrung nach Adorno und Derrida* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp 1991), (especially Chapter 3 b, "Die Gefahr des Ästhetischen").
- 19 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, trans. Werner Pluhar (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1987), paragraph 35. Henceforth cited as *CJ*.
- 20 See his theory of "abduction."
- 21 See Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA:

MIT Press, 1987), Lecture VII, “Beyond a Temporalized Philosophy of Origins: Derrida,” 161–84. Habermas’s reading of Derrida was criticized by Gerd Kimerle in his article “Ist Derridas Denken Ursprungsphilosophie? Zu Habermas’ Deutung der philosophischen Postmoderne,” in Manfred Frank, G. Raulet and W. v. Reijen (eds.), *Die Frage nach dem Subjekt*, Frankfurt-on-Main: Suhrkamp, 1987, 265–79.

CHAPTER 3

PUNCTURING GENRES: BARTHES AND DERRIDA ON THE LIMITS OF REPRESENTATION (DANA HOLLANDER)

- 1 Roland Barthes, *La Chambre claire. Note sur la photographie* (Paris: Seuil, 1980). *Camera Lucida. Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981), §1. (Section numbers in the text refer to this work.)
- 2 Marie-Françoise Plissart, *Droit de regards. Avec une lecture de Jacques Derrida* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1985), XXXIV–V. “Right of Inspection,” trans. David Wills, *Art & Text* 32 (Autumn 1989), 90–1. Cited hereafter as *DR*.
- 3 Jacques Derrida on the interdependence of speech and silence in “Comment ne pas parler: Dénégations” (1986), *Psyché* (Paris: Galilée, 1987); “How To Avoid Speaking: Denials,” trans. Ken Frieden, *Languages of the Unsayable: The Play of Negativity in Literature and Literary Theory*, eds. S. Budick and W. Iser (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989). Cf. in this connection *DR* XXXIII/85: When Derrida reproduces Wittgenstein’s injunction from the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, “What you can’t say keep silent about” (a citation that also comes up in “Comment ne pas parler”), this can be read not only as an ironic injunction issued by Derrida against himself while engaged in the very project of speaking about *Droit de regards* but also as a signal that what is at stake here is fundamentally connected to his interest in the later essay.
- 4 Jacques Derrida, *Mémoires d’aveugle. L’autoportrait et autre, ruines* (Paris: Réunion des musées nationaux, 1990), 46 ff. *Memoirs of the Blind. The Self-Portrait and Other Ruins*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 41 ff. Henceforth cited as *MA*.
- 5 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Lingis, as cited by Derrida, *MA* 57/52.
- 6 Jacques Derrida, “Les Morts de Roland Barthes,” *Poétique* 47 (September 1981), 275 (reprinted in *Psyché*). “The Deaths of Roland Barthes,” trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, in *Philosophy and Non-Philosophy since Merleau-Ponty*, ed. Hugh J. Silverman (New York/London: Routledge, 1988), 269. Henceforth cited as *LM*.
- 7 Like the *Droit de regards*, but in a milder form, *Mémoires d’aveugle* includes the “voice” of a critical interlocutor who occasionally interrupts Derrida’s discourse to pose quasi-objections.
- 8 A term Barthes uses both with specific reference to Lacan and as a general concept.
- 9 Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962), 376–7. To be sure, there are also important differences between Barthes’s temporality of the photograph and Heidegger’s notion

of ecstatic temporality, an exploration of which would be beyond the scope of this chapter.

- 10 Likewise, in *Mémoires d'aveugle* a *punctum caecum* is evoked that applies to all the senses and human faculties: "From the absolute withdrawal of an invisible center or command post, a secret power ensures from a distance a kind of synergy. It coordinates the possibilities of seeing, touching, and moving. And of hearing and understanding" (11/3–4).
- 11 The link between language and drawing comes up in various ways throughout the text: language shares with drawing a dependence on a constitutive blindness. This goes as much for spoken language:

One must always remember that the word, the vocable, is heard and understood, the sonorous phenomenon remaining invisible as such. Taking up time rather than space in us it is addressed not only from the blind to the blind, like a code for the nonseeing, but speaks to us, in truth, all the time of the blindness that constitutes it. Language is spoken, it speaks to itself, which is to say, *from/of blindness* [*de l'aveuglement*]. It always speaks to us *from/of the blindness* that constitutes it. (MA 11/4)

- 12 There is no room here to explore the privilege granted by both Derrida and Barthes to those drawings or photographs that represent the human figure. Could we imagine, for instance, the Barthesian Spectator detecting a *punctum* not in a woman's strapped pumps (§19) or a boy's crossed arms (§22) or the co-presence of soldiers and nuns in a single frame (§9), but in some feature of a photographed landscape, still life, or abstract figure?

Derrida is aware of this issue of thematic privileging: alongside the "transcendental" blindness at the origin of drawing he discerns a "sacrificial" blindness, an event "which comes to or meets the eyes, the narrative, spectacle or representation of the blind" in the *tableaux d'aveugle* that both becomes the "theme" of transcendental blindness (which is itself unthematic) and may motivate that blindness "by the violence of a sacrificial economy" (MA, 46/41).

- 13 Cf. "Comment ne pas parler," in which the speech/silence relation is explored particularly with reference to "divine names" and the modes of prayer.

PART TWO: BEYOND REPRESENTATIONAL THINKING

CHAPTER 4

BLANCHOT'S GAZE AND ORPHEUS'S SINGING: SEEING AND LISTENING IN POETIC INSPIRATION (ALESSANDRO CARRERA)

- 1 Maurice Blanchot, *The Space of Literature*, trans. Ann Smock (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1982). Henceforth cited as *SL*. I have also consulted Lydia Davis's translation in M. Blanchot, *The Gaze of Orpheus and Other Literary Essays*, ed. P. Adam Sytney (New York: Station Hill, 1981).
- 2 "Una esitazione fra senso e suono" in Giorgio Agamben, *Idea della prosa* (Milan: Feltrinelli, 1985), 23. There is a similarity between Blanchot's concept of inspiration and the creative inclination which precedes expression. Silvano Arieti,

- Creativity: The Magic Synthesis* (New York: Basic Books, 1978) has called it *endocept* (when *concept* is not a concept yet). It is worth remembering that Friedrich Schiller believed that some “musical disposition” (Blanchot’s song?) preceded poetic inspiration. Blanchot’s inspiration is also close to the Heideggerian “giving of itself” of language – the experience of the unspeakable totality of language that occurs when the word that is sought for does not come to mind, only to hide itself in the word that is actually found. See Martin Heidegger, “The Nature of Language” in *On the Way to Language*, trans. Peter D. Hertz (New York: Harper & Row, 1971).
- 3 Maurice Blanchot, *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), 184. Henceforth cited as *IC*.
 - 4 See also Françoise Collin, *Maurice Blanchot et la question de l’écriture* (Paris: Galimard, 1971) and Rocco Ronchi, *Bataille, Lévinas, Blanchot. Un sapere passionale* (Milan: Spirali, 1985), 123–85.
 - 5 Or at least to be seen. In the psychoanalytic tradition perhaps no one has tried to explore the subtleties of listening more than Theodor Reik. He understood that the voice is first of all an instinctive utterance, and as a psychoanalyst he knew that listening to a voice without seeing the speaker can reveal a lot about his or her character. “A voice which we hear, though we do not see the speaker, may sometimes tell us more about him than if we were observing him. It is not the words spoken by the voice that are of importance, but what it tells us of the speaker; its tone comes to be more important than what he says. ‘Speak, in order that I may see you,’” said Socrates. Theodor Reik, *Surprise and the Psychoanalyst: On the Conjecture and Comprehension of Unconscious Processes*, trans. Margaret M. Green (New York: Dutton, 1937), 21. On these themes in Reik see the chapter “L’écho du sujet” in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Le Sujet de la philosophie* (Paris: Aubier-Flammarion, 1979).
 - 6 *Membra iacent diversa locis; caput, Hebre, lyramque / Excipis, et (mirum!) medio dum labitur amne / Flebile nescio quid queritur lyra, flebile lingua / Murmurat exanimis, respondent flebile ripae.* Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 50–4, trans. Rolfe Humphries (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1955), 260–1.
 - 7 Ihab Hassan, *The Dismemberment of Orpheus: Toward a Postmodern Literature* (Milwaukee: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1982), 6. See also, by the same author, *The Literature of Silence* (New York: Knopf, 1967).

CHAPTER 5

FOUCAULT AND THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE VISIBLE SUBJECT (REGINALD LILLY)

- 1 This chapter, in earlier unpublished form, was originally entitled “Foucault Ontotopology.”
- 2 See, for example, Jacques Derrida’s essays “Before the Law,” “The Law of Genre,” as well as *The Gift of Death* and the recently published *Demeure*.
- 3 Michel Foucault’s polemical exchange with Derrida, “Mon corps, ce papier, ce feu” as well as the Prefaces to a number of texts (especially those published in the 1960s) drive home his concern with and rejection of specific issues of philosophical presentation.

