

THREE

MARCEL BROODTHAERS, AN ARTIST IN QUOTATION MARKS

Quotation is a constant reminder that writing is displacement.
—Edward Said

Parrots

It would be easy to set up Guy Debord and Marcel Broodthaers as opposing figures: Debord would play the role of the revolutionary who eventually turns away from art, and Broodthaers would be cast as the bourgeois artist focused on a conceptualist form of *l'art pour l'art*. This scenario would, however, obscure the more complex points of comparison between the two artists as well as their shared interest in examining the possibilities available to art, politics, and critique in the 1960s and 1970s. Debord continues to write and make films, despite his skepticism about art as a separate activity, while Broodthaers's works emerge from a profoundly political reflection—his *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*, for instance, draws on his experiences during the May 1968 occupation of the Brussels Palais des Beaux-Arts.¹

Broodthaers insists on the survival of art's critical potential even as he carefully circumscribes art's critical reach. This is his response to an interviewer who asks if he makes “engaged,” political art: “I did once. They were poems, which are concrete signs of engagement since they exist without compensation. . . . In the visual arts, my only possible engagement is with my adversaries [je n'ai pu m'engager que chez mes adversaires].”² There are two ways to understand the last sentence here: either as “I can only engage with (that is, contest) my adversaries” or as

from Patrick Greaney, “Quotational Practices: Repeating the Future in Contemporary Art” (University of Minnesota Press, 2014)

"I can only be engaged (that is, be employed) by my adversaries." Art must attempt to contest reification, and, at the same time, he claims, art *is* reification.³ Broodthaers highlights the difficulties involved in negating art's reification, and he submits to a restrained yet biting critique his contemporaries' attempts to undo or avoid reification.

In 1964, after almost twenty years as a poet active in the ambit of Belgian surrealism, Broodthaers has his first gallery exhibition and declares that he is an artist.⁴ He locates his "point of departure" as an artist in his encounter with George Segal's sculptures and with pop art, which he interprets, in a 1965 interview, as a form of "opposition" against a consumerism that, in the United States, has "invaded absolutely all the areas of private life" and "completely destroyed the possibility of enjoying the pleasures of life."⁵ Pop art is a "form of revolt" that "uses the forms of advertising to denounce them," and it is this simple strategy, similar to *détournement*, that can be used to understand Broodthaers's works. Eight years later, Broodthaers proposes the same basic structure for interpreting his "experimental exhibition" *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* (The eagle from the Oligocene to today): "I wanted to neutralize the use value of the symbol of the Eagle and reduce it to a zero degree so as to introduce a critical dimension into the history and use of this symbol."⁶ In the catalog for that exhibition, he writes that "the intention is to incite a critical attitude about how art is presented in public."⁷ Broodthaers's reading of pop art makes clear why he might be interested in appropriation and quotation: he can present images, words, and objects in such a way as to reduce their use value and provoke a critical relation to them. These are modest goals, especially when compared to Debord's.

In the years that separate Broodthaers's debut as an artist from his later statements about his exhibition, there is a slight shift. He speaks in the later texts much more about how art is presented than he does about consumer society. He hasn't changed his view of what art can do, but he has become aware of impediments to art's critical functions, impediments often set up by artists themselves, who, instead of offering critique, simply mimic the conditions that pop art aimed to oppose. Already in the early 1960s, he is skeptical of the Nouveaux Réalistes, who were and are often compared to pop artists, but whose movement, Broodthaers writes, "acquiesces to the forms of modern civilization. It's

almost a form of glorification. They are searching for a new aesthetic that would be adequate to the civilization they live in [à la mesure de la civilization dans laquelle ils vivent], while Pop is first of all a form of opposition."⁸ Broodthaers does not want to make art to measure for consumer society. But he also doesn't want to give up the intimate, oppositional relation that pop art modeled for him. He copies what he opposes so as to insert difference into his copy, and what he often copies are the practices of other artists, who, he says more or less explicitly, acquiesce without critique. Broodthaers recognizes that he too acquiesces, to the methods and manners of the art market, but he also insists that he can remain critical when doing so.

This all remains abstract without discussion of specific works, but the point of these introductory remarks is to outline Broodthaers's general view of art, which often results in works that don't seem so clearly tied to critique. If Broodthaers's intentions seem obscure, it's in part because his opaque mimicry disturbs every perception of intention. Broodthaers is interested in mimicry's transformative powers, but remains aware of the negative reaction to those powers and their potential impotence, which is why he often uses base materials, like eggshells and mussel shells, in his works, as if to highlight art's weakness. "His materials in the mid-1960s do not start but *end* chains of signification," Rachel Haidu writes. "It is as if Broodthaers were using the most impoverished, debased sign system he could find . . . to countenance the avant-garde ideal of an evacuation of languages, both plastic and written."⁹

Among Broodthaers's impoverished materials, the parrot occupies a special, unacknowledged position: alive, stuffed, painted, silhouetted, appropriated, the parrot often appears as a marker of the tension between the loquaciousness and silence of the artist and the artwork itself. Parrots do not speak, if "speaking" requires consistently discernible intention, but they can be taught to say many things, and they are beautiful, colorful animals, even if they are often surrounded, when caged, by their own waste—which appears in installation photos of Broodthaers's living parrots—and thus recall the other kinds of waste (eggshells, mussel shells) in Broodthaers's works. His 1974 installation-like "decor" titled *Ne dites pas que je ne l'ai pas dit* (Don't say I didn't say so) includes a live parrot, and the companion work *Dites partout que je l'ai dit* (Say everywhere that I said so), part of his 1974 retrospective exhibition *Éloge du*

sujet, includes a stuffed parrot under glass as well as an appropriated image of a parrot.¹⁰ To state the obvious and unpack the tautological: the parrot is the allegorical emblem, for Broodthaers, of repetition.¹¹ He makes this very clear by including, in *Dites partout que je l'ai dit*, a recording of his voice reading his repetitive, stuttering poem, "My Rhetoric." There is also a critical edge to his parrots: as Haidu notes, the parrot "underscores, pathologizes, and parodies the aspect of repetition intrinsic to the artistic retrospective."¹²

Broodthaers poaches his parrots from nineteenth-century ornithological volumes, just as he copies, in his best known artist's books, works of literature by nineteenth-century authors, including Alexandre Dumas père, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, and Heinrich Heine.¹³ Appropriation and quotation offer Broodthaers a way to create engaged art: art that engages in debates about politics and aesthetics while also remaining distant from them; and art that foregrounds the fact that it has been produced by an artist who has been engaged by a collector, a museum, the market. By using quotation, Broodthaers can offer critiques without speaking in his own voice and without using language as a means of expression and communication.

These interpretive premises will guide the reading that follows, but they should be understood as necessary but not sufficient conditions for understanding Broodthaers's works, which aim to provide the kind of aesthetic experience that would disappear from an interpretation that focuses only on the works' critical aspects. His works are critical and opaque. This opacity reinforces the works' critical edge—by refusing communication, by resisting instrumentalization, by reducing objects to a zero degree—but also resists an instrumentalization in the service of critique. This is why Broodthaers's works sometimes seem like dead ends. His parrots embody his critique of the retrospective, among other things, but they are also uncomprehending and potentially incomprehensible mimes, especially when they're stuffed.

This chapter will focus on one quotational work, Broodthaers's 1973 artist's book whose title, *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* is a line quoted from Baudelaire's sonnet "La Beauté" ("Beauty"). The poem is like a parrot, caged and stuffed, but one that comes alive in Broodthaers's book to intervene in contemporary debates about the status of

the artwork and to show the continued potential of the kind of aesthetic experience offered by bourgeois art.

Memory

The cover of *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* announces it as a work by Baudelaire (Plate 4). The book is made up of nine page spreads:

1. The first spread contains, in the upper right hand corner of the recto, all the numbers and the sole letter of the "figures" that will appear in the book: 0, 1, 2, 12, A.
2. On the recto of the second page spread (Plate 5), Broodthaers quotes Baudelaire's poem "Beauty" as it appears in *Les fleurs du mal*; Broodthaers's only modification is the printing in red of the line "Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes."
- 3–6. The body of the book consists of the line "Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes" spaced out, one word on each of its eight pages. Each page also contains eight instances of the abbreviation "Fig." (Figure 2) arranged in three rows on the top half of the page, with each "Fig." followed by a number.
7. The antepenultimate page spread contains a version of the sonnet that reverts, in one passage, to an earlier version of the sonnet that Baudelaire published in a journal. (By leaving out another variant in that publication, Broodthaers creates a poem that Baudelaire never wrote.)
8. The penultimate page spread (Figure 3) contains the colophon and a single-sentence postscript in which Broodthaers situates the book's "origin" in a seminar that he attended on Baudelaire conducted by the sociologist Lucien Goldmann.
9. The final page spread is blank.

The back cover is blank except for the notation "(Fig A)."

Broodthaers quotes Baudelaire very differently than Debord. Broodthaers's Baudelaire is not a source for fragments to be removed from their original context, delyricized and placed among a collection of clippings from mass circulation newspapers and magazines. Instead, Broodthaers isolates Baudelaire's poem on the page, respecting its conventional presentation and even reproducing it in Garamond, the typeface used in the

Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, the prestigious leather-bound French series printed on high-quality paper and reserved for canonical works of literature, philosophy, and history. When compared to the use of language by contemporaries such as Joseph Kosuth and Debord, Broodthaers's work seems anachronistic, a throwback to the *livres d'artiste* of Picasso and Matisse.

The comparison with Debord and Jorn's *Mémoires* is telling in other ways. *Mémoires* was, according to Debord, never intended to be sold and certainly does not contain any information about the edition size, whereas Broodthaers's book was sold in a limited edition and lists, in its colophon, all the details a collector would want to know about the *édition originale* (numbered I to X and signed) and the *première édition* (three hundred copies, unnumbered and unsigned). This is far from Debord's putative potlatch. But there is at least one obvious similarity between the two works: Broodthaers and Debord quote Baudelairean lines about beauty. Debord wants to speak "the beautiful language of his century," and Broodthaers quotes a poem titled "Beauty." For Debord, a beautiful language may be made possible by the détournement of commodified language. For Broodthaers, beauty and commodification are intimately tied, in a way that a close reading of his work will reveal.

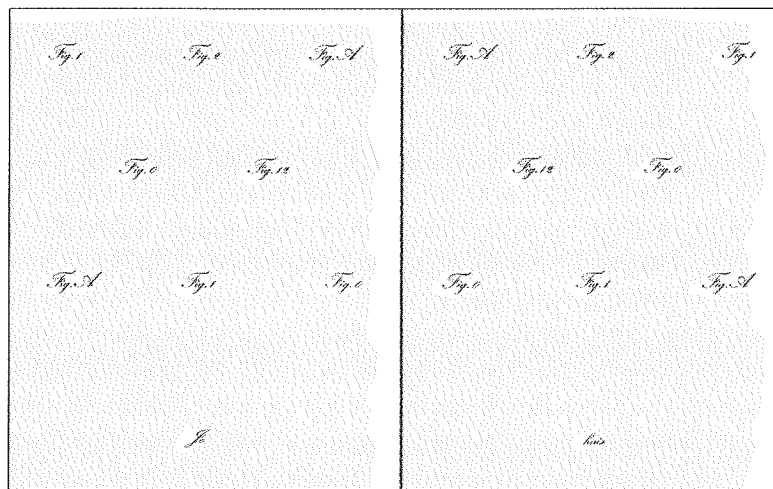


FIGURE 2. Page spread from Marcel Broodthaers, *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* (1973). 32 x 48 cm. Copyright The Estate of Marcel Broodthaers / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SABAM, Brussels.

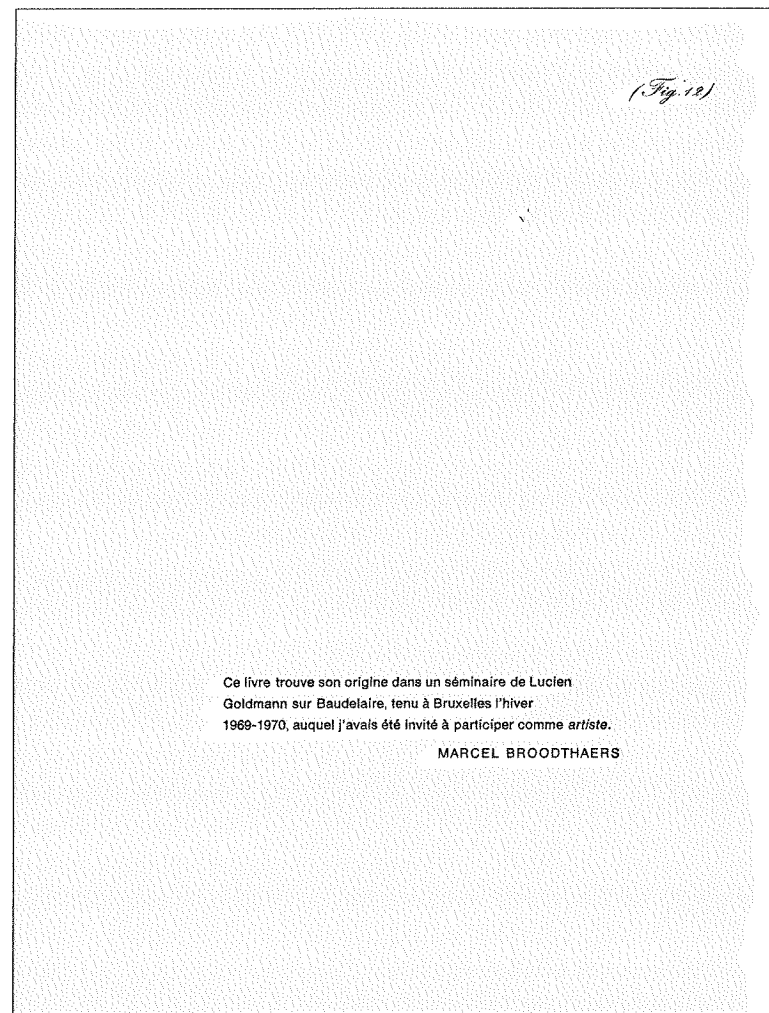


FIGURE 3. Page from Marcel Broodthaers, *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* (1973). 32 x 24 cm. Copyright The Estate of Marcel Broodthaers / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SABAM, Brussels.

Timeless and Austere: Baudelaire's Beauty

Broodthaers's poetry often echoes Baudelaire's, and his works related to Baudelaire include two films from 1970 and the artist's book *Pauvre Belgique*, a take on Baudelaire's book project with the same title.¹⁴ His choice of the sonnet "Beauty" must have been carefully considered, and a reading of the poem is essential for an interpretation of the artist's book that quotes it. This is the poem as it appears in *Les fleurs du mal* and in Richard Howard's translation:

La Beauté

Je suis belle, ô mortels! comme un rêve de pierre,
Et mon sein, où chacun s'est meurtri tour à tour,
Est fait pour inspirer au poète un amour
Éternel et muet ainsi que la matière.

Je trône dans l'azur comme un sphinx inconnu;
J'unis un cœur de neige à la blancheur des cygnes;
Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes,
Et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.

Les poètes, devant mes grandes attitudes,
Que j'ai l'air d'emprunter aux plus fiers monuments,
Consommeront leurs jours en d'austères études;

Car j'ai, pour fasciner ces dociles amants,
De purs miroirs qui font toutes choses plus belles:
Mes yeux, mes larges yeux aux clartés éternelles!

Beauty

Conceive me as a dream of stone:
my breast, where mortals come to grief,
is made to prompt all poets' love,
mute and noble as matter itself.

With snow for flesh, with ice for heart,
I sit on high, an unguessed sphinx
begrudging acts that alter forms;
I never laugh—I never weep.

In studious awe the poets brood
before my monumental pose
aped from the proudest pedestal,

and to bind these docile lovers fast
I freeze the world in a perfect mirror:
The timeless light of my wide eyes.¹⁵

The incipit's laconic declaration—"Je suis belle"—is disorienting because its speaker is not identified.¹⁶ This repeats the confusion sown by the cover of Broodthaers's book: the reader knows that this is a book by Broodthaers, and yet the book is attributed to Baudelaire. The book thus focuses, from the start, on the question "Who is speaking?" The reader soon determines that the poem is spoken in the voice of Beauty, who goes on to describe herself as distant, cold, and immortal.¹⁷ She is an unattainable beauty who "inspires . . . an eternal and mute love" in the poets who adore her, a love that compels them to spend their days composing "austères études" dedicated to her.

The poem seems unified by a polarizing vertical axis: immobile Beauty above, admiring and docile poets below. It would be possible to interpret Baudelaire's poem this way, as the declaration of "le beau idéal" of antiquity . . . as expounded by contemporaries of Baudelaire."¹⁸ And yet something seems off in this reading. The notion of a purely spiritual, eternal beauty contradicts many texts in which Baudelaire argues for a more complex conception of beauty as simultaneously eternal and fleeting, as ideal and earthy.¹⁹ But that is not enough to call into question her words: just because Baudelaire criticizes something in one text doesn't mean he can't praise it in another.²⁰ There are, however, several indications, within "Beauty," that the poem should not be taken at its word, beginning with two unusual similes in the first quatrain: she is as beautiful "as a dream of stone," and the poets' love for her is as "mute and noble as matter itself." The second simile is especially bizarre. Why is their love "like matter"?

There is a cumulative effect of the first quatrain's two similes: a heaviness that makes it difficult to take seriously the second quatrain's ethereal opening, "I sit on high." The continuation of the line—"I sit on high, an unguessed sphinx"—further undercuts her midair suspension. "A sphinx in the sky is a bizarre twist of the classical myth," Andrea

Moorhead writes, especially since the poem's later comparison of Beauty with monuments suggests that this sphinx is made of stone, too heavy to float weightlessly in the sky.²¹ This allows for Beauty's pronouncement to be rewritten: "I sit on high just as the sphinx falls to the ground." Read in this way, Beauty insists on her ethereality even as she plummets from the sky.²²

Beauty asserts, in the second quatrain, that she "hates the movement that displaces lines," and the reason for this has become clear: a displacing rhetorical movement undermines her claim to reign from on high. Once this movement has been revealed, the poem can no longer be divided into two vertically linked horizontal planes, one inhabited by Beauty and one by her enthralled acolytes. This reading dethrones Beauty in a way that corresponds to the acceptance of "déplacer" (to displace) as "to dismiss from one's position or occupation."²³ Beauty has been fired.

Baudelaire's poem presents Beauty's claim to a place in heaven while also making her fall from the sky. It is an understatement to say that this is an ironic poem. Francis S. Heck identifies as a specific target of scorn the "cult of pagan beauty" and the "impassivity" of Leconte de Lisle and the poets of the Parnasse.²⁴ Heck lists a few phrases from Parnassian vocabulary mocked in the poem and singles out the line "Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes" as "captur[ing] the essential position of Leconte de Lisle."²⁵ Drawing on Heck's analysis, Anne Jamison focuses on the aestheticizing power of Beauty's mirror eyes as the object of Baudelaire's irony. For Jamison, the Parnassians' "fascination with beauty is exposed as narcissism disguised, hypnotic because its mirror reflects back their own image beautified."²⁶ The poets' "studies" would thus be nothing but self-portraits; their austerity is due not to beauty's distance but to the poets' reduction of poetry to a hall of mirrors reflecting only themselves.²⁷

This narcissism appears in striking ways: not just in the repeated "je" of Beauty's speech but also in an unspoken, purely visual aspect of the poem, the acrostic in the first two quatrains, in which every line begins with a *j* or an *e*, enough to make four instances of "je," even if the word is only spelled out as "je" in the vertical reading of the first two lines.²⁸ This acrostic is just another way in which the poem reflects the narcissist poets; the poem's "je . . . je . . . je" is attributed to Beauty but

really spoken only by the poets. The recognition of the vertical "je" requires a kind of reading that once again displaces "les lignes," or at least the horizontal line of reading, and reinforces the deflating, plummeting movement implicit in the poem's rhetoric.

But "La Beauté" should not be read simply as a dismissal of the ideal nature of beauty. She has been dethroned only because of her pretensions to an ideality without matter. In fact, this poem might just serve to exorcise one notion of beauty in favor of another kind of beauty that is present in later poems in *Les fleurs du mal* but only negatively, ironically, in "La Beauté."

Irony

It is worth pausing for a moment to examine the concept of irony not only because of its central role in Baudelaire's poem but also because Broodthaers's critics often note his irony without specifying how it functions in his works.²⁹ In *The Concept of Irony*, Kierkegaard presents irony as "a demand, an enormous demand, because it rejects reality and demands ideality."³⁰ Just as Baudelaire's poem rejects Parnassian beauty without offering an alternative, Kierkegaard's ironists lack an existing ideal ready to take the place of what they ironize.³¹ Instead, they offer only beginnings. Irony's "actuality is only possibility," Kierkegaard writes, which is why he quotes Hamann's formulation of irony as "spiritual pederasty," a love of inchoate possibilities over mature actualities.³²

For Kierkegaard, Socrates's irony has "a world-historical validity" because it dismantles the Greek gods and way of life and prepares for the emergence of individuality.³³ Socrates is not able to bring about this new beginning; he is just a "dash in world history . . . the nothing from which the beginning must nevertheless begin."³⁴ But Socrates, in Kierkegaard's account, does not completely abandon actuality. The Greek philosopher strives to intervene, to make actuality into history.³⁵ He does this by questioning how things are, not by asserting a new actuality. Kierkegaard imagines an objection to this Socratic irony:

We might ask how, then, does he destroy the old, and the answer to that must be: he destroys the given actuality by the given actuality itself; but it should be remembered nevertheless that the new principle is present within him *kata dunamin* [potentially], as

possibility. But by destroying actuality by means of actuality itself, he enlists in the service of world irony.³⁶

Socrates performs a form of montage *avant la lettre*, using the materials of Greek culture against itself, rearranging it so that it no longer supports its own principles but, instead, comes to indicate something else. Since the ironist makes actuality refer to a new principle that is merely possible, a fundamental relation has been transformed: for the ironist, Kierkegaard writes, “the phenomenon is not the essence but the opposite of the essence.”³⁷ In irony, what you mean may not be what you say, and what you say may not be what you mean. In irony, Sylviane Agacinski writes, “inadequation . . . is the only rule.”³⁸

For Kierkegaard this inadequation is historical, because it allows for Socrates to participate in the transformation of the present.³⁹ Irony is historical because it names, among other things, the fragility of what is and what is said, and because it points to the possibility of something else, something possibly unintended and unstated that would undermine whatever has been said. Paul de Man pursues Kierkegaard’s insight into the ironic caesura between essence and phenomenon and shows how irony reveals language to be “a mere semiotic entity, open to the radical arbitrariness of any sign system and as such capable of circulation, but . . . as such . . . profoundly unreliable.”⁴⁰ He draws here on Schlegel, who writes that language, thus stripped of its pretensions to embody ideas, approaches “error, madness, and simpleminded stupidity.”⁴¹

The ironic reading of Baudelaire’s poem gives a glimpse of something like madness: a leaden Beauty as plummeting Fury, stuttering out (“je . . . je . . . je . . .”) her insistence on her immateriality.⁴² When language can no longer be relied on to refer to an essence, it is potentially reduced to dumb matter and mad babbling, even as its absence of intention—or at least its disturbance of intentionality—opens up language to a future ungoverned by the intentions of the present. De Man’s interest in irony arises not because of some putatively transgressive meaninglessness but, perhaps, because of its “curious” link to history and its distance from every intention, every *vouloir-dire*.⁴³

Irony tears Baudelaire’s beauty in two directions: beyond this beauty toward another beauty, before this beauty into matter. Beauty recognizes this possibility of her sublation, and this is why she hates movement,

especially the ironic movement that makes explicit the disjointed relation of essence and phenomenon. She likes stasis: she wants to be a pure thing, if this thing is identified simply and eternally with beauty itself. There are two complementary ways to read the poem’s resolution of this desire. Its irony can be read as undoing her reification by revealing the movement in the poem, or it can be read as intensifying her reification to an extreme conclusion in which she becomes only a thing and falls, a petrified sphinx, to the ground.⁴⁴ In either case, irony is linked to displacement and transformation.

Reification and Fiction

In his postscript to *Je hais . . .*, Broodthaers situates the book in the context of his seminar with Lucien Goldmann: “This book’s origin can be found in Lucien Goldmann’s seminar on Baudelaire, held in Brussels in the winter of 1969–1970.” The seminar focused on Baudelaire’s prose poems but also extended into a more general discussion of Baudelaire and his critique of reified beauty. This is a passage from Goldmann’s notes for the seminar:

What’s important for Baudelaire . . . is that art is a solution only if it maintains its contradictions. Art presupposes revolt. What interests me is the way in which beauty becomes one of two things for Baudelaire: either it negates life—as the immobile, the metallic, “le jet de l’eau et de pierrerie”—or it is evil, the taking up of a position in the interior of contradictions. Beauty as it’s been conceived since Diderot—as that which suppresses contradiction—. . . constitutes precisely that clear divinity that Baudelaire revolts against.⁴⁵

For Goldmann, Baudelaire’s poetry depicts a struggle against “aesthetic ideology as the resolution of contradictions.”⁴⁶ “Beauty” may be one of the Baudelairean texts in which this revolt, this *mal*, is at once most explicit because it is a critique of *la beauté*, beauty itself; and most obscure, present only to an ironic reading.

According to Broodthaers’s widow, there are no surviving notes or documents that could testify to the degree or nature of Broodthaers’s participation in Goldmann’s seminar, but a number of Broodthaers’s remarks in interviews and other texts are not that far from Goldmann’s summary

of his Baudelaire seminar.⁴⁷ For example, in a 1974 interview Broodthaers identifies “the essential structure of art” as “a process of reification,” and elsewhere he insists that artistic value is “based on a ‘different’ language”—different, that is, from the system of distribution (galleries, museums) that commodifies it.⁴⁸ In a 1975 interview, Broodthaers repeats, warily, this diagnosis:

What is Art? Ever since the nineteenth century the question has been posed incessantly to the artist, to the museum director, to the art lover alike. I doubt, in fact, that it is possible to give a serious definition of Art, unless we examine the question in terms of a constant, I mean the transformation of art into merchandise. This process is accelerated nowadays to the point where artistic and commercial values have become superimposed. If we are concerned with the phenomenon of reification, then Art is a particular representation of the phenomenon—a form of tautology.⁴⁹

It is important to note all the marks of hesitation here: the hedging “I doubt that . . .,” the use of the conditional, the definition *ex negativo* (“it’s not legitimate to define art seriously other than as . . .”), and the circumlocution. Broodthaers seems to shy away from uttering the word “reification” here perhaps because, as he says in the same text, he is loath to assume the role of critic and to perform the political function implied in the adoption of such a vocabulary. He also questions the value of the very “commentary” that artists’ texts often offer: “it seems doubtful to us that such commentaries can be described as political.”⁵⁰ Broodthaers hesitates again here before the assertion of critical truth: it only “seems” to him that it is “doubtful.”