- 4 Simon During's excellent *Foucault and Literature: Towards a Genealogy of Writing* (London: Routledge, 1992), is one of the few treatments that have pursued this tack.
- 5 As is well known, this period plays a prominent role in Foucault's historical studies, and this, I suggest, is not accidental.
- 6 Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, "Brief an Joh. Bernoulli" in *Mathematische Schriften*, ed. C. I. Gerhardt (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 1971) 3/1: 321.
- 7 See Georg Wilhelm Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), 23f on dogmatism. Some modification in the translations have been made. Henceforth cited as *PS*.
- 8 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), A 406, B 433. Henceforth cited as *CR*.
- 9 This is, of course, a paraphrase of Hegel, but he expresses well a theme common to modernity.
- 10 Though we draw directly from Kant, our presentation here of Kant is based on Hegel's reading of Kant and, as profound as it is, differs from what our reading of Kant might be if we were to take him up directly.
- 11 The significance of the *intuition* of objects as verifying the full presence of objects cannot be overemphasized in Kant or, for that matter, in Descartes and Hegel.
- 12 Joseph Werner in *Darstellung als Kritik* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1986) correctly points out that the grounding produced by the Kantian critique, namely the Cartesian principle of "I think" in the form of a principle of transcendental apperception, is a starting point or beginning from which it is impossible to deduce (viz. present) a determinant system of concepts. See 79ff.
- 13 See *PS*, 46ff; §73ff;
- 14 Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Humanities Press, 1976), 51.
- 15 This distinction constitutes the core of the analyses of Michael Theunissen's *Sein und Schein* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1978).
- 16 Johannes Heinrichs, *Die Logik der Phänomenologie des Geistes* (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1974), 82.
- 17 For an important statement of Hegel's conception of language and the manner it goes about saying the seeable, see his discussion of the "spekulative Satz" – the "speculative proposition" in *PS*, §§59–66.
- 18 Visibility therefore is that dimension that makes the ontotopological presentation possible, a presentation which, in a sense, presumes the absoluteness of the dimension of visibility.
- 19 Michel Foucault, "La langage de l'espace", *Critique* 203 (April, 1964), 278–9.
- 20 See Michel Foucault, *Sept propos sur le septième ange* (Montpellier: Fata Morgana, 1986).

- 21 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (London: Tavistock, 1970), xxi.
- 22 Hence those who object, saying Foucault fails to provide adequate argumentation for his antihumanism, miss the “methodological” point.
- 23 This would be to substitute some other being as an origin, opening up precisely the sort of infinite substitution that leads Derrida to say one must accomplish a systematic displacement as well as a displacement of the subject and its semantic equivalents.
- 24 This is true, I would argue, even in Sartre and the early Heidegger who assign a certain privilege to the future, to possibility, in the sense that both argue that the future has a more fundamental significance for the present than does the past. But the main point seems indisputable: both conceive of temporality in terms of a gathering process, a unification of being.
- 25 François Ewald notes the historical advent of discipline whereby visibility comes to be based not in the space of objects (architecture, for example), but the space of objects itself is conditioned by the more fundamental element of visibility: “First the institution of a one-dimensional space of visibility, where the axis of verticality – up and down – disappears, leaving purely horizontal vision; next, and as a result of this, comes the institution of lateral and relative visibility. That is to say, in [this] space there is nothing to take the place of the sovereign. Perception itself becomes invisible . . . Visibility is no longer the visible origin which can be situated; for it has no source other than those whom it makes visible, thus visible to themselves.” See his “A Power without an Exterior” in *Michel Foucault: Philosopher*, trans. Timothy J. Armstrong (New York: Routledge, 1992), 172. Henceforth cited as *MF*.
- 26 This difference between an absolute system that is inaugural in Foucault and a culmination in Hegel is fundamentally rooted in their respective “media” – space for Foucault and time for Hegel.
- 27 In his book on Foucault Deleuze speaks of Foucault as a “cartographer.”
- 28 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality: Volume One*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 94–5.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 97.

PART THREE: EXPRESSIONS AND THE LIMITS OF PHILOSOPHY

CHAPTER 6

FRAMES OF VISIBILITY: SI(GH)TING THE MONSTROUS (ROBERT BURCH)

- 1 Aristotle, *Metaphysics* (New York: Green Lion Press, 1999), 980a.
- 2 Jonathan Barnes, ed. *Complete Works of Aristotle* (New York: Modern Library, 1976). See *Protrepticus*, B 87; *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1177a25.
- 3 Gottfried Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1970), 44. See also *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 6 Aufl., Hrsg. J. Hoffmeister (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1952), 135. Henceforth cited as *PG*.

- 4 Hans Jonas, "The Nobility of Sight," in *The Phenomenon of Life* (New York: Dell Publishing Co., 1966), 147. Henceforth cited as *PL*.
- 5 Cf. Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, Vol. I (New York: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1978), 120.
- 6 Cf. Nicholas Lobkowitz, *Theory and Practice* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967), 6–7.
- 7 Cf. Jan Zwicky, "Bringham's Presocratics: Lyric and Ecology," unpublished paper.
- 8 Martin Heidegger, "Platons Lehre von der Wahrheit," in *Wegmarken* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1967), 142. Henceforth cited as *W*.
- 9 Since, for Hegel, being is thought and the essence of "thought is to manifest itself," that is, "to be clarity itself," nothing can *be* which does not yield to our essential vision (see e.g., *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie* [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1971], I, 109–10, 13–14). Moreover, in demonstrating that the concrete realization of this essential vision is a dialectical process of externalization and interiorization, Hegel solves an aporia intrinsic to this whole tradition: namely, how philosophical knowing can be both preeminently seeing and hence an "holding-at-a-distance" and yet have as its *terminus ad quem* unity with the "thing" known.
- 10 "Nur noch ein Gott kann uns retten," *Der Spiegel*, 30, Nr. 23, May 31, 1976, 193–219.
- 11 Hermann Heidegger, "Comments on *Der Spiegel* Interview," in *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism: Questions and Answers*, ed. G. Neske and E. Ketterling (New York: Paragon House, 1990), 233. Henceforth cited as *SI*.
- 12 Hugo Ott, *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, trans. Allan Blunden (London: Fontana Press, 1994), 367.
- 13 Martin Heidegger, "Die Frage nach der Technik," in *Vorträge und Aufsätze* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1954), 26. Henceforth cited as *VA*.
- 14 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit*, 12 Aufl. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972), 127. Henceforth cited as *SZ*.
- 15 George Steiner, *Real Presences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989), 26–7.
- 16 On the notion of the "interesting" see *Was heißt Denken?*, 3 Aufl. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1971), 2. Henceforth cited as *HD*.
- 17 Martin Heidegger, *Identität und Differenz* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1957), 44.
- 18 Martin Heidegger, "Die Zeit des Weltbildes," in *Holzwege* (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1950), 94. Henceforth cited as *H*. Cf. also *Einführung in die Metaphysik*, 3. Aufl. (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1966), 36–7.
- 19 See e.g., Helmut Arntzen and Winfried Nolting, "*Der Spiegel*" 28 (1972): *Analyse Interpretation, Critique* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1977).
- 20 Martin Heidegger, *Der Satz vom Grund* (Pfullingen: Neske, 1978), 58. Henceforth cited as *SG*.

- 21 Roy Paul Nelson, *Publication Design*, 2nd edn. (Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Co., 1979), 44.
- 22 Martin Heidegger, "Nietzsches Wort 'Gott ist tot'," *H*, 234.
- 23 Martin Heidegger, *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens*, 3 Aufl. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1976), 7.
- 24 Michel Tournier, *Le Roi des Aulnes* (Paris: Gallimard, 1970), 14. Henceforth cited as *RA*.
- 25 See e.g., Alfred Bohm, "The German Crisis of Representation in Michel Tournier's *Le Roi des Aulnes*," unpublished monograph, 6 and passim. The interpretation of *Le Roi des Aulnes* which follows owes much to Bohm's insightful monograph.
- 26 Michel Tournier, *Le Vent Paraclet* (Paris: Gallimard, 1977), 116. Henceforth cited as *VP*.
- 27 E.g., *Dictionnaire historique de la langue française* (Paris: Dictionnaires Le Robert, 1992).
- 28 See e.g., Jacques Derrida, "La main de Heidegger Geschlecht II," in *Psyche: Invention de l'autre* (Paris: Galilée, 1987), 420ff. Henceforth cited as *HG*.
- 29 Having Tiffauges connect *monstre* and not *monstrance* with *montré* loosely parallels the confusion that gave rise to the novel's title and the Goethe poem from which it is taken (see *VP*, 118–19).
- 30 Jacques Derrida, *La Vérité en peinture* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978), e.g., 314ff., and 370. Henceforth cited as *LVP*. In *Le Coq de Bruyère* (Paris: Gallimard, 1978, 281), Tournier gives the theme of footwear a more sinister twist.

The boot . . . Yes the boot, it was all of Germany at this time, all of Nazi Germany. Look, shortly after the war they executed a gang of S.S. torturers. A crude and excessive solution. It would have sufficed to confiscate their boots . . . The most sadistic Nazi torturer, take away his boots and give him instead slippers, some large felt peasant slippers [*charentaises*] with buckles. You turn him into a lamb.
- 31 Martin Heidegger, *Unterwegs zur Sprache*, 4 Auflage (Pfullingen: Neske, 1971), 12. Henceforth cited as *US*.
- 32 Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche II*, 2 Auflage (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961), 358. Henceforth cited as *N*.
- 33 See Jacques Derrida, "Heidegger's Ear: Philopolemology," in *Reading Heidegger: Commemorations*, ed. John Sallis (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1993), 163–218.
- 34 Friedrich Kluge, *Etymologisches Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, 2, Auflage (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1975), 804.
- 35 "Agriculture is now the motorized food industry, the same thing in its essence as the production of corpses in the gas chambers and the extermination camps,"

quoted in Wolfgang Schirmacher in *Technik und Gelassenheit: Zeitkritik nach Heidegger* (Freiburg/Munich: Verlag Karl Albert, 1983), 25.