In another text, Broodthaers offers what could be read as an explanation for his circumspection: “the way I see it, there can be no direct connection between art and message, especially if the message is political, without running the risk of being burned.”⁵¹ Broodthaers insists on the impossibility of occupying a critical position exterior to the market as a political artist or even as commentator on his own art. There seem to be few, if any, options for the artist who desires to be critical. Broodthaers asserts, first, that art *is* reification, the very thing that it should and would criticize; second, that commentary cannot come to the art object’s rescue because its explanation of the object contributes

to that object’s value and thus is commercial in nature, an advertisement for art; and, finally, that an artist’s theoretical attempts are just as deluded as commentary.⁵² “The ‘political’ statements made by certain artists do not prevent their prices from rising,” Broodthaers writes.⁵³ In short: artworks reify; commentary cannot be political; and theory is mere advertising.

In Broodthaers’s last interview, he describes the degradation of artists’ critical positions to commercial stances, and he offers this summary account of the relation of art and the market in the 1970s: “In the case of the avant-garde, he [the artist] participates more closely than before in the business structure and marketing of art.”⁵⁴ Broodthaers’s interviewer responds by offering Broodthaers one more chance to imagine a critical position for the artist: “Couldn’t one imagine the equivalency artist/worker?” This is Broodthaers’s reply:

The artist as worker is simply a producer, but in any case, even if he’s broke, the artist knows very well what he’s aiming for, and when he becomes a well-known producer, he’s a worker of great luxury. An artist lives much better than any worker in any country, doesn’t he?⁵⁵

After abandoning all the possible, exterior critical positions that many artists of the 1960s and 1970s attempted to occupy (artist as social critic, artist as political figure, artist as art theorist, and artist as worker), Broodthaers relegates the artist to the position of the well-heeled producer of luxury goods.

The notion of the artist as critic or theorist relies on a model of communication and transparency that, for Broodthaers, ignores the intimate relation of art to the reifying context of the art market and also ignores the nature of the art public, which is not politically engaged but commercially interested. Broodthaers insists on the primacy of the market: “The goal of art is commercial. My goal is just as much commercial. The goal (the end) of critique is also commercial.”⁵⁶ But he also insists on his “intention of inciting a critical attitude towards how art is presented in public,” and he attempts “to introduce something that includes the negation of this situation”:

The politics that I would like to defend—in art—is weak, individual, and subject to the pressure and influence of a specialized public in

which a prominent position is occupied by middlemen and collectors. Nowadays art lovers are rare and are sorely missed. . . . Nevertheless, despite its weakness, a political attitude remains necessary today.⁵⁷

The “weakness” of his politics is the result of the necessity of bearing this tension between commerce and its negation. “It remains to be seen if art exists anywhere else than on the level of negation,” Broodthaers writes.⁵⁸

Instead of offering political utterances and critical insights about art and society, Broodthaers says in an interview that he aims to refuse “to deliver a clear message—as if this role were not incumbent upon the artist, and by extension upon all producers with an economic interest.”⁵⁹ His refusal of clarity appears explicitly at the very moment of his emergence as an artist, in the form of a declaration of his insincerity in this oft-quoted invitation to his first gallery show in 1964:

Me too, I asked myself if I could not sell something and succeed in life. It's been awhile that I've been good for nothing. I'm forty years old. . . . Finally the idea of inventing something insincere came to me and I got to work immediately. After three months I showed my work to Ph. Edouard Toussaint, the owner of the Galerie Saint Laurent. But it's Art! he said, and I'll happily show all this. If I sell something, he'll take 30%. These are, it seems, normal conditions, some galleries take 75%.⁶⁰

His “something insincere” becomes art with a capital *A* through the gallerist's christening intervention, which is followed directly by a discussion of contractual terms, which Broodthaers dutifully notes. This is not (or not only) an artist's commentary or a theoretical text because it is integrated into the invitation as a work of art. Broodthaers dramatizes his entry into art in an inaugural, institutional speech act that thematizes the accompanying financial arrangements. He claims insincerity as a position, but even this claim could be insincere.

The invitation is a work of what Broodthaers would call “fiction,” a technical term that he equates with “political parody.”⁶¹ He uses it to describe his *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles* (“un musée fictif”), and it appears in a revealing way in his discussion of his film *Une seconde d'éternité, d'après une idée de Charles Baudelaire* (A second of

eternity, after an idea of Charles Baudelaire), which shows Broodthaers's hand signing his initials in a film:

It's a very short film, one second long; the title's even *A Second of Eternity*. I'd like to bear witness, in an artistic way, to a certain artistic reality. What's important is not that it's my signature or anyone else's: it's just the fact of the signature itself. I believe that artistic creation depends on a narcissistic drive. *A Second of Eternity* is inspired, more or less, by Charles Baudelaire. I enjoyed making this film; the graphic mark that only lasts for one second constitutes, simultaneously, a fiction.⁶²

The film fictionalizes his signature, dramatizing its power by thematizing it and exposing it to critique.⁶³ He describes the act of signing, in the continuation of his comments on *Une seconde d'éternité*, as apotropaic: “The signature of the author—painter, poet, director . . .—seems to me to be the beginning of a system of lies, the system that every poet, every artist attempts to establish to defend himself . . . against what, I'm not sure.”⁶⁴ This is the third polemological metaphor quoted so far in Broodthaers: he wants to engage in a “polemic” against his “adversaries” and makes this film about the artist's “attempt to defend himself.” Broodthaers often presents art as a military exercise: “the plastic arts,” he writes, are the place for applying a “style that is more military than erudite.”⁶⁵

One only has to read the rest of Broodthaers's interview about *Une seconde d'éternité* to know exactly how he conceives of his opponent. His interlocutor asks about his “attitude” toward the Cologne art fair, where he was showing his work at the time:

Oh, but I feel much more comfortable in the Cologne fair than in my own museum because at an art fair we are right in the middle of its system, which is a base commercialism.

And why do you feel more comfortable?

Because it's the everyday life of everyone, the existence of practically all artists, museum directors, and gallery owners. Base commercialism—I don't mean to say that all these people are odious or vile but that art is sold here as a contemptible commodity.⁶⁶

Broodthaers goes on to explain how he counters this, how he defends himself and his objects:

I try, especially in these works that are being exhibited here at the Cologne Fair, to introduce something that includes the negation of this situation, a situation that I'm very aware of. Here there are two or three objects that could be taken for contemptible commodities, but I hope that, by their structure or by the words that surround them, they contain a warning that indicates: "I am here, but it's not my fault." I hope it's not me who says that, I hope it's the object itself that indicates that.⁶⁷

His artworks are at once "contemptible" and "innocent," objects in an art fair and attempts to negate that fair. Their double nature also offers a way to understand his filmed signature: it depicts the carrying out of the gesture of the signature, which is meant to guarantee the authenticity and value of a work of art by imprinting an indexical mark of the artist's presence; but it also presents the act of signing as a repeatable, filmed, fictional act that can be separated from the presence of the author. Broodthaers's signature may also be speaking—as he imagines his objects to speak—of its innocence of all that, of its desire to be just a signature, a pleasurable gesture ("I enjoyed making this film") free of all that it inevitably means. But this pleasure does not rely on an exterior position. Instead of pretending to remain outside the contradictions of the art market, Broodthaers assumes the "position in the interior of contradictions" that Goldmann outlines in his seminar.⁶⁸

Fiction, this doubling of every act into guilty (given over to the market) and innocent (or at least attempting to declare its innocence, its intention to negate the market), endangers the sincere understanding between artist and public, that public which Broodthaers also robs of its neutrality by identifying its members simply as collectors: "In our bourgeois society—need one remind you?—art is specifically bourgeois, and the ties that necessarily exist between gallery, museum, and collector have a bearing on the structure of any work of art."⁶⁹ Explicit, avowed fictionality troubles the relation of essence and phenomenon just as irony does. The object's declaration of innocence—which can only exist as duplicity—undermines and ironizes the transaction it enters into and the meaning given to the object by that transaction. Fiction blinds the object, disturbs its relation to essence and value and makes it into something more or something less than a value vessel by robbing it, for at least a moment, of its function as commodity.⁷⁰

Invisible Beauty

Broodthaers's texts reveal a set of adversaries: reification, but also artists who believed that they could resist reification by making art that was only commentary or theory. This is implicit in his attempts to circumscribe the critical reach of his own activities and in his hesitation about uttering gnomic statements about art. It is not difficult to discern the specific objects of his irony. His open letter to Joseph Beuys, later included in the book *Magie*, was directed against Beuys's shamanic, voluntaristic, political activities, and his catalog for the exhibition *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* reveals his desire to criticize a certain reception of Duchamp in conceptual art:

Since Duchamp the artist has been the author of a definition. Duchamp's move, at the beginning, aimed to undermine the power of juries and academies; now this move has been reduced to its own shadow and today it dominates a large part of contemporary art, with the support of collectors and the market. This exhibition sheds light on these two aspects. The survival of Duchamp's undertaking is demonstrated by the fact that, today, artists apply the definition of art to the definition itself—to the language of the definition—and thus create an entire infra-literature.⁷¹

His exhibition is both a critique of the watered-down strategy of definitions-as-art, as employed by conceptual artists, and an investigation of the "survival" of Duchamp's legacy.

Given the diversity of artists grouped under the rubric of conceptual art, it is necessary to be precise about exactly *which* conceptual art Broodthaers reacted against. In this context, Thierry de Duve's definition of what he calls a "narrow view of conceptual art" is helpful: "this is art theory disguised as art, or art disguised as art theory. That is when the self-reflexive move of modernism has come to the point where art wants to be its own theory and sustain itself on that theory."⁷² Broodthaers's remarks about art as commentary and art as theory indicate that such "theory disguised as art" should be understood as the target of what Broodthaers calls his "political parody."⁷³ Among the best examples of this kind of conceptual art are Joseph Kosuth's photostats of dictionary entries, and Kosuth's unpublished remark in a letter to Lucy

Lippard makes the tie to *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* explicit, even though Broodthaers could not have known about it: "I have always stated that my ideas were not meant to be considered esthetic objects in themselves but rather to refer to an invisible 'beauty' or esthetic which is the idea. The beauty is intended to exist in the idea not in the photograph." ⁷⁴ This is very close to the Parnassian beauty that Baudelaire ironizes: a purely spiritual beauty.

Another example of language-as-art, chosen from Broodthaers's immediate milieu, can be found in Ian Wilson's decades-long *Discussions* project. One such discussion took place in Brussels at the MTL Gallery in 1972, in the presence of Broodthaers's wife and in the same gallery where Broodthaers also showed in 1972 and 1973. ⁷⁵ The work's documentation consists of two sheets of A4 paper. One of them reads, "On the 23rd of January 1972 there was a discussion between Herman Daled and Ian Wilson. What was said remains in the collection of Herman Daled." ⁷⁶ Those typewritten words are followed by Wilson's signature and the typewritten date. A second piece of paper documents the same event on a sheet of stamped letterhead from the gallery MTL that includes the price of the work.

For Wilson, the *Discussions* represent an attempt to reach the extreme of conceptual art and to create what, in his 1984 text "Conceptual Art," he calls a "vacuum" from which "true consciousness emerges." ⁷⁷ The achievement of this extreme, Wilson writes, requires going beyond Sol LeWitt (whose "statements about conceptual art" are "general enough to include physical execution of ideas") and Kosuth (who is "still concerned with the visual presentation of ideas") toward a total abandonment of the object and of visibility: "True conceptual art moves beyond visual and physical execution of ideas, no matter how abstract, beyond figurative and inanimate ideas: true conceptual art is found within the formless abstractions of language." ⁷⁸ Even this reduction to language requires a further limitation on the size of the typeface so as to preclude any visual impression: "Conceptual art presented in a typeface larger than 12 points causes a reference to a place other than the consciousness of the reader." ⁷⁹

Wilson's works, considered solely in the form of their documentation, seem to fulfill all the criteria for conceptual art as discussed by Buchloh in his essay "Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetic

of Administration to the Critique of Institutions": they efface all transcendence, skill, and the last remnants of an aesthetic experience. ⁸⁰ Wilson's critique of the objecthood of the work of art takes place as an accentuation of the bureaucratic and commercial aspects of art (the certificate of authenticity, the contract, the signature, and the presence of the collector) and thereby corresponds to what Buchloh calls "the aesthetic of administration," in which "the definition of the aesthetic becomes on the one hand a matter of linguistic convention and on the other of both a legal contract and an institutional discourse (a discourse of power rather than taste)." ⁸¹ In Buchloh's account, conceptual art's successes are Pyrrhic: its attempts to demystify art wind up abandoning the aesthetic and critical functions specific to art. Conceptual artists, for Buchloh, achieve a "final reification of language under the pretense of liberating the art discourse from its object status." ⁸² Buchloh writes that conceptual art "succeeded in purging itself entirely of imaginary and bodily experience, of physical substance and the space of memory, to the same extent that it effaced all residues of representation and style, of individuality and skill." ⁸³ This was "perhaps the last of the erosions (and perhaps the most effective and devastating one) to which the traditionally separate sphere of artistic production had been subjected."

It is the "eroded" character of Wilson's *Discussions* that continues to elicit interest. Daniel Buren praises Wilson's "monastic rigor" and ascetic renunciation of every kind of documentation of his work, except for his certificates. ⁸⁴ Key to Buren's claims is his understanding of Wilson's relation to the market:

[H]ow could anyone seriously purchase . . . something that doesn't illustrate the action in question and that doesn't say anything other than that he wasn't invited to the conversation about which he will never know anything. Ian Wilson makes improbable, if not impossible, any kind of financial speculation on his work. ⁸⁵

Buren subscribes, in this text from 2004, to an ideal that Lucy Lippard recognizes as compromised in a 1973 text:

It seemed in 1969 . . . that no one, not even a public greedy for novelty, would actually pay money or much of it, for a xerox sheet referring to an event past or never directly perceived, a group of photographs documenting an ephemeral situation or condition,

a project for work never to be completed, words spoken but not recorded; it seemed that these artists would therefore be forcibly freed from the tyranny of a commodity status and market orientation. Three years later, the major conceptualists are selling work for substantial sums.⁸⁶

Lippard and Buren see the resistance to commodification as key elements of the heroic self-understanding of conceptual artists, but as Lippard recognizes, spiritualization doesn't stand in the way of acquisition. On the contrary, as Alexander Alberro's study of conceptual art (and the "Siegelau system") shows, it actually facilitates the marketing and distribution of art. Alberro's book serves as a valuable corrective in its undoing of the conflation of the commodity and the object; in the new service and information economy that emerges in the 1960s and 1970s, the idea is the commodity par excellence. "The emergence of conceptual art is closely related to this new moment of advanced capitalism," Alberro writes.⁸⁷

For Alberro, the belief that conceptual artists sought to preclude the commodification of their art is "mythical": "there was never a moment when they did not seek to market the art."⁸⁸ But myths have their own efficacy and this particular myth lives on in the twenty-first century, as Buren's text shows. How could one "seriously" buy one of Wilson's certificates, he asks. Implicitly, Broodthaers asks the same question in all his works. Buchloh assigns this seriousness a central place in his interpretation of Broodthaers's ironization of conceptual art:

It was left to Marcel Broodthaers to construct objects in which the radical achievements of Conceptual Art would be turned into immediate travesty and in which the seriousness with which Conceptual Artists had adopted the rigorous mimetic subjection of aesthetic experience to the principles of what Adorno had called the "totally administered world" were transformed into absolute farce.⁸⁹

Broodthaers's works ask: What if these claims were not taken seriously—or at least relativized and not taken as determining texts for interpretation? What if the works of conceptual artists were freed from their makers' heroic statements—like this conclusion to an article by Wilson:

Passing beyond metaphor, beyond criticism, beyond art, beyond space and time, we come upon the formless abstractions of language. Infinite and formless, what is presented is neither known nor unknown. This is the center. This is the heart of conceptual art.⁹⁰

Broodthaers's response to an interviewer's question—about surrealism's desire to overcome the differences between "life and death, the real and the imaginary"—comes to mind here as a possible response to Wilson's claims: "I hope I have nothing in common with that state of mind."⁹¹

Buren, despite his insistence on the nonmarketability of Wilson's works, doesn't take all of Wilson's ideas about his discussions seriously and writes that "there is, after all, an object in the oeuvre of Ian Wilson, a true physicality that, through the flesh-and-bones presence of individuals, Ian Wilson, and his interlocutors . . . manifests itself in the form of an exchange of phrases and words."⁹² Buren also insists on the presence of humor beneath the "extremely austere appearance" of Wilson's works. This is already a liberation of Wilson's works from conceptualist rhetoric.

Broodthaers goes even further in his works, whose adversarial relation to the works of his contemporaries could be understood not as rejecting those works but as insisting on the necessity of new, not-serious ways of reading them. If Broodthaers's works are ironic, inscrutable if tied only to the utterances of their creator, then other works of conceptual art may be too. What if Kosuth's works were freed from their creator's manifestos? What if Wilson's works weren't treated as monastically pure events and his certificates recognized as the art that they de facto already are? An example of such an analysis is Alberro's interpretation of Kosuth's works, which points out their intimacy with Warhol despite Kosuth's desire to conceal his works' pop aspects.⁹³ Kosuth and Wilson would thus no longer be able to serve as straw men in a confrontation with Broodthaers, whose works would serve as a mirror to show what conceptual art could be, if read apart from the intentions of its creators.

Broodthaers's irony is infectious. Like all good travesties, his *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* draws on an intimate knowledge of its targets. He could even be said to offer a rich, dialectical interpretation of conceptual art's strategies. In *Je hais* . . . , Broodthaers engages with some of conceptual art's theoretical claims about art's status as well as with its serial practices, but he also reacts to the often unacknowledged

or unexamined material aspects of conceptual art, especially the forms of writing used by many conceptual artists.

Handwriting, Typewriting, Information

Like Ian Wilson's certificates, many conceptual artists' works consist of handwriting and typewriting, from Carl Andre's handwritten and typewritten poems and Robert Smithson's handwritten *Heaps of Language* and deaestheticized magazine articles to Lawrence Weiner's *Escalated from Time to Time*, Stanley Brouwn's typewritten *1 Step to 10000 Steps*, and On Kawara's rubber-stamped *I Got Up* series.⁹⁴ While his contemporaries engaged in experiments in the reduction of language to letters, numbers, shifters, and sparse instructions, Broodthaers quotes the complex, stylized, conventional language of a Baudelairean sonnet.⁹⁵ This is not the kind of quotation favored by Broodthaers's contemporaries; one only has to compare *Je hais . . .* to the roughly contemporaneous work of Carl Andre and Hans Haacke to see this.⁹⁶ By turning away from professionally set typefaces and making a handwritten or typewritten document into a work, these other artists participate in many of the deskilling or deaestheticizing operations associated with conceptual art. By simply copying or registering time, many of them also participate in conceptual art's attempt to withdraw from expression and subjectivity and to "empty [the work] of literature," as Douglas Huebler puts it.⁹⁷ For Huebler, language, freed from myth and literariness, becomes nothing more than an instrument for delivering information: "The language that I use in the work is meant to very carefully structure itself and build towards a kind of conclusion that allows a reconstitution of the information by the viewer."⁹⁸

The language and typography of *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* should be viewed against this background. The book uses three typefaces: English cursive, Garamond, and Helvetica. Garamond is associated with the printing of canonical literary texts and in particular with the Bibliothèque de la Pléiade; English cursive with calligraphic, ornamental formality; and Helvetica with modernism.⁹⁹ The first two are far from the typewritten or handwritten works by the artists listed above, but they reveal something, negatively, about conceptual art: the ornamental, formal aspect of Broodthaers's English typeface highlights how

conceptual art's handwritten and typewritten works can be read as indexical markings of the writing subject. Writing about Carl Andre, Liz Kotz describes the "tactile quality of letters typed on a manual typewriter, with their inevitable variations in ink density, sharpness, and force of impression," which makes typewritten documents into the art objects whose creation these very variations and tactility were often meant to preclude. "The inevitable slight variations—the differences within repetition—give the massed blocks" of Andre's works "a vulnerability and poignancy," Kotz writes.¹⁰⁰ In *Je hais . . .*, the artist's hand and typewriter are replaced with a calligraphic typeface without any pretense to authenticity or immediacy. Language in *Je hais . . .* is literary, and these typefaces are far from indexical or reduced. Broodthaers's typography can be read as a critique of conceptual artists' claims to indexicality and linguistic reduction. In the 1960s and 1970s, typewriting and handwriting are as calligraphic and conventional as Broodthaers's ornate scripts.

Figures

Broodthaers's critique of conceptual art can also be seen in his use of the abbreviation "Fig." in *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes*.¹⁰¹ The arrangement of the "Fig." figures reflects the content of Baudelaire's poem: the figures mirror themselves just as beauty reflects the poets and makes everything beautiful. Baudelaire's poem is structured by the repetition of "je," and in Broodthaers's book, the abbreviation "Fig." is repeated. The "Fig." numbers seem to create a completely self-reflexive system and thus point to solipsism as another way to imagine Baudelaire's Beauty: she hates displacement just as she hates any form of exteriority or reference to anything external to herself. This would correspond to Mel Bochner's notion of series as solipsistic. The serial work is, as Bochner writes, "fundamentally parsimonious and systematically self-exhausting."¹⁰²

And yet Broodthaers's series is not purely solipsistic. The abbreviation "Fig." usually points, when used in a text, to an image or, when appearing next to an image or table, to the image's commentary in the text. The "Fig." is a switch point between text and image.¹⁰³ It is thus the opposite of solipsistic; it is a call to go beyond what is on the page, or at least to move to another place on the page. A parenthetical "(Fig.)"

conventionally refers to a nonparenthetical "Fig." And yet even this apparently sealed feedback loop, in its constant shuttling back and forth, creates, despite itself, a degree of self-difference. This is why Rosalind Krauss can write that Broodthaers's "Fig." indicator in *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* "insists on the incomplete or fragmentary status of the word, its resistance to the possibility of the image's ever being fully (self-)present."¹⁰⁴ The book dissolves into a system of references to itself that cannot be unraveled, simplified, or reduced to an anticompositional series.¹⁰⁵ The dilatory effect of the figures "expose[s]," Krauss writes, "as self-delusory the romantic belief in poetry as a form of total immediacy . . . but [it] also [works] to open that immediacy to its real temporal destiny, in which the subject can never become identical with himself."¹⁰⁶ This is especially true of Broodthaers's use of "Fig. 12," which, in his system, points to time; that figure appears on the same page as his postscript and thus links his critical gesture, his location of the book's origin in Goldmann's seminar, to temporalization.

Spreading out the single line of poetry over several pages slows down reading, and the figures similarly interrupt reading by inserting a potentially meaningless system of references into the reader's field of view.¹⁰⁷ The figures thus mirror Baudelaire's text in their insistence on the place of temporality in language, which cannot be the instrument for communication and self-reflection that Beauty and some artists would like it to be.

Supplemental Figures

The appearance of the parenthetical "(Fig.)" above the colophon and the postscript indicates that these final two passages should be considered parts of the book, despite their apparent exclusion.¹⁰⁸ They are not part of Baudelaire's text, and they do not seem to belong to the main scheme of repetition and mirroring. In the colophon, there appears the customary information about the edition:

The present edition consists of: thirteen signed copies, which make up the original edition, on handmade Roemerturm Alt Xanten paper, of which ten copies are numbered I to X and three are hors commerce and numbered A to C; three hundred copies, which

make up the first edition; and twenty-five copies, labeled S.P., which are reserved for the press.¹⁰⁹

And on the right-hand side, the postscript, which was partially quoted above, reads as follows:

This book has its origin in Lucien Goldmann's seminar on Baudelaire, held in Brussels in the winter of 1969–1970, in which I was invited to participate as an *artist*.

MARCEL BROODTHAERS¹¹⁰

Broodthaers has prepared his reader for this confrontation of two texts facing off across the gutter. The entire book is made up of conflicting, varying pairs: there are two versions of Baudelaire's poem, labeled "(Fig. 1)" and "(Fig. 2)"; there are six double pages on which a double series of figures mirror each other; and here on the final page spread, there are two texts: one concerned with authenticity, the establishment of "l'édition originale," and the signature of the author; and another concerned with the origin of the book and the identity of the "artiste," followed with the signature-like capitalized name of the artist. Elements of these two paratexts reflect each other: origin/original, author/artist, and thematized signature/printed name.

And there is mirroring of an even more significant nature. On the verso, the book inserts itself, by means of an impersonal passive voice, into the marketplace of luxury goods that is the art market. This passive voice could even be said to be the voice of reification itself, as impersonal and dematerialized as Baudelaire's beauty. Such a colophon is usually understood to be serious, no matter how irreverent the rest of the book is. On the recto, Broodthaers situates the book's origin in a seminar on reification and the role of the modern writer as critic of aesthetic ideology and nineteenth-century capitalism. The voice here, marked as Broodthaers's, is the voice of the critique of reification. There would be many other ways to formulate the opposition of these two pages: art as process of reification vs. art as negation and critique; or reification vs. Goldmann, who, next to Lukács, was one of the mid-twentieth century's best-known theorists of reification.

These tensions are exacerbated when considered in terms of the conflicts within the history of typography. The colophon and postscript

are in Helvetica, which is, like other sans serif typefaces, for Jan Tschichold and other representatives of the “new typography,” “absolutely and always better” than other typefaces.¹¹¹ The final page spread stages a confrontation of Helvetica with typefaces that typographic history presented as its opposites: as the influential graphic designer Otl Aicher put it, “The enemy [of new typography] was historicism, classicism, the typography of such as Garamond, Bodoni, Didot, or Caslon.”¹¹² There are typographic tensions between these parerga and the instances of “Fig.” on the same page, set in English; and between the final page spread and the rest of the book, set in English and Garamond.