- 36 Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, Vol. I (New York: Harvest Books, 1989), 113.
- 37 Erik Voegelin, *Israel and Revelation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1956), 407.
- 38 Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*, trans. Howard and Edna Hong (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 79.

CHAPTER 7

FRANCIS BACON, THE PHILOSOPHER'S PAINTER, AND THE LOGIC OF SENSATION (ZSUZSA BAROSS)

- 1 Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), 1 (hereinafter cited as DI).
- 2 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. H. Tomlinson and B. Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
- 3 For some of the more influential discussions on the language of images see Jean Mitry, *La sémiologie en question; langage et cinéma* (Paris: Broché, 1987); Christian Metz, *Langage et cinéma* (Paris: Larousse, 1971); idem, *Essais sur la signification au cinéma* I and II (Paris: Klincksieck, 1968 and 1973); Umberto Eco, "Articulation of the cinematic code," and Pier Paolo Pasolini, "The cinema of poetry," in *Movies and Methods*, ed. Bill Nichols (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Erwin Panofsky, *Perspective as Symbolic Form* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1991); Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993). Henceforth cited as MB. Although in the above neither Panofsky nor Derrida deals with the cinema – both broach the question of the image from the side of language. (For a discussion of Jacques Derrida's *Memoirs of the Blind* see my forthcoming essay, "The Image and the Trait".)
- 4 Jacques Lacan, "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious" in *Écrits: a Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton & Norton Co., 1977), 146.
- 5 Gilles Deleuze, *Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Editions de la Différence, 1981); hereafter cited in the text as LS. The English version cited in the text is my translation.
- 6 Zsuzsa Baross, *The Lure of the Image*, MS, forthcoming. "What is a picture" is the title of Chapter 9 in Lacan's *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. and trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Penguin Books, 1979) hereinafter cited as FFCP. Here – in a section called "Of the Gaze as Objet Petit a" – Lacan offers his most comprehensive analysis of the scopic field and the split between the eye and the gaze.
- 7 I am using "last painting" in the sense of Thomas Mann who, in his *Doctor Faustus*, calls Beethoven's *Piano Sonata Opus 111*, written without a third movement, the last sonata – a farewell written to do away with the sonata as form: "A third movement? A new approach? A return after this parting – impossible! It had

happened that the sonata had come, in the second, enormous movement, to an end, an end without return. And when he said 'the sonata' he meant not only this one in C minor, but the sonata in general, as a species, as traditional art-form . . ." (trans. H.T. Lowe-Porter, New York: Vintage Books, 55).

- 8 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things*, trans. anon. (New York: Vintage Books, 1973), 3–17; *This Is Not a Pipe*, trans. J. Harkness (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983). Henceforth cited as *TP*.
- 9 Where he does attend to the problem is Chapter 4, "November 20, 1923 – Postulates of Linguistics," in *A Thousand Plateaus* (with Félix Guattari). Here Deleuze comes close to Foucault's position by postulating that every discourse is indirect discourse – goes from saying to saying: "If language always seems to presuppose itself, if we cannot assign it a nonlinguistic point of departure, it is because language does not operate between something seen (or felt) and something said, but always goes from saying to saying." (trans. Brian Masumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, 76).
- 10 For, if Van Gogh is Heidegger's painter, and Bacon is Deleuze's, then Cézanne is clearly Merleau-Ponty's painter: works as a phenomenologist and works for the phenomenologist in the field of vision. For Merleau-Ponty's discussion of Cézanne, see his *L'œil et l'esprit* (Paris: Gallimard, 1964) and his posthumously published *The Visible and the Invisible*, trans. Alphonso Longis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968). Henceforth cited as *VI*.
- 11 "One must always remember that the word, the vocable, is heard and understood, the sonorous phenomenon remaining invisible as such. Taking up time rather than space in us, it is addressed not only from the blind to the blind, like a code for the nonseeing, but speaks to us, in truth, all the time of the blindness that constitutes it" (*MB*, 4).
- 12 *Subject's* vision is not a question I have time to enter into here. Nonetheless, especially since the focus of attention here is on the *eye*, it is necessary to observe, even if only in a footnote, that the lure of the *image* is for the *subject's* eye alone. In the field of the spectacle the eye is not the (same) organ of perception the subject has in common with animals (with the birds for example who were fooled by Zeuxis's perfect grapes); in designating the eye as an organ of *vision* one must allow for the capacity – which is of the subject alone – to see in the image and beyond what it represents an image/a reflection of its (subject's) vision.
- 13 Jean Baudrillard, "I'll Be Your Mirror," in *Seduction*, trans. B. Singer (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1979). Henceforth cited as *S*.
- 14 The *Black Square* was painted at least twice by Malevich himself (in 1915 and in the late 1920s) and several times by other suprematists: an intriguing phenomenon, as it is difficult to imagine what could have prompted, or what desire its repainting for the second time and third time could have satisfied. Difficult, that is, if we see it as pure concept or conceptual art – removed from the field that is traversed by forces of desire. In the order of the spectacle, however, where desire reigns over concept, it is repetition, the compulsion to repeat, which makes "more sense." It is in this context that I find it strangely moving that the 1915 version is so fragile that it cannot bear transport and could not travel to the exhibition that was held in 1989 in Amsterdam.
- 15 Bela Balazs, *Theory of the Film* (London: Dover Publications, 1970).

- 16 Michel Leiris, *Au verso des images*, cited in *LS*, 36.
- 17 Yoichi Takabayashi, *Irezumi; the Spirit of Tattoo*, Pacific Arts Video Records, 1985.
- 18 For a discussion of mimesis, camouflage, mask see Roger Caillois, *Le mimétisme animal* (Paris: Hachette, 1963).
- 19 See Jacques Lacan's discussion in "Tuché and Automaton," *FFCP*, 53–64.
- 20 For many, the concern with Lacan's symbolic as universal is one of agency and change: how can the subject intervene in the order of which Lacan says he is only an effect. I am attempting to read Deleuze's text here as a radical attempt not to change the order of analysis but to escape it altogether. It is not that Deleuze (the thinker I am assembling here) questions Lacan and the order psychoanalysis inaugurates. Rather, he makes an exit from it. That he understands that this exit can be achieved only at the price of a catastrophe, that he awaits for it camouflaged and inside the picture he paints (of Bacon's painting) shows the force and the power of the order that is to be evaded.
- 21 In connection with the *Méno* where Socrates, as part of his demonstration of knowledge as anamnesis, introduces the sign of the square root, Lacan writes: "the symbolic function . . . isn't at all homogeneous with (a priori intuition) and (its) introduction into reality constitutes a forcing." *The Seminars of Jacques Lacan, Book II*, trans. Sylvia Tomaselli (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991, 18).

CHAPTER 8

BATAILLE'S EROTIC DISPLACEMENT OF VISION: ATTEMPTS AT A FEMINIST READING (LADELLE McWHORTER)

- 1 Denis Hollier writes:

Discourse *on* is a discourse of truth, making truth dependent upon completion. Writing *on* Bataille would be, thus, proposing to do what he himself did not manage to do, taking the authority of his death to complete his work. Collecting the theses and themes whose proliferation he was unable to conclude. Laying them out according to a plan showing how they go together, whereas Bataille himself was lost in them. Proposing an idea, therefore, while dominating from the full height of a masterful discourse, that would allow one to answer a question like 'What about Bataille?' Giving him the form of an idea. Turning what used to be the name of a subject into the signifier of a concept.

See *Against Architecture*, trans. Betsy Wing (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1989), 25. Nancy writes, "It is becoming urgent to stop commenting on Bataille . . ." See Jean-Luc Nancy, "Exscription," in *Yale French Studies: On Bataille*, ed. Alan Stoekl (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 59. Henceforth cited as *EX*. See also Jacques Derrida, "From Restricted to General Economy: A Hegelianism Without Reserve," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 251–77. There (273) Derrida writes,

The reading of Bataille . . . must not isolate notions as if they were their own context . . . But inversely, one must not submit contextual attentiveness and differences of signification to a *system of meaning* permitting or promising

an absolute formal mastery. This would amount to erasing the excess of nonmeaning and falling back into the closure of knowledge: would amount, once more, to not reading Bataille.

- 2 Georges Bataille, *Theory of Religion*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Zone Books, 1989). Henceforth cited as *TR*.
- 3 Georges Bataille, *Story of the Eye*, trans. Joachim Neugroschel (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1987), 3. Henceforth cited as *SE*.
- 4 See Mary Daly, *Gyn/Ecology* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1979). *SE* contains some very literal necrophilia, too, of course. The narrator's and Simone's violations of Marcelle's corpse are a prime example. See page 50. Necrophilia is an even stronger theme in Bataille's 1936 novel *The Blue of Noon*, wherein the narrator admits to having reached orgasm while standing at the foot of his mother's death bed. See Georges Bataille, *The Blue of Noon*, trans. Harry Matthews (London: Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd., 1986), 38ff.
- 5 Andrea Dworkin, *Woman Hating* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1974). See for example page 53 where she writes, "Literary pornography is the cultural scenario of male/female. It is the collective scenario of master/slave. It contains cultural truth: men and women, grown now out of the fairy-tale landscape into the castles of erotic desire; woman, her carnality adult and explicit, her role as victim adult and explicit, her guilt adult and explicit, her punishment lived out on her flesh, her end annihilation – death or complete submission."
- 6 Please note that I am not saying Bataille was a feminist. Such speculations are idle. It is clear from many of his texts that Bataille liked women a lot – at least quite a lot more than some of his successors.
- 7 Michael Beard, "Eppure Si Gaude: Theoretical Pornography," *The North Dakota Quarterly*, Vol. 54, No. 2 (1986), 50. Beard writes:

The physical confrontation proceeds in the early episodes without the usual narrative melting – that is, with the participants still conversing, their bodies in full view. The complex positions of the initial episodes are positions in which vision remains central. The result is that the narrator avoids intervening between the reader and events. (This is the usual dilemma of portraying intercourse in literature as in film – one participant covers the other, leaving the camera an awkward third party.)