Broodthaers labels the colophon as “(Fig. 0)” and the postscript’s statement of origin as “(Fig. 12),” the lowest and highest numbers in the book, the alpha and omega of figures.¹¹³ On the final page spread that stretches out the line “Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes,” “(Fig. 0)” and “(Fig. 12)” mirror each other. This labeling may make the tension between the two final texts function in the way Broodthaers wanted all his objects to function. Just like the objects he displays at the Cologne fair, *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* may seem to be a “contemptible commodity.” But the sentence about the origin of the work indicates that Broodthaers has the same hope here that he has for his works at the Cologne fair: “I hope that, by their structure or by the words that surround them, they contain a warning that indicates: ‘I am here, but it’s not my fault.’ I hope it’s not me who says that, I hope it’s the object itself that indicates that.”¹¹⁴ This book is guilty, because it is a work of art whose status as a luxury good is protected and guaranteed by the colophon; and innocent, because it contains a moment of negation, “an authentic form of putting art into question, along with its circulation.”¹¹⁵

Once these paratexts have been brought into focus as texts, it becomes clear that they are no mere appendixes, no mere price tags and markers of authenticity, but a way for Broodthaers to focus on the aesthetic of administration (edition numbering, artist’s signature, postscript . . .) while also distancing himself from it, as well as a way to present the conflict between reification and resistance.¹¹⁶

Broodthaers’s *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* seems to effect the same kind of Duchampian depersonalization embraced by conceptual art: it is a book completely purged of the artist’s personality and presence, without a signature (except for the thirteen signed and numbered

copies), and with the artist’s name mentioned only in the postscript. The book is even a quotation of a poem that, at first glance, seems to be about poets sacrificing themselves, selflessly, to beauty. But this surrender is ironized in Baudelaire, which suggests that Broodthaers, too, might be ironizing depersonalization in other ways.

Broodthaers’s name appears only in the postscript, and there he says he was invited to participate in Goldmann’s seminar “as an *artist*” (“comme *artiste*”). These are Broodthaers’s italics, and in a book that often seems to be about typefaces, these italicized letters draw attention to themselves and function like quotation marks. This literalizes Michael Oppitz’s suggestion that Broodthaers is an artist “in quotation marks.”¹¹⁷ The italics ironize the word “*artiste*,” and they seem to indicate that “*artiste*” is a quotation, perhaps from the actual invitation that would have denied Broodthaers any other function than that allowed him by his alienated occupation: can he not intervene as a writer, as a critic and thinker, perhaps even as a human being?

The italicized “*artiste*” would be legible as ironic even if Broodthaers had not bristled, in another context, at an interviewer’s question about his “role as an artist in the contemporary social situation”: “the concepts of the artist and of the analyst are not necessarily contradictory. That’s why, in today’s social situation, I certainly don’t limit myself to playing the role of the artist. You are wrong in your assumption that I completely identify with this role.”¹¹⁸ The italics in the postscript say as much. They serve as an explicit indication of the irony that infuses the entire work: Baudelaire’s irony but also Broodthaers’s irony, which intensifies and doubles Baudelaire’s.¹¹⁹

Broodthaers writes elsewhere of his search for a “new alphabet for a new history lesson that would still have to be learned by the world.” But this search is often ironically deflated, as in this remark: “I see new horizons approaching me and the hope of another alphabet (see catalogue).”¹²⁰ For Buchloh, Broodthaers’s objects are at once melancholic and utopian: melancholic because “they radically deny any material and formal anticipation and solutions that the visual-plastic discourse traditionally seems to suggest”; and utopian because even as they “negate the contemporary ideological life of objects,” they are “at the same time . . . reminiscent of their past material potential,” the “last residues” of which were, according to Buchloh, emptied out by conceptual art.¹²¹

In a repetition of the methods and tenets of a dematerialized, desubjectivized art, both those of the Parnassians and those of certain 1960s and 1970s artists, Broodthaers points to the possibility of a different conception of art, one that is material and conceptual, depersonalized and yet not alienated, one in which he would not just be an *artiste*. He does this with an artist's book rigorously pared of any visible intervention of a human hand and free of any image, except the images made by the typeface. He uses the methods of conceptual art (serialization, depersonalization, textualization) to historicize claims made by some conceptual artists and to undermine their pretensions to escape commodification and overcome art; and to show that declarations of the "end of art" and immaterial beauty are established strategies in the "fine arts," with an especially strong nineteenth-century tradition.¹²²

How does this reading of Broodthaers's book fit into the reading of quotation sketched out in the previous chapters? Quotation played a key role in conceptual art's use of language, from Mel Bochner's essay-works on photography and Dan Flavin to Carl Andre's manipulation of quoted material in his poems. But there is something fundamentally different about quoting a literary text in toto, and especially a lyric poem. Broodthaers doesn't embrace banal language, and doesn't try to overcome the boundary between everyday language and the lyric; his use of the English typeface accentuates this boundary, even as it ironizes it. Quoting a literary text is also a way of mocking the pretensions of conceptual art to a nonliterary, nonartistic language. It also shows that, as Douglas Crimp writes, "the dilemma of contemporary art in the late sixties—as it attempted to . . . become engaged in the political struggles of its time—had its origin in the nineteenth century."¹²³ Crimp is writing about the *Section XLIX^{ème} Siècle* of Broodthaers's museum, and the Baudelaire book may be understood as a continuation of that museum department's project of historicizing the present, of showing how the claims of conceptual art to purity and reduction had already been made in the nineteenth century. Baudelaire already criticizes the fantasy of creating a purely ideal work of art—of, for example, Kosuth's project of "just presenting the *idea* of water."¹²⁴

Broodthaers quotes to revivify the ironic and critical aspects of Baudelaire's poem. Quotation allows him to retreat from the role of author as expressive subject, even as he criticizes the necessity of such a withdrawal, and it allows him to assume the role of author as arranger of preexisting texts. He only quotes, with quotation understood as recontextualizing, resetting in type. He thereby shows the rich material possibilities in the seemingly impoverished practice of quoting—as title, in Garamond, in English, in a variant—and the critical possibilities available to the putatively nonexpressive artist. He is not just an artist but also a typesetter who produces the luxury good that is the artist's book, and also an "analyst" and writer.

There is, however, something else here in this luxury item, some other text indicated by the ornamentation in the English typeface, some tension indicated by the hatred of the title and by the referring away by means of the figures. These refer to an outside of the book, to the ironic subject, to a future. Broodthaers isn't offering a new critical commentary or theoretical truth. He lets Baudelaire do that. He lets Baudelaire criticize the reification of language that occurs in conceptual art's watering down of Duchamp, and he lets Baudelaire point to the appurtenance of fantasies of dematerialization to the repertory of time-tested strategies of literary history.

The King of Mussels

In *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes*, as in his other Baudelairean projects and in his Mallarmé appropriations and redactions, Broodthaers quotes poetry and thus takes on the mantle of the poet, if only in one moment of the work. This gives extra credence to his statement that his days as a poet, an engaged poet, remain with him as an artist: "I believe that my exhibitions have depended and still depend on my memory of the era in which I took on the creative situation in its heroic and solitary form."¹²⁵ Poetry's heroic, immodest, and solitary isolation comes from its attempts to counter the instrumentalization of language, its reduction to a tool for communication and expression.¹²⁶ Broodthaers's poetry is ironic, enigmatic, whimsical, and often deceptively simple, and it addresses many of the questions that continue to interest him as an artist.

This continuity is especially apparent in the case of Broodthaers's use of mussels as material in his visual work and his poetry. This is the entire text of the poem "The Mussel" ("La Moule") from Broodthaers's poetry collection *Pense-Bête*:

The clever thing has escaped society's mold [le moule].
It's cast itself in its own.
Others, its doubles, share the anti-sea with it.
It's perfect.¹²⁷

The poem relies on the double meaning of "moule" in French: with a feminine article, it means "mussel"; and with a masculine article, it means "mold," as in a sculptor's mold. This play surfaces in the first line, where it is the starting point for insisting on the mussel's possession of its own mold and thus its ability to guard its independence and difference. It uses its own mold to differentiate itself from its surroundings; the shell is its method of distinction (or her "anti-sea," her method of opposing the sea and gaining form) that allows it to "perfect" itself in its distinction.¹²⁸

It may be perfect, but it is also *roublarde* ("clever" or *rusé*). So its perfection may be of a more slippery nature: not the perfection of an individualized form, but a cunning perfection that is exemplified in the undecidability of the word "moule." "Moule" can always be given an article and thus be assigned one meaning, but it always also refers beyond this containment to its other meaning. In the 1966 text "Théorème," Broodthaers writes that "a mussel [une moule] conceals a mold [un moule] and vice versa."¹²⁹ And the plural—"les moules"—allows for no distinction (unless an accompanying adjective betrays the gender) because it could refer to many mussels, many molds, or a mixture of mussels and molds. The mussels, plural, in Broodthaers's works could always also be sculptural molds, and his mussels are almost always plural mussels.¹³⁰ These works and their titles speak in forked tongues: they seem to say one thing but might be saying something else.¹³¹

Broodthaers declares in the 1966 text "Ma rhétorique" that he is "King of the Mussels," and if he is taken at his word (but why should he be, given the insistence on duplicity in his use of the word "moule" and in almost all of his works, writings, and interviews?), then all his works, even his most polished and apparently elegant works, were made



PLATE 1. Page from Guy Debord and Asger Jorn, *Mémoires* (1959). 24 x 21 cm. Courtesy of Alice Debord.

CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes

Edition Hossmann Hamburg
1973

PLATE 4. Cover of Marcel Broodthaers, *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* (1973). 32 x 24 cm. Copyright The Estate of Marcel Broodthaers / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SABAM, Brussels.

(Fig. 1)

LA BEAUTÉ

Je suis belle, ô mortels! comme un rêve de pierre,
Et mon sein, où chacun s'est meurtri tour à tour,
Est fait pour inspirer au poète un amour
Éternel et muet ainsi que la matière.

Je trône dans l'azur comme un sphinx incompris;
J'unis un cœur de neige à la blancheur des cygnes;
Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes,
Et jamais je ne pleure et jamais je ne ris.

Les poètes, devant mes grandes attitudes,
Que j'ai l'air d'emprunter aux plus fiers monuments,
Consumeront leurs jours en d'austères études;

Car j'ai, pour fasciner ces dociles amants,
De purs miroirs qui font toutes choses plus belles:
Mes yeux, mes larges yeux aux clartés éternelles!

PLATE 5. Page from Marcel Broodthaers, *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* (1973). 32 x 24 cm. Copyright The Estate of Marcel Broodthaers / Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York / SABAM, Brussels.



PLATE 12. Glenn Ligon, *We're Black and Strong (I)* (1996). Silkscreen on unstretched canvas. 120 x 84 inches. Courtesy Regen Projects, Los Angeles. Copyright Glenn Ligon.

under the sign of the mussel, a deflating sign if there ever was one.¹³² In a 1965 text, Broodthaers also discusses *moules* together with the sculptures, the *moulages*, of George Segal, Broodthaers's "point de départ" as an artist.¹³³

A more appealing and grandiloquent appellation for Broodthaers would rely on the rhetorical term that describes the duplicity of the word "moule": antanaclasis, the repetition of "the same word . . . in a different, if not in a contrary signification; as *In thy youth learn some craft, that in thy old age thou mayest get thy living without craft*."¹³⁴ Antanaclasis might be the figure that best names Broodthaers's rhetoric; it emphasizes how every word is different from itself, and it is thus an apt term for what many critics have identified as foundational principles of Broodthaers's works.¹³⁵ "Broodthaers's visual language follows a strategy that might easily be misapprehended and which is probably assumed by its author to induce such misunderstanding," Buchloh writes.¹³⁶ In Broodthaers's works, Buchloh writes, "no sign seems to have the same meaning twice."¹³⁷

When Broodthaers calls himself King of the Mussels, he also lays claim to the title of the King of Antanaclasis. This appellation, taken as seriously or as ironically as the tone of Broodthaers's works allows, makes possible the following radicalization of Buchloh's statement: because every sign in Broodthaers is always potentially different from itself, no sign, in Broodthaers's works, has the same meaning even once. A mussel is always also a mold, and vice versa. A sign in Broodthaers never serves to communicate one meaning, so it seems to embody a promising multiplicity. It is like the *Miroir d'Époque Regency* that Broodthaers displayed in his 1974 retrospective exhibition in Brussels, which Broodthaers calls the mirror of "misunderstanding [contresens]."¹³⁸

But Broodthaers empties out this promise's multiplicity. Haidu points out how Broodthaers treads the line between excessive dissemination and deadening mute materiality, as he relies on materials that have been emptied out and become nothing more than "frames, molds, and voids" from which nothing is to be expected: no meaning, no message, no transcendent experience.¹³⁹ His mussels may be figures for the undermining of instrumentalized language, but they may also fail at this task and, in this failure, turn to mere ciphers. They may be examples of antanaclasis, but this rhetorical term is just a Greek name for a pun.¹⁴⁰ The pun is as impoverished as mussels, coal, and eggshells. In his attempt

to outwit the instrumentalization of language, Broodthaers may render himself mute by relying on base materials and rhetoric.

Or he may, according to Haidu, wind up reducing himself to little more than a provincial artist working with regional materials: mussels are a "touristic cliché," and coal is associated with Wallonian mines. "One sometimes feels," Haidu writes, "standing before a *Panneau de moules* or a *Panneau de charbon*, that these works use their own literalness—the refusal of those shells to transmute form—to consign their author to saying only one thing: 'Belgian.'"¹⁴¹ For Haidu, Broodthaers's use of poor, stereotypically Belgian materials indicates the risk that he may be little more than a product of his national identity. It's worth quoting here again a passage from Haidu partially cited in the beginning of this chapter: "His materials in the mid-1960s do not start but *end* chains of signification. . . . It is as if Broodthaers were using the most impoverished, debased sign system he could find . . . to countenance the avant-garde ideal of an evacuation of languages, both plastic and written."¹⁴² Broodthaers's *moules* thus embody a promise of multiplicity and difference, and they simultaneously signify the dead end of art, which may be nothing other than reification itself. They are at once overdetermined and reduced to a zero point.¹⁴³

There is a way beyond this impasse: reading Broodthaers's art as essentially incomplete.¹⁴⁴ The best image for this is the "Fig." reference in Broodthaers, which makes everything a figure for everything else in a system that may, in the end, refer to nothing but itself as a hollow vessel for value. By means of the "Fig.," Broodthaers insists, "objects . . . submitted to an identical numbering system . . . become interchangeable elements on the stage of a theater. Their destiny is ruined."¹⁴⁵ After he makes these claims about his use of figures, he discusses his "hope that [because of the figures] the viewer runs the risk—for a moment at least—of no longer feeling at ease."¹⁴⁶ In French, this unease appears as a disturbance of the viewer's identity: the risk of "ne plus se trouver si bien dans le sien."¹⁴⁷

This figural unease complements quotation's antanaclastic effect. Just as figures point to something else, antanaclasis emphasizes words' openness to dissemination, and quotation disturbs the expressive, intentional relation to language. The possibility that every word could be a quotation and could be quoted and thus transformed makes every word potentially

antanaclastic. This might seem to be merely another way of pointing out the irony that many critics associate with Broodthaers, but it allows for the focus to be on the word or sign and avoids an interpretation of irony in which the artist maintains mastery over an ironic work whose real meaning he knows.

Baudelaire, Broodthaers, History

Could Broodthaers's quotations be understood as another form of Situationist *détournement*? *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* might seem to be a *détournement* in the Situationist sense. Just as Debord would demand, Broodthaers's book "restores all the subversive qualities to past critical judgments that have congealed into respectable truths."¹⁴⁸ This sentence from *The Society of the Spectacle* could be read as an interpretation of Broodthaers's artist's books and his *Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles*. Broodthaers returns to the subversive qualities of Duchamp and Baudelaire to criticize their epigones. The postface to *Je hais* . . . also distances Broodthaers from the status of mere *artiste* and thus seems to participate in Debord's notion of culture as "no longer separated from the critique of social totality," but instead as the "locus of the search for a lost unity," a search that, Debord claims, requires "culture as a separate sphere . . . to negate itself" and create "a praxis embodying both an unmediated activity and a language commensurate with it."¹⁴⁹

Despite these apparent similarities, there are key differences that separate Broodthaers and Debord. For Debord, art must overcome its isolation from everyday life and become part of a revolutionary political praxis.¹⁵⁰ For Broodthaers, art's isolation is its sole resource, the only thing that allows it to retain its capacity for critique, and, for Broodthaers, the dissolution of the distance between art and society had already taken place, not as the culmination of a revolutionary practice, but as the spectacularization of the art market. The abandonment of art's autonomy advocated by Debord, the surrender of its compromised but still present potential for critique would be a form of acquiescence to this spectacularization. *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* emphasizes that it belongs to what Debord calls, pejoratively, "culture as a separate sphere."¹⁵¹ It is resolutely an artist's book; it fulfills Johanna Drucker's

definition of the medium: "an artist's book should be a work by an artist self-conscious about book form, rather than merely a highly artistic book."¹⁵² Broodthaers fulfills this definition by his labeling of the book as a whole as "Fig A"; by working with the paratextual status of the colophon and postscript; and, as Haidu writes, by treating the page as an aesthetic unit and not just a space to be filled with a flowing text indifferent to pagination.¹⁵³ Printed in a limited edition, relying on ornamental typefaces, inscribing itself in the continuity of nineteenth-century literature, it also approaches the status of a *livre d'artiste*, the putative other of the artist's book in Drucker's account, in its rendition of a Baudelaire poem. The use of classic literary texts was a staple of the *livre d'artiste* business, which, as a former book dealer, Broodthaers knew well.¹⁵⁴

Broodthaers remains on this boundary separating *livre d'artiste* and artist's book, luxury item and critique of the art market, because he believes that artists have no choice: they always supply the market with luxury wares, no matter how grungy, improvised, or critical a work may be. By adopting aspects of the *livre d'artiste* and by making explicit the commodity character of the artist's book, Broodthaers makes *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* a travesty of an artist's book. Broodthaers uses the style of the *livre d'artiste* to deliver a critique of art's spectacularization, a critique that could only be carried out by returning to one of the origins of modern art and literature—*Les fleurs du mal*—that has served as a source for many critical treatments of modernity.

In many of Broodthaers's works, it is Baudelaire who appears as the marker of this historical and critical aspect of language. Broodthaers refers often to Baudelaire's "Au lecteur," the opening poem of *Les fleurs du mal*, whose explicit ("—Hypocrite lecteur,—mon semblable,—mon frère!") posits a fraternity, based on hypocrisy, between reader and author. Broodthaers's last book of poetry, *Pense-bête*, ends with an invocation of "Au lecteur," and his 1975 text "To be *bien pensant* . . . or not to be. To be blind" concludes his reflections on art as reification with these Baudelairean words that function both as an invitation to fraternal readers and a warning about the poems' hermeticism: "All of this is quite obscure. The reader is invited to enter into this darkness to decipher a theory or to experience feelings of fraternity, those feelings that unite all men, and particularly the blind."¹⁵⁵ Instead of clear messages, Broodthaers

offers insincerity; instead of the friendship of reader and collector with writer and artist, he offers a hypocritical fraternal bond based on obscurity and blindness.

Broodthaers's return to Baudelaire corresponds to Foucault's description of modernity not as a revolutionary project aiming to "liberate man to his own being" but as the task of inventing oneself.¹⁵⁶ Foucault reads Baudelaire as a critic of the "will to know" (which aims to reveal subjectivity's secret) and an example of "the care of the self" (ascetic self-creation) and pays special attention to Baudelaire's pages on the dandy, who, for Foucault, "takes himself as object of a complex and difficult elaboration."¹⁵⁷ *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* bears signs of the dandy's disciplined elegance, perhaps most strikingly in the serial arrangement of figures, but also in the icy figure of beauty, whose critique is similarly cold in its ironic, nonexpressive distance. Even if this discipline is ironized by Baudelaire and Broodthaers, it structures the work and makes it rigorously artificial.¹⁵⁸ Baudelaire's praise of the artificial finds a response in the typefaces and artful copying of Broodthaers's book and in Broodthaers's critique of expression.

Broodthaers sees Baudelaire not as the bearer of a hope in a future language free from alienation, but as the source of minor, localized critical interventions, as one of the "very specific transformations" that Foucault envisages in "What is Enlightenment?" supplanting "all projects that claim to be global or radical."¹⁵⁹ Foucault laments the restriction of aesthetic creation to artworks and calls for life itself to be treated as an object of aesthetic creation, but it seems unlikely that Broodthaers would have followed this call.¹⁶⁰

In his very different account of modernity, Lukács writes that, for the proletariat, history is not the process of unveiling but "the unbroken alternation of ossification, contradiction, and movement."¹⁶¹ Broodthaers stages this alternation in *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes*. He quotes a poem about immobility in a book that seems like an ossified commodity but that also seems to criticize the commodification of language. The "I" that hates movement is subjected to quotation, "cited" into motion, in the sense that Compagnon emphasizes.¹⁶² In Broodthaers's works, quotation ossifies and mobilizes. History is not reserved for the proletariat but available, in modest, specific ways, to the artist,

who draws on the past to intervene in contemporary debates, who inserts his work into literary and visual traditions. This is why he ends his book with "Fig. 12," which throughout his work is associated with time. The book's negation and critique are historical, working to undo stasis and to point to a movement beyond lines, beyond a reified conception of time as linear progression.

3. Marcel Broodthaers, an Artist in Quotation Marks

1. See Rachel Haidu, *The Absence of Work: Marcel Broodthaers, 1964–1976* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2009), 142–61.

2. Broodthaers, “Ten Thousand Francs Reward,” trans. Paul Schmidt, *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 45; Marcel Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, ed. Anna Hakkens (Ghent: Ludion/Flammarion, 1998), 118. On Broodthaers’s use of the term “engagement” in another context, see Birgit Pelzer, “Fictions dans la fiction,” in *Marcel Broodthaers: La collection des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* (Ghent: Snoeck, 2010), 98. See also the commentary on this passage in Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 160–61.

3. See Benjamin Buchloh, “Formalism and Historicity: Changing Concepts in American and European Art since 1945,” in *Europe in the Seventies: Aspects of Recent Art* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1977), 97.

4. For an account of Broodthaers’s involvement in this milieu, see Jacques Van Lennep, “De Magritte à Broodthaers: Le surréalisme en Belgique quarante ans plus tard,” *Bulletin des Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* 1–3 (1981–84): 205–44. Belgian surrealism would have introduced Broodthaers to the idea of publishing quotational books; Marcel Mariën discusses several quotational works by Belgian Surrealists in *L’activité surréaliste en Belgique 1924–1930* (Brussels: Lebeer Hossmann, 1979), 18, 20, and 64.

5. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 44–45.

6. Ibid., 95. The frontispiece of the catalog announces it as an “experimentelle Ausstellung”; see Marcel Broodthaers and Jürgen Harten, eds., *Der Adler vom Oligozän bis heute* (Düsseldorf: Kulturamt der Stadt Düsseldorf, 1972).

7. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 91.

8. Ibid., 45.

9. Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 23–24.

10. See Rainer Borgemeister, *Marcel Broodthaers: Lesen und Sehen* (Bonn: Weidle, 2003), 240–44; Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 232; and Catherine David, ed., *Marcel Broodthaers* (Paris: Jeu de Paume, 1991), 235.

11. See his poem “The Parrot,” which simply parrots a poem on the verso of the same page spread. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 48.

12. Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 232.

13. Brief descriptions of the completed book projects can be found in Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers: Katalog der Editionen, Graphik und Bücher* (Ostfildern-Ruit: Cantz, 1996). He also made quotational artist's books using texts from La Fontaine and Max Ernst, and he began a project to republish Foucault's slim volume on Magritte under his own name. The Foucault project is documented in Broodthaers and Rainer Borgemeister, *Ceci est une pipe = this is a pipe = dies ist eine Pfeife* (Brussels: Merz, 2001). His version of Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés* was part of his 1969 *Exposition littéraire autour de Mallarmé*, which included quotations by Mallarmé painted on canvases, written with chalk on pieces of clothing, and played on tape. See David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 138–45; and Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 63–105. Anny De Decker reports that Broodthaers also planned to write out the poem on the gallery floor but then abandoned this plan; see Anny De Decker in David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 141. For a reading of Broodthaers's version of *Un coup de dés*, see Jacques Rancière, *L'espace des mots: De Mallarmé à Broodthaers* (Nantes: Musée des Beaux-Arts de Nantes, 2005). Broodthaers's 1970 exhibition at MTL in Brussels also included works in which he quotes Mallarmé; see David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 146–55; and Anne Rorimer, "The Exhibition at the MTL Gallery in Brussels, March 13–April 10, 1970," *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 101–25.

14. On these Baudelaire projects, see Petra Metz, *Aneignung und Relektüre: Text-Bild-Metamorphosen im Werk von Marcel Broodthaers* (Munich: Schreiber, 2007), 138–58; on *Pauvre Belgique*, see Broodthaers, *Katalog der Editionen*, 74–75, and Yves Gevaert, "Pauvre Belgique: 'An Asterisk in History,'" trans. John Shepley, *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 182–95. Other works related to Baudelaire are mentioned in Gevaert, "Pauvre Belgique," 189.

15. Baudelaire, *Les fleurs du mal*, trans. Richard Howard (Boston: Godine, 1982), 24–25 and 202.

16. Paul Allen Miller points out that this is the "sole example of unattributed prosopopeia in the whole of Baudelaire's corpus" and that "its invocation of the lyric 'I' forces the reader to do a double take in order to determine who is speaking." Paul Allen Miller, "Beauty, Tragedy, and the Grotesque: A Dialogical Esthetics in Three Sonnets by Baudelaire," *French Forum* 18, no. 3 (September 1993): 329.

17. On Beauty as "the embodiment of stasis, calcification, and pallor," see Anne Jamison, "Any Where Out of This Verse: Baudelaire's Prose Poetics and the Aesthetics of Transgression," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 29, no. 3–4 (2001): 268.

18. Francis S. Heck, "'La Beauté': Enigma of Irony," *Nineteenth-Century French Studies* 10, no. 1–2 (1981): 85. Paul Allen Miller credits Heck with the

development of the ironic reading of "Beauty" in Miller, "Beauty, Tragedy, and the Grotesque," 328.