- 8 The word is Luce Irigaray's. See *Speculum of the Other Woman*, trans. Gillian C. Gill (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989).
- 9 Monique Wittig, *The Lesbian Body*, trans. David Le Vay (Boston: Beacon Press, 1987).
- 10 *EX*, 62.

CHAPTER 9

**LUCE IRIGARAY'S SPECULAR MOTHER: LIPS IN
THE MIRROR (LYNNE HUFFER)**

- 1 Susan Howe, "Pythagorean Silence," in *The Europe of Trusts* (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1990), 63.
- 2 See especially Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 1992); Patricia Hill Collins, *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* (New York: Routledge, 1990); Luce Irigaray, *Speculum de l'autre femme* (Paris: Minuit, 1974) [Henceforth cited as *SF*]; Irigaray, *Ce sexe qui n'en est pas un* (Paris: Minuit, 1977) [Henceforth cited as *SU*]; and Audre Lorde, *Sister Outsider: Essays and Speeches* (Freedom, CA: The Crossing Press, 1984).
- 3 As this chapter will show, Irigaray's concept of the same comes from her reading of the parable of the cave in Books Six and Seven of Plato's *The Republic*. Her interpretation of Plato asserts that the self-identical logic of model and copy on which the republic and its truth is founded does not allow for alterity, difference, or deviation from the form of the Ideal, the paternal model. For a lucid and helpful explanation of Irigaray's reading of Plato, see Margaret Whitford, *Luce Irigaray: Philosophy in the Feminine* (London: Routledge, 1991), especially 101–22. Henceforth cited as *PF*.
- 4 See Note 8 for recent examples of this ongoing interest. In addition, see Carolyn Burke, Naomi Schor, and Margaret Whitford, eds., *Engaging with Irigaray* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994); Tina Chanter, *The Ethics of Eros: Irigaray's Re-writing of the Philosophers* (New York: Routledge, 1994); Serene Jones, "This God Which is Not One: Irigaray and Barth on the Divine," in *Transfigurations: Theology and the French Feminists*, eds. C. W. Maggie Kim, Susan M. St. Ville, and Susan M. Simonaitis (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993), 109–41; and Serene Jones, "Divining Women: Irigaray and Feminist Theologies," *Yale French Studies* 87 (1995), 42–67.
- 5 Simone de Beauvoir begins *The Second Sex* by asking and repeating precisely the same question: "What is a woman?" (11); "What is a woman?" (13). See Simone de Beauvoir, *Le Deuxième sexe* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).
- 6 Translations throughout are my own. For a close analysis of what Irigaray calls Freud's *devenir femme*, see his construction of the journey toward adult femininity.
- 7 On Irigaray and mimicry see especially Rosi Braidotti, *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth Guild (New York: Routledge, 1991); Drucilla Cornell, *Beyond Accommodation: Ethical Feminism, Deconstruction, and the Law* (New York: Routledge, 1991); Jane Gallop, *Thinking Through the Body* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988); Elizabeth Grosz, *Sexual Subversions: Three French Feminists* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1989); Lynne Huffer, "Luce et veritas: Toward an Ethics of Performance," *Yale French Studies* 87 (1995), 20–41; Toril Moi, *Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1985); Naomi Schor, "This Essentialism Which Is Not One: Coming to Grips with Irigaray," *Differences* 1/2 (1989), 38–58; and *PF*.
- 8 Jacques Derrida, *Éperons: Les Styles de Nietzsche* (Paris: Flammarion, 1978).
- 9 "calqué sur celui des organismes élémentaires."

- 10 In her reading of *The Republic*, Irigaray replaces Plato's term for cave or den, *spelaiion* (σπήλαιον), with the Greek word meaning uterus or womb, *bustera* (ὑστέρα).
- 11 Irigaray's terminology here plays on the double meaning of *enceinte* as both a noun, meaning "enclosure," and an adjective, meaning "pregnant."
- 12 "derrière (de) la mère.
- 13 The verb, "to trope," which means to embellish with a figure of speech, comes from the Greek *tropos* (τρόπος), "a turn."
- 14 "volte de plus."
- 15 "la copule effigée." Irigaray's word play here hints at two meanings. First, "la copule effigée" could refer to the rigid syntactical ordering of language in the predicative copula, the part of a proposition that connects subject to predicate through the verb "to be." Second, "la copule effigée" could also refer to the rigidly ordered coupling, or copulation, of man and women who, in the false difference of their heterosexual relation, function like cardboard effigies of the same.
- 16 "calqué sur une représentation que l'homme se fait du désir de la femme."
- 17 "Mais comment dire autrement: je t'aime?" "Comment le dire?" (*SU*, 211); "Comment le dire?" (*SU*, 213); "Comment te dire?" (*SU*, 214).
- 18 The extension of metaphorical meaning beyond the figural is what classical rhetoric calls an abuse of trope, or catachresis, a figure that lacks an original or proper meaning (a *head* of cabbage, the *face* of a mountain, etc.). As markers of a feminine libido that lacks a proper meaning, Irigaray's lips and clitoris are catachrestic: the extension of anatomical metaphors of femininity that cannot be reduced into the equations of a metaphorical economy.
- 19 "Quelques lèvres toujours pouvant s'y entrouvrir, y antr'ouvrir."
- 20 Irigaray articulates the relationship between sexual difference and *eidos* in her defense of her doctoral thesis: "I am a woman . . . The motive of my work can be found in the impossibility of articulating such an utterance . . . In other words, the articulation of the reality of my sex is impossible in discourse and for structural, eidetic reasons."
- 21 The proleptic possibilities of a posthysterical saying set into movement are as intriguing as they are impossible to formulate. One can begin, however, to think about a different "third term" that is not a *milieu*, beyond the opposition between the "obsessional" (enumeration) and the "hysterical" (metaphorical conversion) (see *SF*, 71). For a rhetorical reading of this opposition see Paul de Man, "Anthropomorphism and Trope in the Lyric," in *The Rhetoric of Romanticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1984), 239–62. De Man's conclusion about the non-tropological "sheer blind violence" of history might be linked to Sarah Kofman's rejection of the complicitous hysteric for the more radical, nonfigural woman-as-criminal. See Sarah Kofman, *L'Enigme de la femme: La femme dans les textes de Freud* (Paris: Galilée, 1980).
- 22 Irigaray uses the term "specula(risa)tion" throughout *Speculum* to designate, simultaneously: (1) philosophical speculation; (2) observation of the heavens; (3) enterprise in goods or land; (4) to speculate, observe, or view mentally; (5) to talk over, conjecture; (6) to look at or gaze at something. The term also draws attention to Irigaray's title, *Speculum* (from the Latin, *specere*, to look (at) or observe), which

means: (1) a surgical instrument used for dilating orifices of the body; (2) a mirror or reflector and, by extension, a telescope; (3) a diagram or drawing, especially of the planets [from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, Second Edition, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989)]. The parenthetical intrusion of (*risa*) into “speculation” also draws attention to the notion of specularity, thereby highlighting the visual, self-reflective economy through which the various forms of speculation justify themselves. My thanks to Micol Seigel for suggesting that the Spanish term for laughter, *risa*, might also be read into Irigaray’s word play.

- 23 As Nietzsche puts it: “Neither the house, nor the stride, nor the clothing, nor the clay jug betray the fact that need invented them; they seem intended to express an exalted happiness and an Olympian serenity and, as it were, a playing with serious matters.” See Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lying in an Extra-Moral Sense,” in *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, eds. and trans. Sander L. Gilman, Carole Blair, and David J. Parent (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 246–57.
- 24 See Jane Gallop, *The Daughter's Seduction: Feminism and Psychoanalysis* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), for an early reading of Irigaray’s strategy of asking impertinent questions of her discursive fathers.
- 25 Irigaray uses the word “semblant,” or resemblance, to describe the logic of identity that reduces women to a repetition of the same. The structure of the “semblant” is like its homophone, *sang blanc*, or white blood, which freezes difference into a homogenous blank. “And what about your life? You must *pretend* to receive it from them [Tu dois faire *semblant* (*sang blanc*): la recevoir d’eux]” (*SU*, 207, emphasis added).
- 26 Jacques Derrida, “La Mythologie blanche: La Métaphore dans le texte philosophique,” in *Marges de la philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), 253.
- 27 See Derrida, “La Structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines,” in *L’Écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 409–28. Regarding the temptation to privilege pleasure in the struggle for sexual liberation, the comments of Sheila Jeffreys are apt:

An issue on housing would not be expected to focus on interior decoration at the expense of looking at homelessness. An issue on women’s work would probably not just focus on individual fulfilment but on the issue of exploitation. It is inconceivable that an oppositional group of socialists would set themselves up to say that there has been altogether too much gloom and doom about oppression, now was the time to talk about fashion, interior decoration, eating out and so on . . . [I]t is only in the area of sexuality that individual pleasure has taken precedence over the ending of *oppression*.”