19. See Jamison, "Any Where Out of This Verse," 269. The similes remain jarring even if, as Judith Ryan argues, this is the voice of the Greek courtesan Phryne; see Judith Ryan, "More Seductive than Phryne: Baudelaire, Gérôme, Rilke, and the Problem of Autonomous Art," *PMLA* 108, no. 5 (1993): 1133–34.

20. On the abuse of parallel passages in interpretation, see Peter Szondi, *On Textual Understanding and Other Essays*, trans. Harvey Mendelsohn (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 18.

21. Andrea Moorhead, "Thanatos and Carnal Knowledge in Baudelaire's 'La Beauté,'" *Esprit créateur* 13 (1973): 127, quoted in Heck, "'La Beauté': Enigma of Irony," 90.

22. This movement may have appealed to Broodthaers, who writes of the goal of his "Section de Figures" as "déloger [the eagle] du ciel imaginaire où il vole depuis des siècles et nous menace de foudre." Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 89.

23. *Litttré*, s.v. "déplacer."

24. Heck, "'La Beauté,'" 93. Baudelaire's prose poem "The Fool and the Venus" also seems like a parody of the Parnassian poets; see Baudelarie, *The Parisian Prowler*, 11.

25. Heck, "'La Beauté,'" 90.

26. Jamison, "Any Where Out of this Verse," 279.

27. "Austerity" is a term often used to describe minimalism and conceptual art; see Lucy Lippard, *Six Years: The Dematerialization of the Art Object from 1966 to 1972* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), xvi; Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 91; and Daniel Buren, "Ian Wilson, un artiste non figuratif," *Revue des sciences humaines* 273 (2004): 85. And self-reflexivity is also a key trait of conceptual art: see Germano Celant, *book as artwork 1960/1972* (New York: 6 Decades Books, 2010), 28.

28. Baudelaire's acrostic is discussed in Stamos Metzidakis, "Baudelaire: Sculptor of Words," *Romanic Review* 89, no. 2 (March 1998): 207–18. In the "mirror-like re-presentation of the pronoun 'je,' the quatrains express the poem's themes once again," Metzidakis writes. For a reading of Broodthaers's use of acrostic in the lines "O tristesse / Viol d'oiseaux / O Melancholie," see Borgemeister, *Marcel Broodthaers: Lesen und Sehen*, 61. On Broodthaers, Baudelaire, and narcissism, see Borgemeister, "La signature, l'artiste," in *Marcel Broodthaers: L'œuvre graphique, essais* (Geneva: Centre genevois de gravure contemporaine, 1991), 47–52. Broodthaers's "Ma rhétorique" is his own version of a stuttering poem with a repeated "je"; see Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 48.

29. For example, Benjamin Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," *Artforum* 28, no. 9 (May 1980): 53; Buchloh, "Formalism and Historicity," 98; and Sven Lütticken, "Visionäres Branding," *Texte zur Kunst* 58 (2005): 186.

30. Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony, with Continual Reference to Socrates*, trans. Howard V. Hong and Edna Hong (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1989), 213.

31. "[I]rony is the beginning, and yet no more than the beginning; it is and it is not, and its polemic is a beginning that is just as much an ending, for the destruction of the earlier development is just as much the ending of this as it is the beginning of the new development, since the destruction is possible only because the new principle is already present as possibility." Kierkegaard, *ibid.*, 214.

32. *Ibid.*, 279 and 431. Irony could be another way of reading Broodthaers's reduction of the use value of the eagle to zero. For a similar reading of Broodthaers's *Un coup de dés*, see Riccardo Boglione, "Dadi illegibili: Il Mallarmé cancellato di Mario Diacono e Marcel Broodthaers," *Forum italicum* 44, no. 2 (2010): 376.

33. "Irony is the very incitement of subjectivity, and in Socrates irony is truly a world-historical passion." Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, 211. See also *ibid.*, 253 and 264. On irony and history, see Henri Lefebvre, *Introduction to Modernity: Twelve Preludes September 1959–May 1961*, trans. John Moore (New York: Verso, 1995), 7–48. For a related discussion of irony and history in postwar art, see Rosalind Krauss, "Jasper Johns: The Functions of Irony," *October* 2 (Summer 1976): 91–99.

34. Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, 198. For a discussion of the hyphen and history, see Kevin Newmark, *Irony on Occasion: From Schlegel and Kierkegaard to Derrida and de Man* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 11–12.

35. Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Irony*, 328. See also *ibid.*, 154, where Kierkegaard writes of the individual constantly being thrown back, in the search for an idea, into actuality; and then wanting to exceed actuality.

36. *Ibid.*, 262.

37. *Ibid.*, 247.

38. Sylviane Agacinski, *Aparté: Conceptions and Deaths of Søren Kierkegaard*, trans. Kevin Newmark (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1988), 70.

39. Newmark highlights the relations among repetition, irony, and history, and he shows how irony's interruptions are even more disturbing for often being unverifiable. Newmark, *Irony on Occasion*, 11.

40. Paul de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, ed. Andrzej Warminski (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 181.

41. *Ibid.*, 180–81.

42. See Broodthaers's parodically solipsistic poem "Ma rhétorique" in *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 48. See also the commentary on his repetition of "je" in his *Téléphone* (1969) in Benjamin Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry: Essays on European and American Art from 1955 to 1975* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 100–102.

43. See Jacques Derrida, *Voice and Phenomenon: Introduction to the Problem of the Sign in Husserl's Phenomenology*, trans. Leonard Lawlor (Evanston, Ill.: Northwestern University Press, 2010), 102–4.

44. Buchloh remarks on a similar tension in Broodthaers's *Industrial Poems* in Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry*, 72.

45. Lucien Goldmann, seminar notes, quoted in Agnès Krutwig Caers, "La vision du monde dans les *Petits Poèmes en prose* de Charles Baudelaire," *Revue de l'institut de sociologie* (1973): 635.

46. *Ibid.*

47. Petra Metz quotes this remark by Broodthaers's widow, Maria Gilissen, in *Aneignung und Relektüre*, 139n6. See Broodthaers's similar remarks about ideology as quoted in an interview from 1972, quoted in David, ed., *Marcel Broodthaers*, 214.

48. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 117; Birgit Pelzer, "Recourse to the Letter," *October* 42 (1987): 168. In an interview, Broodthaers presents his participation in Goldmann's seminars as "working with" Goldmann; see Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 131. He mentions this collaboration in the context of a discussion of two other critics whom he admires: Lukács and Benjamin.

49. Marcel Broodthaers, "To be *bien pensant* . . . or not to be. To be blind," trans. Paul Schmidt, *October* 42 (1987): 35.

50. *Ibid.*, 35.

51. Broodthaers, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," 42.

52. For Broodthaers, Buchloh writes, "There is not a single model of artistic production or an exceptional social space where art is not immediately subjected to the instrumentalized forms of the production of sign exchange value." Benjamin Buchloh, "Contemplating Publicity: Marcel Broodthaers's Section Publicité," in *Section Publicité du Musée d'Art Moderne, Département des Aigles, Marcel Broodthaers*, ed. Maria Gilissen and Benjamin Buchloh (New York: Marian Goodman Gallery 1995), 97. Jacques Rancière reads a similar critique in Broodthaers's version of Mallarmé's *Un coup de dés*; see Rancière, *L'espace des mots*, 35–36. See also Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 125; Broodthaers, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," 45; Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 55, 58; and Rosalind Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea*, 15. Broodthaers's rejection of all these roles belongs to his critique of the "becoming institutional

of the avant-garde." See Hal Foster, *Return of the Real: The Avant-Garde at the End of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), 1–34.

53. Broodthaers, "A Few Commonplaces," in *Behind the Facts: Interfunktionen 1968–1975*, ed. Gloria Moure (Barcelona: Polígrafa, 2004), 196. Broodthaers does not aspire to the role of artist-critic-theorist-politician; one of his most acerbic texts is directed at the aspiration of Joseph Beuys to such a role. See Wilfried Dickhoff, "Magie. Art et Politique: Zur Jetztzeit eines Buches von Marcel Broodthaers aus dem Jahr 1973," *Parkett* 80 (2007): 15–20; Stefan Germer, "Haacke, Broodthaers, Beuys," *October* 45 (Summer 1988): 63–75; and Pelzer, "Recourse to the Letter," 174–77. Broodthaers's critique of Beuys appeared in the German newspaper *Rheinische Post* in 1972 and was republished in Broodthaers's *Magie. Art et Politique* (Paris: Multiplicata, 1973). Buchloh argues for an understanding of a "broader dialogue" with Beuys that includes Broodthaers's *Museum of Modern Art, Section of Eagles* in Benjamin Buchloh and Michael Oppitz, "Marcel Broodthaers trente ans plus tard: Une conversation," in *L'action restreinte: L'art moderne selon Mallarmé*, ed. Jean-François Chevrier (Nantes: Musée des beaux-arts, 2006), 91.

54. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 128.

55. *Ibid.*, 129.

56. *Ibid.*, 74.

57. *Ibid.*, 91, 78, 125.

58. Broodthaers, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," 48.

59. *Ibid.*, 42.

60. This is Rachel Haidu's translation in Haidu, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 1. See also David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 56–57.

61. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 92. On Broodthaers's use of "fiction," see Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea," 46–53.

62. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 75 and 78. See also David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 154.

63. See also Broodthaers's works *Le Catalogue et la Signature* (1968); *La signature série 1* (1969); and *Miroir (La Signature de l'Artiste)* (1971), in David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 19, 133, and 163.

64. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 78.

65. David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 172.

66. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 77.

67. *Ibid.*, 78.

68. For Broodthaers, "critical negation . . . has to assume the status of the object-discourse into which it inscribes itself." Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 55–56.

69. Broodthaers, "A Few Commonplaces," 196.

70. Or at the very least it makes a joke of language's pretensions to transparency and significance. This blinding was part of his work even as a poet. See Broodthaers, "Ars poetica," trans. Paul Schmidt, *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 16.

71. Quoted in David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 217.

72. Benjamin Buchloh, Rosalind Krauss, Alexander Alberro, Thierry de Duve, Martha Buskirk, and Yve-Alain Bois, "Conceptual Art and the Legacy of Marcel Duchamp," *October* 70 (Autumn 1994): 134. See also Krauss's summary account of conceptual art in Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea," 10–11.

73. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 92.

74. Kosuth to Lippard, 13 May 1968, quoted in Alexander Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2003), 39. On Kosuth and Broodthaers, see Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea," 10–20.

75. The documentation for this conversation appears in *Conceptual Art in the Netherlands and Belgium 1965–1975*, ed. Suzanna Héman, Jurrie Poot, and Hripsimé Visser (Amsterdam: NAI Publishers, 2002), 182; further information about this particular conversation can be found in Chantal Kleinmeulman, ed., *Ian Wilson: The Discussions* (Eindhoven: Van Abbemuseum, 2008), 57.

76. Héman, Poot, and Visser, *Conceptual Art in the Netherlands and Belgium*, 182.

77. Ian Wilson, "Conceptual Art," *Artforum* 22, no. 6 (February 1984): 60.

78. *Ibid.*, 60. Anne Rorimer echoes Wilson's claims for achieving this conceptual extreme: "It might be said that Wilson's work most truly fits the 'conceptual' label insofar as it specifically aims to represent the ineffable reality belonging only to the province of the mind." Anne Rorimer, "Ian Wilson—The Object of Thought," in Kleinmeulman, *Ian Wilson*, 5–6.

79. Wilson, "Conceptual Art," 60.

80. And it corresponds to Rosalind Krauss's account of conceptual art's desire to "escape the commodity form in which paintings and sculptures inevitably participated as they were forced to compete in a market for art that increasingly looked like any other." Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea," 10–11.

81. Benjamin Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962–1969: From the Aesthetics of Administration to the Critique of Institutions," *October* 55 (Winter 1990): 143.

82. Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 56.

83. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962–1969," 143.

84. Daniel Buren, "Ian Wilson, un artiste non figuratif," *Revue des sciences humaines* 273 (2004): 86.

85. *Ibid.*, 85.

86. Lippard, *Six Years*, 263.

87. Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 3. On this transformation of capitalism, see Maurizio Lazzarato, *Lavoro immateriale: Forme di*

vita e produzione di soggettività (Verona: ombre corte, 1997), and Maurizio Lazzarato, "Immaterial Labor," trans. Paul Colilli and Ed Emory, in *Radical Thought in Italy: A Potential Politics*, ed. Michael Hardt and Paolo Virno (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 133–47.

88. Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 4.

89. Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962–1969," 143.

90. Wilson, "Conceptual Art," 61.

91. Broodthaers, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," 43.

92. Buren, "Ian Wilson, un artiste non figuratif," 84.

93. Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 26–53.

94. All these examples are taken from Héman, Poot, and Visser, *Conceptual Art in the Netherlands and Belgium*. Broodthaers also made handwritten works (often of his signature) and typewritten works (his "Open Letters"). On the open letters, see Benjamin Buchloh, "Marcel Broodthaers: Open Letters, Industrial Poems," in Buchloh, *Neo-Avantgarde and Culture Industry*, 85–111. On the importance of typewriting in the work of John Cage, see Liz Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At: Language in 1960s Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2007), 72. On the "Everyman-style simplicity" of Beuys's typewritten *Lebenslauf* *Werklauf*, see Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 55.

95. For conceptual artists' aspirations to reduce language, see Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 174.

96. For example, in *On Social Grease* (1975), Haacke "photoengraved magnesium plaques with quotations from business leaders and museum officials extolling the connections between business and the arts." See Julia Bryan-Wilson, *Art Workers: Radical Practice in the Vietnam War Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2009), 187–89.

97. Huebler, quoted in Alberro, *Conceptual Art and the Politics of Publicity*, 72.

98. Ibid.

99. On Broodthaers's "extremely developed sense of the meaning of typography," see Buchloh, "Marcel Broodthaers: Open Letters, Industrial Poems," 93–94; and Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 58. On Broodthaers's artist's book *Un jardin d'hiver*, which contains over twenty pages of font schemes, see Yves Gevaert and Émile Van Balberghe, "Un jardin d'hiver: Un 'bibelot d'inanité sonore,'" in *Marcel Broodthaers: L'œuvre graphique, essais*, 81–94. Calligraphy and calligraphic typefaces occur throughout Broodthaers's works, from his first gallery exhibition on, which included *Pour un Haut Devenir du Comportement Artistique* (1964), an assemblage of partial eggshells and a wooden plaque with the title (which Dieter Schwarz translates as "For a glorious future of artistic behavior") written in elaborate calligraphy, attached with plaster to a

piece of wood. See Dieter Schwarz, "'Look! Books in Plaster!': On the First Phase of the Work of Marcel Broodthaers," *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 64–65.

100. Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 146. The vulnerability of this kind of indexical writing is the result of what Rosalind Krauss, in her "Notes on the Index," identifies as artists' "sense of isolation from the workings of . . . convention"; their vulnerability would be countered by a "delicate short-circuiting of issues of style," which is supplanted by the presence of the hand's direct imprint, in handwriting, or indirect force, in typewriting. Rosalind Krauss, *Originality of the Avant-Garde and Other Modernist Myths* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1986), 208.

101. On the origin of this numeration system in Magritte, see Borgemeister, *Marcel Broodthaers: Lesen und Sehen*, 159n58. For other readings of Broodthaers's use of "Fig.," see Krauss, "The Angel of History," *October* 134 (Fall 2010): 111–21. On Broodthaers's "figures" as signs of the "homogenizing principle of commodification" and "a parody of curatorial practice," see Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea*, 15 and 33. On Broodthaers's figures as emphasizing the difference between text and image, see Jacques Rancière, *L'espace des mots*, 25–26.

102. Mel Bochner, *Solar Systems and Rest Rooms: Writings and Interviews, 1965–2007* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2008), 42.

103. The figures may highlight "le caractère résolument plastique de son œuvre," as Frederik Leen argues, but only as part of a tension with the resolutely textual character of Broodthaers's works. See Frederik Leen, "'Sans mots': Un coup de dés jamais n'abolira le hasard," in *Marcel Broodthaers: La collection des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 16.

104. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea*, 51.

105. If Donald Judd's statement about "one thing after another" is, as Krauss writes, "a way to escape from setting up relations," then for Broodthaers the use of numbers and figures in *Je hais le mouvement qui déplace les lignes* is a way of insisting on the impossibility of not setting up relations even if these relations are inscrutable. See Rosalind Krauss, *Passages in Modern Sculpture* (New York: Viking Press, 1977), 244.

106. Krauss, *A Voyage on the North Sea*, 47.

107. This interruption of reading can be compared to other acts of impeding reading in Broodthaers: in his last book of poetry, *Pense-bête*, he covers up parts of the poetry with colored pieces of paper and then, in his inaugural exhibition, he encases the unsold volumes in plaster; and in his 1967 film *Le corbeau et le renard*, the camera pans across text that is difficult to read because it is blocked by objects; because the camera pans left to right over two lines of text simultaneously and thus makes it hard to focus on one line at a time; because the camera also pans right to left, against engrained reading habits; because the text is too small or out of focus; because the camera never zooms out enough

to show the entire text; and because there is often simply too much to read at once.

108. Broodthaers often included parerga in his works, especially in his museum, in which packing crates, a moving van, letterhead, postcards, wall text, and labels all become part of the work (or are the entire work) and cease being mere accessories. On Broodthaers's "intentional and ironic blurring [of] the line between work and publicity," between "primary" and "secondary information," see Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, xix–xx. An apt example of this is his *La signature série 1*; see David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 19.

109. "Il a été tiré du présent ouvrage: treize exemplaires sur Roemerturm Alt Xanten à la cuve dont dix exemplaires numérotés de I à X et trois hors commerce numérotés de A à C, signés par l'auteur et constituant authentiquement l'édition originale; trois cents exemplaires formant la première édition et vingt-cinq exemplaires marqués S.P., réservés à la presse."

110. "Ce livre trouve son origine dans un séminaire de Lucien Goldmann sur Baudelaire, tenu à Bruxelles l'hiver 1969–1970, auquel j'avais été invité à participer comme *artiste*." (The italics are in the original.)

111. Jan Tschichold, "The Principles of the New Typography," in *Texts on Type*, ed. Steven Heller and Philip B. Meggs (New York: Allworth Press, 2001), 115–28.

112. Otl Aicher, "Typographical Warfare," in Heller and Meggs, *Texts on Type*, 157.

113. The colophon is "(Fig. 0)," a significant appellation in Broodthaers's works. Here, there is no return to Mallarmé or the eagle as the "zero degree" or "origin of contemporary art"; that honor goes here to the voice of reification. On the importance of the "Fig. 0" in Broodthaers's works, see Buchloh, "Contemplating Publicity," 94.

114. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 78.

115. Ibid., 118.

116. In the interview that Broodthaers pastes into his appropriation of Dumas's *Vingt ans après*, he claims that he writes books so that he can write dedications in them and examine the relation "art/commodity" ("Pourquoi viens-tu d'écrire un livre?—Pour faire des dédicaces et établir ce rapport art/marchandise. Il y a en effet une écriture spéciale pour soulever certains problèmes"). Pelzer discusses this passage in her "Recourse to the Letter," 167–68. And he says that his open letters communicate, more than anything else, the name of the museum on their letterhead: "un peu le contraire d'un moyen de communication, elles communiquent plutôt le nom du musée." Interview with Ludo Beckers, 1969, quoted in David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 199.

117. See Buchloh and Oppitz, "Marcel Broodthaers trente ans plus tard," 105.

118. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 99–100. Broodthaers casts himself as "an artist" ("ein Künstler") in his 1976 film *Berlin oder ein Traum mit Sabine*; see Bruce Jenkins, "Un peu tard: Citation in the Cinema of Marcel Broodthaers," in *Marcel Broodthaers: Cinema*, ed. Manuel J. Borja-Villel (Barcelona: Fundació Antoni Tàpies, 1997), 292. Broodthaers also recognizes that he can't simply pretend that he has overcome the role of the artist; see Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 67.

119. On the notion of a work "permeated" with irony, see de Man, *Aesthetic Ideology*, 177.

120. Broodthaers, quoted in Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 58.

121. Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 55–56; Buchloh, "Conceptual Art 1962–1969," 142.

122. I am referring here to his cover of the journal *Studio International*: for a commentary on that work, see Krauss, "A Voyage on the North Sea," 9–10.

123. Douglas Crimp, *On the Museum's Ruins* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1995), 212.

124. Joseph Kosuth, quoted in Kotz, *Words to Be Looked At*, 186.

125. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 118. On the "persistence" of Broodthaers's concerns as a poet in his art, see Deborah Schultz, *Marcel Broodthaers: Strategy and Dialogue* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007), 57.

126. On the noninstrumentalized conception of language in Broodthaers, see Birgit Pelzer, "Fictions dans la fiction," in *Marcel Broodthaers: La collection des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 95.

127. Broodthaers, "The Mussel," trans. Michael Compton, *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 27 (translation modified). The reading here is indebted to Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 11–12.

128. In the same collection, Broodthaers calls the jellyfish "perfect" because it has no "mold": "pas de moule." Haidu interprets the autonomous mussel as an allegory of autonomous art; see Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 11. This reading resonates with Judith Ryan's reading of Baudelaire's "Beauty" in Ryan, "More Seductive than Phryne: Baudelaire, Gérôme, Rilke, and the Problem of Autonomous Art." On the mussel's shell as resistance, see Carter Ratcliff, "The Mold, the Mussel, and Marcel Broodthaers," *Art in America* 71, no. 3 (1983): 137.

129. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 48; Broodthaers, "Ma rhétorique," in *Moules Œufs Frites Pots Charbon* (Antwerp: Wide White Space, 1966), n.p. The catalog was reprinted for Broodthaers's 1974 exhibition *Ne dites pas que je ne l'ai pas dit*; see David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 234.

130. For example, the works in his 1966 exhibition titled *Moules Œufs Frites Pots Charbon: Grand casserole de moules, Cercle de moules, Pyramide de moules, and Étal de moules* (all 1966). In the catalog for that exhibition, Broodthaers includes

four texts, three of which address the word "moule." In his 1966 *L'erreur*, included in another exhibition, the painted word "moules" is scrawled across the top half of a canvas, where it seems to be a false appellation (an "error") for the fifty-four eggshells glued to the bottom half; this error is related to the error of reading a word as a name for a thing.

131. See Borgemeister, *Marcel Broodthaers: Lesen und Sehen*, 241.

132. See Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 48. On Broodthaers's adoption of this name, see Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 55.

133. See Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 40.

134. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "antanaclasis."

135. Another example of explicit and prominent antanaclasis in Broodthaers's poetry occurs in his 1957 collection titled *Mon livre d'ogre* in an untitled poem that I cite here in its entirety: "Les crapauds se dévorent / au cœur des diamants." The word "crapaud" means both a "toad" and an "impurity" in a diamond, so the poem can either be translated as "the impurities devour each other / at the heart of the diamonds" or "the toads devour themselves / at the heart of the diamonds." Broodthaers, *Mon livre d'ogre: Suite de récits poétiques* (Ostende: l'Arquebuse du silence, 1957), 26. Another explicit example of antanaclasis can be found in Broodthaers's poem "L'index" in *Pense-bête*.

136. Buchloh, "Formalism and Historicity," 98.

137. Buchloh, "Allegories of the Avant-Garde," 56.

138. Broodthaers, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," 47. Broodthaers's comments on *Miroir d'Époque Regency* (1973) can be found in David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 236. On Lacanian misrecognition in Broodthaers, see Pelzer, "Recourse to the Letter," 164–65.

139. Haidu presents Broodthaers's mussel works as "stultifying rejoinders to those heroic exploitations of the canvas" that had recently emerged from American painting—Rothko and Pollock—and as low-grade responses to the "deskilled and incongruously empty use" by his European contemporaries (such as Piero Manzoni) of poor materials. Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 13. See also Dirk Snauwaert, "The Figures," *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 126.

140. Wolfram Groddeck calls the pun the "proletarian cousin" of paronomasia in his *Reden über Rhetorik: Zu einer Stilistik des Lesens* (Basel: Stroemfeld, 1995), 139. These materials' fragility mirrors the pun's vulnerable status as a weak form of rhetoric. Cathleen Chaffee remarks on the "fragility" and "vulnerability" of Broodthaers's works made using organic materials in her "Chez Broodthaers: considérations domestiques," in *Marcel Broodthaers: La collection des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique*, 78.

141. Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 19.

142. *Ibid.*, 23–24.

143. This is Rainer Borgemeister's verdict on the objects in Broodthaers's fictional museum; see Borgemeister, "Section des Figures: The Eagle from the Oligocene to the Present," 151.

144. On incompleteness in Broodthaers, see Pelzer, "Recourse to the Letter," 179.

145. Broodthaers, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," 43. Dirk Snauwaert makes a strong case for Broodthaers's use of figures as a critique of Minimalism; and as a reference to binary code; see his "The Figures," 126–34.

146. Broodthaers, "Ten Thousand Francs Reward," 43.

147. Broodthaers, *Marcel Broodthaers par lui-même*, 115.

148. Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, §206 (translation modified).

149. *Ibid.*, §§211, 180, and 187.

150. *Ibid.*, §180, and Jappe, *Guy Debord*, 71–72.

151. Debord, *The Society of the Spectacle*, §180.

152. Johanna Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books* (New York: Granary Books, 2004), 21.

153. Haidu, *The Absence of Work*, 99.

154. See Drucker, *The Century of Artists' Books*, 4; and David, *Marcel Broodthaers*, 34.

155. Broodthaers, "To be *bien pensant* . . . or not to be. To be blind," trans. Paul Schmidt, *October* 42 (Autumn 1987): 35.

156. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, 109.

157. *Ibid.*, 108.

158. See Broodthaers's Baudelairean praise of the ephemeral and artificial in Broodthaers, "Comme du beurre dans un sandwich," *Phantomas* 51–61 (December 1965): 295.

159. Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?," in Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, 114.

160. See Foucault, "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress," in Dreyfus and Rabinow, *Michel Foucault*, 236.

161. Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, 199.

162. Compagnon, *La seconde main*, 44–45.

4. The Aesthetics of Administration

1. Heimrad Bäcker, *transcript*, trans. Patrick Greaney and Vincent Kling (Normal, Ill.: Dalkey Archive Press, 2010), originally published as Heimrad Bäcker, *nachschrift* (Linz: edition neue texte, 1986), and in a corrected edition as Bäcker, *nachschrift* (Graz: Droschl, 1993). Hereafter, page numbers will be