Sheila Jeffreys, as quoted in Jenny Kitzinger and Celia Kitzinger, “‘Doing it’: Representations of Lesbian Sex,” in *Outwrite: Lesbianism and Popular Culture*, ed. Gabriele Griffin (London: Pluto Press, 1993), 23.

- 28 Irigaray significantly alters Plato’s version of the story here. In Book Seven of *The Republic*, it is the freed prisoner who is put to death: “and if one tried to loose another and lead him up to the light, let them only catch the offender, and they would be put to death.” See Plato, *The Republic: The Complete and Unabridged Jowett Translation* (New York: Random House, 1991), 257.
- 29 Luce Irigaray, *Le Corps-à-corps avec la mère* (Montreal: Editions de la pleine lune, 1981), 15–16. Henceforth cited as CC.

- 30 Clytemnestra, the wife of Agamemnon, king of Mycenae, was killed by Orestes, her son, to avenge her plotting of her husband's death at the hands of Aegisthus. After killing his mother with the help of his sister, Electra, Orestes was punished for his crime by the Furies, who visited him with madness.
- 31 "Il importe que nous découvriions la singularité de notre jouissance . . . Essayons aussi de découvrir la singularité de notre amour pour les *autres* femmes" (CC, 33, emphasis added).

PART FOUR: FILMING THE (IN)VISIBLE

CHAPTER 10

EXPRESSIONIST TOWERS OF BABEL IN WEIMAR FILM AND ARCHITECTURE (JANET LUNGSTRUM)

- 1 Vachel Lindsay, *The Art of the Moving Picture* (1915, New York: Macmillan, 1922).
- 2 In the *Genesis* story (xi.1–9), the construction of a tower that would reach heaven and that was being built by those speaking a universal language was impeded by the Lord jealously sending down a confusion of tongues. "Babel" typically refers to a foolishly constructed tower or structure, or to a scene of linguistic confusion ("babbling"). The Hebrew word *Babel* is probably from the Akkadian *Bab-ilu*, meaning "gate of God."
- 3 Georg Simmel, "Die Großstädte und das Geistesleben," *Die Großstadt. Vorträge und Aufsätze zur Städteausstellung*, ed. K. Bücher et al. (Dresden: v. Zahn and Jaensch, 1903), 185–206. Cf. also the comments of the art historian Fritz Burger in 1917 regarding the city's new mythology of "labyrinthine bustle" and "Towers of Babel," *Handbuch der Kunstwissenschaft*, 14; cited by Wolfgang Pehnt, *Expressionist Architecture* (London, UK: Thames & Hudson, 1973), 29.
- 4 In 1927, Ludwig Hilberseimer comments on the latent tendency toward "false monumentalisation" in skyscraper design, but his general tone is nonetheless elegiac and in search of the authentic monumentality of the skyscraper. See his *Großstadtarchitektur* (Stuttgart: Verlag Julius Hoffmann, 1927), 67.
- 5 Peter Behrens stated, in his 1908–9 essay "Was ist monumentale Kunst?", that the ideal viewing subjects are located "at the point which a people holds in highest esteem, which most deeply affects it, and by which it is animated and moved. It may be the place from which power is exercised, or that which receives the most fervent adoration" (*Kunstgewerbeblatt* Vol. 20, No. 3 (1908–9), 46). Cited by Wolfgang Pehnt, *Expressionist Architecture* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1973), 63. Henceforth cited as *EA*.
- 6 Paul Bommersheim ("Das Ewige und das Lebendige," in Bruno Taut's *Frühlicht 1920–1922. Eine Folge für die Verwirklichung des neuen Baugedankens*, ed. Ulrich Conrads (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1963), 116, 115. All translations in this chapter are my own.
- 7 Erich Mendelsohn, *Amerika. Bilderbuch eines Architekten* (1925, New York: Da Capo Press, 1976).
- 8 Cf. Jacques Derrida's essay: "Des Tours de Babel," in *Difference in Translation*, ed. Joseph F. Graham (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985), 165–248.

- 9 Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben" in *Sämtliche Werke*, Vol. 1, eds. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag/de Gruyter, 1980), 261–2. Henceforth cited as *SW*.
- 10 See Iain Boyd White's biographical study: *Bruno Taut and the Architecture of Activism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Walter Gropius was, at least in his early Bauhaus days, as enthusiastic a visionary as Taut (*EA*, 107–16): the *Program of the State Bauhaus* (1919) had as its cover a decidedly Expressionistic cathedral-skyscraper of prismatic glass, designed by Lyonel Feininger.
- 11 Bruno Taut, "Architektur-Programm" (1918); republished in Ulrich Conrad's *Programme und Manifeste zur Architektur des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Ullstein, 1964), 39.
- 12 Contained in Taut's *Stadtkrone*
- 13 . . . ein höchstes Bauwerk, das, ganz vom Zweck losgelöst, als reine Architektur über dem Ganzen thront. Es ist das Kristallhaus, das aus Glas errichtet ist, dem Baustoff, der Materie und doch mehr als gewöhnliche Materie in seinem schimmernden, transparenten, reflektierenden Wesen bedeutet. Eine Eisenbetonkonstruktion hebt es über das Massiv der vier großen Bauten heraus und bildet sein Gefüge, zwischen dem in Prismenglasfüllungen, farbigen und Smalten-Glastafeln die ganze reiche Skala der Glasarchitektur prangt. Das Haus enthält nichts als einen wunderschönen Raum, den man von Treppen und Brücken rechts und links des Schauspielhauses und des kleinen Volkshauses erreicht. Doch wie soll man auch nur andeutungsweise schildern, was man nur bauen kann! (67) (Jena: Eugen Diederichs, 1919) is the germination of the modern "garden city." The city for Taut is something to be overcome by being spread out, and re-formed with an urban centerpiece. Taut's plans for these new towns were for 300,000 to 500,000 inhabitants (cf. the phenomenon of English New Towns, or garden cities, like Milton Keynes).
- 14 Here Benjamin is citing Fritz Stahl's *Paris. Eine Stadt als Kunstwerk* (Vienna: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1929); *Gesammelte Schriften*, Vol. 5, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982), 654.
- 15 Taut, *Der Weltbaumeister. Architekturschauspiel für symphonische Musik* (Hagen: Folkwang Verlag, 1920).
- 16 Cf. Taut, "Künstlerisches Filmprogramm," *Das hobe Ufer*, Vol. 2, No. 6 (1920), 88.
- 17 Bruno Taut, *Alpine Architektur* (Hagen: Folkwang-Verlag G.M.B.H., 1919).
- 18 What Taut could not have foreseen is that fascist Italy would actually build a military monument, Babel-tower style, on Monte Grappa to commemorate the Italian and Austrian war-dead of World War I. Cf. Robert Harbison, *The Built, the Unbuilt and the Unbuildable. In Pursuit of Architectural Meaning* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 43–5.
- 19 Cf. Adolf Behne's Tautian "Glasarchitektur" essay, published in Taut's *Frühlicht* (12–16).
- 20 To enter this domain of alpine architecture is at once to become subsumed within the logic of Babel, as Taut states: "eine Heimat haben wir nur im Höheren, im Aufgehen darin und im Unterordnen" (21).

- 21 Bruno Taut, *Die Auflösung der Städte; oder, Die Erde eine gute Wohnung; oder auch, Der Weg zur Alpen Architektur* (Hagen: Folkwang Verlag, 1920).
- 22 Hugh Ferriss, *The Metropolis of Tomorrow* (New York: Ives Washburn, 1929).
- 23 Bruno Taut, *The Crystal Chain Letters*, trans. Iain Boyd Whyte (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985). Henceforth cited as *CCL*.
- 24 See Taut's untitled article on use of film for architecture in *Der Städtebau*, Vol. 14, No. 2/3 (1917). Cf. Mikhaïl Iampolski's positive evaluation of Taut's cinematic works in "Le cinéma de l'architecture utopique," *Iris* 12 (1990), 39–46.
- 25 See Winifred Nerdinger, *Bruno Taut, 1880–1938* (Milan: Elemond Electa, 2002).
- 26 Cf. Manfred Speidel, *Bruno Taut. Retrospektive. Natur und Fantasie 1880–1938* (Magdeburg: Ernst and Sohn, 1994), 154–5, for a transcription of the texts cited by Taut from the works of Nietzsche, Luther, etc.
- 27 Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra (Sämtliche Werke)*, Vol. 4, 278–81.
- 28 Heide Schönemann calls attention to the similarity of Taut's Monument to the New Law with the central skyscraper in Lang's *Metropolis*, designed by the screen architect Erich Kettelhut. Kettelhut's skyscraper has, likewise, a surrounding "crown"-like configuration of tablets, and is lit both from within and by searchlights from without. See Schönemann, *Fritz Lang: Filmbilder, Vorbilder* (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1992), 78–81.
- 29 Lotte H. Eisner calls attention to the light-effect of aurora borealis in this scene: *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt*, trans. Roger Greaves (London: Thames & Hudson, 1969), 164. Henceforth cited as *HS*. She refers to Arnold Böcklin's Romantic painting, *The Isle of the Dead*, as an inspiration for its mountain architecture (150).
- 30 Cf. Frank Kessler's article on the phenomenon of film-architects in Weimar Germany: "Les architectes-peintres du cinéma allemand muet," *Iris* 12 (1990), 47–54.
- 31 Cf. Jean-Louis Baudry's essay of 1975: "The Apparatus: Metapsychological Approaches to the Impression of Reality in the Cinema," in *Film Theory and Criticism*, ed. Gerald Mast, Marshall Cohen, and Leo Braudy, 4th edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 690–707.
- 32 On the former, see Miriam Hansen's *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991). On the latter, see Frieda Grafe's "Für Fritz Lang. Einen Platz, kein Denkmal," in *Fritz Lang*, ed. Peter W. Jansen and Wolfram Schütte (Munich: Hansen, 1985), 7–82.
- 33 Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1947). Henceforth cited as *CH*.
- 34 Cf. Michael Esser's essay on Weimar film architects: "Poeten der Filmarchitektur," *Das Ufa-Buch*, ed. Hans-Michael Bock and Michael Töteberg (Frankfurt am Main: Zweitausendeins, 1992), 118–23.
- 35 Cf. Lang's indebtedness to the effects of light and shade, as explained in his essay, "Metaphysik der filmischen Kunst" of 1929 in *Fritz Lang: Die Stimme von*

Metropolis, ed. Fred Gehler and Ulrich Kasten (Berlin: Henschel Verlag GmbH, 1990), 257. Henceforth cited as *SM*. Lang and the other Expressionist filmmakers were indebted to Max Reinhardt's techniques with light and shade (the chiaroscuro-effect) at Berlin's *Grosses Schauspielhaus* from 1907 to 1919 (after which Piscator's Russian Constructivist theater came into vogue). See *HS*, 44–51.

- 36 Cf. Sabine Hake's article on this film as an architectonic narrative: "Architectural Hi/stories: Fritz Lang and *The Nibelungs*," *Wide Angle*, Vol. 12, No. 3, 1990, 38–57.
- 37 Cf. Janet Lungstrum, "Metropolis: The Woman Question Concerning Technology," in *Women and the Metropolis*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (forthcoming, University of California Press).
- 38 Nietzsche mocks the *deus ex machina* tendency of the drama of monumental history.
- 39 Lang states: "Tempo heißt Raffen, Straffen, Steigern, Hochreißen und Zum-Gipfel-Führen" (*SM*, 92).
- 40 In 1924, Norbert Jacques, a journalist, condemned Lang for introducing the masses into theater.
- 41 These structures are uncannily accurate in comparison with their present-day relatives at Cape Kennedy. Indeed, the technical advisers to this film eventually became rocket scientists during the war: Willy Ley for the Americans, and Hermann Oberth for the Nazis. Cf. also Diana I. Agrest's comment on Cape Kennedy as a "unique skyscraper . . . whose lateral façade recalls the silhouette of the Empire State Building and whose double doors anticipate the World Trade Center": *Architecture from Without: Theoretical Framings for a Critical Practice* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 105.
- 42 Siegfried Kracauer, *Das Ornament der Masse: Essays* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1963), 312. Cf. Janet Lungstrum: "The Building Strategies of the Weimar Film Industry: Kracauer Takes on the Expressionist 'Stimmungs-Kanonaden,'" forthcoming in an essay collection on Weimar cinema, ed. Kenneth Calhoun (Humanities Press).
- 43 Bruno Taut, "Bildvorführungen für liegende Zuschauer," *Bauwelt* 15:32 (1924), 743. Cf. Bettina Zöller-Stock, *Bruno Taut: Die Innenraumwürfe des Berliner Architekten* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1993), 55.
- 44 As Pehnt states of Taut's "revolutionary, and slightly absurd" design: "Screen and projection booth thus exchanged their customary places" (*EA*, 168).
- 45 Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (New York: International Publishers, 1948), 12. Cf. Charles Jencks: *The New Moderns: From Late to Neo-Modernism* (New York: Rizzoli, 1990), 33.
- 46 Walter Benjamin, *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 2, 479. As he comments on the loss of the grand "original" (or demonumentalization) in this age of architectural, filmic, and photographic reproductions: "Die Kathedrale verläßt ihren Platz, um in dem Studio eines Kunstfreundes Aufnahme zu finden" (I, 2, 477). Henceforth cited as *GS*.
- 47 Following the orthodox Kracauer line, Dieter Bartzetzko implies this cause-and-effect logic in his book, *Illusionen im Stein: Stimmungsarchitektur im deutschen Faschismus. Ihre Vorgeschichte in Theater- und Film-Bauten* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1985).
- 48 A major textual influence on Benjamin was Siegfried Giedion's *Bauen in Frankreich* (Berlin: Alfred Holz Verlag, 1928).

- 49 Benjamin cites Victor Hugo's poem "A l'arc de triomphe" as an example of a city's elegy to the monument of itself (*GS*, 1, 147–9).
- 50 With reference to the arcades' role as a pick-up area for prostitutes until they were removed by city police in 1893, Benjamin effectively merges his architectural and human descriptions into one.
- 51 Cf. Anthony Vidler's hypothesis of what Benjamin's Parisian "film" might be like: "The Explosion of Space: Architecture and the Filmic Imaginary," *Assemblage* 21 (1993), 53–5.
- 52 Benjamin is quoting here Karl Boetticher's *Das Prinzip der Hellenischen und Germanischen Bauweise* (1846).
- 53 Glass serves as an obvious link between conceptions of film and architecture. Benjamin states that the early nineteenth century did not yet really know how to build with glass, and so the arcades of these early years of glass construction were dark rather than light (*GS*, 1, 211). Glass came "too early" in the first third of the nineteenth century (*GS*, 1, 217); rather, it came into the full use of its possibilities only in the age of film.
- 54 The Nazi tower at the 1937 exhibition in Paris, for example, clearly depicts this totalitarian shift. Susan Buck-Morss notes Benjamin's deafening silence regarding the contemporary (German and Italian) fascist parallels to the world exposition monumentalism of the nineteenth century; see *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 323.
- 55 The void is a conscious part of the Nazi concept of "antimetropolis": cf. Hitler and Speer's neo-classical plans for Berlin ("Germania") as a vast, "single and total ahistorical monument," as Manfredo Tafuri and Francesco Dal Co state in their *Modern Architecture*, trans. Robert Erich Wolf (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 1979), 302: "The Nazi anticity was conceived of to make the people conscious of their specific mission as instrument of a higher will."
- 56 See *CH*, 307 where the "void" in this *Wochenschau* film is noticed. Benjamin, for his part, remarks on Paris's usual nickname as "la ville qui remue" (*GS*, 1, 643).
- 57 Nietzsche clearly predicted this fall-out for monumentalism:

Monumental history deceives through its analogies. It attracts the spirited man to daring acts with its seductive similarities and the enthusiastic man to fanaticism. If we imagine this history really in the hands and heads of talented egoists, and the wild crowds of evil rascals, then empires are destroyed, leaders assassinated, wars and revolutions instigated, and the number of historical "effects in themselves," that is, the effects without adequate causes, increased once more.

("Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben,"
SW, 1, 262–3) [My translation]

Nazi design desperately wanted to prevent greatness from occurring independently, hence it depicted it incessantly. As Nietzsche states of such a regime: "The monumental is definitely not to rise up once more . . . for they do not want greatness to arise. Their method is to say: 'See greatness is already there.'" (Vol. 1, 264) [my translation]. This is why Hitler posits himself as a rival monument next to the Eiffel Tower in the *Wochenschau* clip.

CHAPTER 11

REWIRING THE OEDIPAL SCENE: IMAGE AND DISCURSIVITY
IN WIM WENDERS'S *JOURNEY UNTIL THE END OF THE
WORLD* (VOLKER KAISER AND ROBERT S. LEVENTHAL)

- 1 Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1978), 29. ("The authentic – the originary seal in the phenomena – is the object of discovery, a discovery which combines itself – in a singular fashion – with recognition/anamnesis." All translations of passages from Benjamin's study on the "Origin of the German Mourning Play" are my own. V.K.) Henceforth cited as *UT*.
- 2 Cf. Georg Lukacs, *Theory of the Novel* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990). For Lukacs, the (Greek) epic is *essentially* defined as a "transcendental topography of the mind." (31). As such it is the formal answer to a question from which the epic itself is constitutively barred. Its world is described as follows: "When the soul does not yet know any abyss within itself which may tempt it to fall or encourage it to discover pathless heights, when the divinity that rules the world and distributes the unknown and unjust gifts of destiny is not yet understood by man, but is familiar and close to him as a father is to his small child, then every action is only a well fitting garment of the world" (30).
- 3 The vital function of rock music both for his movies and their protagonists has repeatedly been stressed by Wim Wenders. In reference to his movie *Im Lauf der Zeit* (Kings of the Road), a film about the end of the (German) cinema, he emphasized the redemptive quality of music and the technical media of its reproduction: "Ohne die Rockmusik wäre ich verblödet. Bei den Velvet Underground heißt eine Zeile: 'Her Life Was Saved By Rock'n Roll.' Deswegen hat Bruno eine Musikbox hinten in seinem LKW und einen Singleplatten-spieler vorne im Führerhaus: Zwei Lebensrettungsmaschinen." ("I would have gone crazy without rock music. The Velvet Underground have one line that reads: 'Her Life Was Saved By Rock'n Roll.' That's why Bruno has a jukebox in the rear of his truck and a turntable for singles in the front: two life-saving-machines." My translation; V.K.) In Wim Wenders, *Die Logik der Bilder. Essays und Gespräche*, ed. Michael Töteberg (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag der Autoren, 1988), 28.
- 4 Translation: Origin, although an historical category through and through, has nevertheless nothing in common with emergence (*Entstehen*). In origin what is meant is not the becoming of something that has come forth (*Entsprungenen*), but rather that which springs forth out of coming-to-be and passing away (*dem Werden und Vergehen Entspringendes*). Origin stands in the flow of becoming as a maelstrom (*Strudel*) which irresistably tears (*reißt*) the stuff of emergence into its rhythm.
- 5 Translation: which inhabits origin . . . It demonstrates that in all essentials uniqueness and repetition mutually condition one another.
- 6 Samuel Weber, "Genealogy of Modernity: History, Myth and Allegory in Benjamin's *Origin of the German Mourning Play*," *MLN*, 3, 1991, 473.
- 7 Note the surprising contrast here between Benjamin's and Heidegger's readings of origin with regard to a complex "postmodern" understanding of history.
- 8 Hans Blumenberg, *Arbeit am Mythos* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1979), 39–41.
- 9 Jacques Lacan, "Psychoanalysis and Cybernetics" in *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan*:

Book II: The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (New York: Norton, 1991), 294–308.

- 10 Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" in Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, ed. David Krell (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), 309.
- 11 In an interview with Walter Donohue, "Revelations: An Interview with Wim Wenders," *Sight and Sound*, Vol. 1, No. 12 (April 1992), 10.
- 12 Wim Wenders, "Revelations," 10. (Our italics.)
- 13 Manfred Schneider, "Was zerstreut die Zerstreuung?" in Wolfgang Tietze and Manfred Schneider, eds., *Fernsehschows: Theorie einer neuen Spielwelt* (Munich: Raben, 1991), 20. ("While our TV-picture, according to the CCIR-Norm, is divided up (and dispersed) into 625 lines and about 500,00 pixels, the optical perception of the human eye operates with even greater resolution. Every eye commands over 125 million rods and pins through which all signals are manufactured." My translation, R.L.)
- 14 Walter Benjamin, "Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit," in W.B., *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1963), 41. ("Then came film and exploded this incarceration world with the dynamite of the fraction of the second, so that we are now able to journey at ease through its widely dispersed ruins." My translation, R.L.)
- 15 Cathy Caruth, "Introduction" in *American Imago. Psychoanalysis, Culture and Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 8.
- 16 (Translation: "All this dissipates with that *one* turn in which allegorical immersion must give up the last phantasmagoria of the objective and finds itself, with no recourse other than itself, no longer playful in the earthly world of things, but earnestly under the sky.") Here we are reminded of Lukacs's description of the vertical temptations (fall/discovery of pathless heights) faced by the subject of modernity; cf. note 2.
- 17 "Leer aus geht die Allegorie."
- 18 Traumatizing effects can, of course, not only be inflicted from the outside, but also from the inside of the psyche. Thus, the melancholic disposition of Henry, Sam, and Claire (the movie explicitly points out that the death of the blind mother, her removal as a screen of projection, is not met by the appropriate technique of mourning) should be read as a traumatizing strategy designed by the psyche to avoid the inevitable confrontation with the various forms of traumatic experience. The fact that, at the end, Claire is "limited" to monitoring pollution reflects the shift between the different psychic and narrative economies of coping with negativity. On various levels, the latter is reproduced at the end of the movie, thus "inverting" its exclusion by the technology of reproduction. Implicitly, Wenders acknowledges the rift between the relations of production (they seem to be crucial) and the development of the forces of production in the psychic economy of identity constitution.

PART FIVE: CRITIQUES OF CONTEMPORARY
IMAGE CULTURE

CHAPTER 12

IMAGISM AND THE ENDS OF VISION: POUND AND
SALOMON (LISA ZUCKER)

- 1 Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (New York: New Directions, 1968), Canto LXXIV, 435. Grateful acknowledgment is given to New Directions Publishing Corporation and Faber and Faber Ltd. for permission to quote from the copyrighted works of Ezra Pound. Copyright © 1934, 1937, 1940, 1948, 1956, 1959, 1962, 1963, 1966, 1968 by Ezra Pound. Henceforth cited as *C*.
- 2 Cf. T. E. Hulme, *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1924) and *Further Speculations*, ed. Sam Hynes (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1955). The Hulme essays were considered to signal the formal interment of the Romantic aesthetic and the philosophical introduction of Modernism to the English reading public.
- 3 First cited by Albert Gelpi, *A Coherent Splendor: The American Renaissance, 1910–50* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 179. Henceforth cited as AR. Gelpi is referring to Pound's introduction to Remy de Gourmont, *The Natural Philosophy of Love*, trans. Ezra Pound (New York: Rarity Press, 1977).
- 4 "The Recurring Decimal" in *Guide to Kulchur* (New York: New Directions, 1970): 249–53. Henceforth cited as RD.
- 5 Confucius, *The Great Digest and the Unwobbling Pivot*, trans. Ezra Pound (New York: New Directions, 1951), 187 (interjection by Pound). Cf. also the "Light tensile immaculata" of Canto LXXIV: 429. Henceforth cited as GD.
- 6 Cf. Ezra Pound, *Gaudier-Brzeska*: 89. In Pound's formulation, the superposition is a kind of palimpsest, with "one idea set on top of another."
- 7 Ezra Pound, *BLAST . . . Review of the Great English Vortex*, I (June 20 1914), 153. Henceforth cited as B.
- 8 The role of the blink here is compatible with that of the *Augenblick* which is played out in Husserl's phenomenology in order to secure the adequation of presence to itself. Cf. Jacques Derrida's analysis in *Speech and Phenomena*, tr. David B. Allison (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1973), 61.
- 9 Ezra Pound, *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*, ed. T. S. Eliot (New York: New Directions, 1968), 50
- 10 Ernest Fenollosa, *The Chinese Written Character as a Medium for Poetry*, ed. Ezra Pound (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1935), 28. Henceforth cited as CWC.
- 11 For Jacques Derrida, the word "hymen" hosts the same function as Pound's "bearing" which is "charged" with debt. Circuating around a central lack which is for both writers instituted within the feminine gender, this metaphor is the site of what we have been referring to as the *con* – a site of (con)fusion and a veil or shield which prevents consumption. Derrida refers to its double position *entre* and *antre*: "Opération qui à la fois met la confusion entre les contraires et se tient entre les contraires." *La Dissémination* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), 240.

- 12 On the flexible gleam of the fetish, see Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in *Sexuality and the Psychology of Love* (New York: Collier, 1972), 215–55.
- 13 Karl Marx, *Capital I* (New York: International Publishers, 1970), 47.
- 14 Ezra Pound, *Impact*, ed. Noel Stock (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1960), 233. Henceforth cited as *I*.
- 15 According to Pound, analysis of the mystery of trinitarian relationships requires the glossing of certain discrepancies. The poet valorizes those thinkers with the right degree of reserve, "Who seized the extremities and the opposites/holding true course between them/ . . . holding empire as if not in a mortar with it/nor dazzled thereby." Cf. Canto LXXIV, 442. Aquinas, by contrast, is said to have gone too far in his reliance on logic, although his reason was essentially sound: "Hence the delay in condemning him." Cf. Canto XXXVI, 179.
- 16 Ezra Pound, "ABC of Economics," in *Selected Prose, 1909–65*, ed. William Cookson (New York: New Directions, 1973), 242. Henceforth cited as *ABC*.
- 17 On the fascism that led to Pound's trial for treason, and on his excusal from standing trial by reason of mental unfitness, see the account of his attorney, Julian Cornell, *The Trial of Ezra Pound: A Documented Account of the Treason Case by the Defendant's Lawyer* (New York: John Day, 1966). Conrad L. Rushing refers to the expression "mere words" as "lawyer's shorthand" for the defensive position that Pound's "broadcasts were not directed by the Italian government." Cf. "Mere Words": The Trial of Ezra Pound," *Critical Inquiry* 14 (Autumn 1987), 111–33.
- 18 John Tytell, *Ezra Pound: The Solitary Volcano* (New York: Anchor, Doubleday, 1987), 334.
- 19 The *Singspiel* has been published without the painted transparent overlays but with typeset transcriptions of the dialogue and musical orchestration as *Leben oder Theater? Ein autobiographisches Singspiel in 769 Bildern* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1981), translated as *Charlotte: Life or Theater? An Autobiographical Play by Charlotte Salomon*, trans. Leila Vennewitz (New York: Viking Press and Gary Schwartz, 1981). Since the pagination in these two texts is exactly the same, they will be collectively referred to in the body of the text as *LT*. Further sources include an earlier, smaller selection which appeared as *Charlotte Salomon, Ein Tagebuch in Bildern, 1917–1943* (Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1963) translated as *Charlotte: A Diary in Pictures*, trans. Ralph Manheim (New York: Harcourt, 1963). See also the exhibition catalogue of Christine Fischer-Defoy, *Charlotte Salomon – Leben oder Theater?* (Berlin: Das Arsenal, 1986). I would like to thank Madame Judith Belinfante, Director of the Joods Historisch Museum, Amsterdam, for granting me access to the Charlotte Salomon Archive and for reproduction permissions. I am also grateful to Madame Paula Lindberg-Salomon for kind hospitality and extensive biographical information. Finally, I would like to thank the Fonds pour la formation de chercheurs et l'aide à la recherche (FCAR) for the financial support which made research for this chapter possible.
- 20 See Nietzsche's *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1978), 155–60.
- 21 For a lengthier discussion of this tale, see my "Burning a (Forgotten) Memory: Nietzsche's 'Mnemotechnics' and the Eternal Return of the Feminine," *Tessera* 14 (Summer 1993), 88–99.
- 22 "I am referring to 'Étant donnés': the viewing point and the vanishing point are

symmetrical: If it is true that the latter is the vulva, then the vulva is the specular image of the voyeur-eyes; or: When these eyes think they see the vulva, they are seeing themselves. He who sees is a cunt.” Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *Les TRANSformateurs DUchamp* (Paris: Galilée, 1977), 138.

- 23 Cf. “Ezra Pound Speaking”: *Radio Speeches of World War II*, ed. Leonard W. Doob (London, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1978), 186.

CHAPTER 13

MEDIUMS OF FREEDOM IN PHOTOGRAMMIC FRAMES: SOME EXPOSURES OF BOUND TRANSCENDENCE

(JAMES R. WATSON)

- 1 Within the philosophical discourse of modernity, according to Habermas, Nietzsche occupies the position of a “turntable” (*Drehscheibe*) – see his *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity: Twelve Lectures*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), 112–13. See also, Fred Dallmayr, “Modernity in the Crossfire: Comments on the Postmodern Turn,” in *Postmodern Contentions: Epochs, Politics, Space*, eds., John Paul Jones III, Wolfgang Natter, and Theodore R. Schatzke (New York: The Guilford Press, 1993), 23–8.
- 2 Theodor W. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1975), 240.
- 3 As quoted by Jayne Merkel, “Art on Trial,” *Art in America*, Vol. 78, No. 12 (December 1990), 41.
- 4 This could be a very lengthy footnote, but an abbreviated one should suffice at this point in the game. See Jean-François Lyotard and Jean-Loup Thébaud, *Just Gaming*, trans. Wlad Godzich (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1985), 71.
- 5 Statement by Jock Sturges in Allen Ginsberg and Joseph Richey, “The Right to Depict Children in the Nude,” *Aperture* 121 (Fall 1990), 43.
- 6 Kendall L. Walton, “Transparent Pictures: On the Nature of Photographic Realism,” *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 11, No. 2 (December 1984), 269–70.
- 7 “Transparent Pictures,” 273 and 264.
- 8 Here I am referring to Himmler’s October 4, 1943 address to the SS generals gathered in Posen.
- 9 See Paul Friedländer, *Plato: An Introduction*, trans. Hans Meyerhoff (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1964), 16–20.
- 10 Edward N. Zalta, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 1 (New York: Macmillan, 1967), xii. Henceforth cited as *E*.
- 11 *E*, Vol. 6, 279.
- 12 *E*, Vol. 8, 194.
- 13 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (New York: Humanities Press, 1962), 238.

- 14 Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs*, trans. Richard C. McCleary (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1964), 169.
- 15 Michel Henry, *The Essence of Manifestation*, trans. Girard Etzkorn (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1973), 715.
- 16 This interpretation of Plato's image of the cave has been "explored" by Luce Irigaray. See especially here repudiation of Plato's "divided line" image in *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985), Chapter 11 "When Our Lips Speak Together."
- 17 A. D. Coleman, "Metaphors of Metamorphosis: The Photographs of Jock Sturges," *Camera & Darkroom*, Vol. 14, No. 12 (December 1992), 14.
- 18 Martin Heidegger, "The Origin of the Work of Art," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1977), 183.
- 19 "The Origin," 187.
- 20 Yve Lomax, "The World is a Fabulous Tale," in *Other Than Itself: Writing Photography*, eds. John X. Berger and Olivier Richon (Manchester: Cornerhouse Publications, 1989), unpaginated.
- 21 Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Heidegger, Art and Politics: The Fiction of the Political*, trans. Chris Turner (Cambridge: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 64.

EPILOGUE

THE PARADOX OF PHILOSOPHY'S GAZE (WILHELM S. WURZER)

- 1 This theme is also addressed, differently in part, by Theodor Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. Robert Hullot-Kentor (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997). For a concrete review of this matter see my "Beyond an Aesthetics of the West: Hitchcock's *Vertigo*," in Ludwig Nagl's *Filmästhetik* (Vienna: Oldenbourg-Akademie Verlag, 1999).
- 2 See my "Nancy and the Political Imaginary After Nature," in *On Jean-Luc Nancy: The Sense of Philosophy*, ed. D. Sheppard, S. Sparks, and C. Thomas (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).
- 3 Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. E. Prenowitz (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 84. Henceforth cited as *AF*. Also, see Renata Salecl, *Per Versions of Love and Hate* (London: Verso Books, 1998).
- 4 Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, trans. D. Krell (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 151. A recent "postmodern" reading of the very paradox of philosophy's gaze can be found in my *Filmisches Denken*, trans. Erik Vogt (Vienna: Verlag Turia + Kant, 2000).

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CONTRIBUTORS

Zsuzsa Baross is Professor of Cultural Studies at Trent University in Canada. She has written extensively on Derrida and Deleuze.

Robert Burch is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Alberta, Canada. He is editor of *Frontiers in American Philosophy*. He is also author of numerous books and essays on Hume, Heidegger, postmodernism, and cultural criticism.

Alessandro Carrera is Professor of Cultural Studies at the University of Texas, Austin. He is the author of *La Voce di Bob Dylan*. He is a musician/poet and member of the Italian Poetry Society of America as well as the Italian Institute of Culture of New York. He has published articles on continental philosophy in numerous journals.

Dana Hollander is Assistant Professor of Philosophy at Michigan State University. She has written articles on Derrida and modern Jewish thought. She taught previously at the University of Nevada and held the Ray D. Wolfe Fellowship in Advanced Jewish Studies.

Lynne Huffer is Professor of French Studies at Rice University. She is author of *Another Colette: The Question of Gendered Writing* (1992) and *Maternal Pasts, Feminist Futures, Ethics, and the Question of Difference* (1998) and many articles on Irigaray, Blanchot, Brossard, and Derrida.

Volker Kaiser is Professor of German at the University of Virginia. He is author of *Das Echo jeder Verschattung: Figure und Reflexion bei Rilke, Benn und Celan* (1989) and *Facing the Void: Reading Kleist's Primal Scenes* (2002). He has also written articles on Heine, Brecht, Adorno, and postmodernism.

Robert S. Leventhal is Professor of German at the University of Virginia. He is author of *The Disciplines of Interpretation: Lessing, Herder, Schlegel and Hermeneutics in Germany 1750–1800* (1994) and editor of *Reading After Foucault*.

Reginald Lilly is Chair and Associate Professor of Philosophy at Skidmore College. He is translator of *Werner Marx, Is There a Measure on Earth* (1987), *Michel Haar, Song of the Song* (1993) and *Martin Heidegger, The Principle of Reason* (1996). He is also editor of *The Ancient and the Moderns* (1996) and a cigar aficionado.

Janet Lungstrum is Assistant Professor of Germanic Studies at the University of Colorado at Boulder. She is co-editor of *Agonistics: Arenas of Creative Contest* (1997) and many articles on modern German visual culture, film theory, and the history of architecture.

Ladelle McWhorter is Professor of Philosophy and Women Studies at the University of Richmond. She is editor of *Heidegger and the Earth* (1992) and

Simone de Beauvoir (1997) and author of *Bodies and Pleasures: Foucault and the Politics of Normalization* (1999). She has published many articles on Bataille, Beauvoir, and Foucault.

Ludwig Nagl is Professor of Philosophy at the University of Vienna, Austria. In addition to being author of *Charles Sanders Peirce*, he has published and edited many books on Derrida, Cavell, Freud, Kant, Vattimo, Wittgenstein, and in areas such as film theory, pragmatism, deconstruction, and psycho-analytic theory.

Anne Tomiche holds a research position at the University of Grenoble, France. She is editor of *Altérations, créations dans la langue: les langages dépravés*. She has published extensively on Artaud, Derrida, and Lacan.

James R. Watson is Professor of Philosophy at Loyola University, New Orleans. He is author of *Thinking with Pictures* (1990) and *Between Auschwitz and Tradition* (1994). He has published articles on the Holocaust, Heidegger, Plato, American working-class movements, Marxian theory, Levinas, Nietzsche, Vattimo, Hegel, Lacoue-Labarthe, Adorno, Derrida, and Nancy.

Lisa Zucker is a freelance writer and actress. She taught in the Department of English Studies at the University of Montreal. She has published a number of articles on Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Irigaray, and Nancy.

EDITOR

Wilhelm S. Wurzer is Professor of Philosophy and Chair of the Department of Philosophy at Duquesne University. He received his Ph.D. from the University of Freiburg, Germany where he studied with Eugen Fink, Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, and Wolfgang Struve. He is author of *Spinoza und Nietzsche* (Meisenheim am Glan: Verlag Anton Hain, 1975), *Judgment and Film-ing: Between Heidegger and Adorno* (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press, 1990) and *Filmisches Denken* (Vienna: Turia + Kant, 2000) as well as numerous articles in postmodern aesthetics, film aesthetics, hermeneutics, and deconstruction, particularly on Nietzsche, Heidegger, Adorno, Derrida, and Nancy. He is the co-founder and co-director of the International Philosophical Seminar (IPS) in Alto Adige, Italy and has served as member of the Executive Committee of the International Association for Philosophy and Literature (1992–7).