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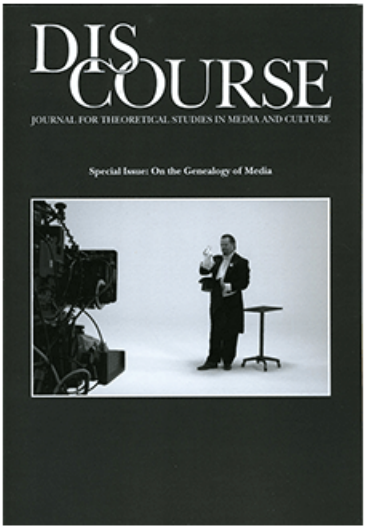
On the Genealogy of Media



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Introduction

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"On the Genealogy of Media" invokes a tradition for thinking about technology, which passes from Nietzsche through Heidegger and Freud. As a collection on media, however, these texts gathered together in this special issue include few Nietzsche readings—or even Nietzsche references—in their thread count. Indeed, Nietzsche is not typically considered a thinker of media technologies. But his genealogical interpretation of the Mass media as being on one uncanny continuum of valuation from Christianity to nihilism influenced, together with either Freud's or Heidegger's input, the media essays of Walter Benjamin as much as the media oeuvre of Friedrich Kittler. Following Nietzsche, then, a *genealogy* of media means, as in Heidegger's questioning of technicity, that whatever technology may be it presupposes assumption of a certain (discursive) ready positioning for (and before) its advent as actual machines to which the understanding of technologization cannot be reduced. Freudian psychoanalysis views media technologies as prosthetically modeled after body parts and partings. A primary relationship to loss (as the always-new frontier of mourning where reality, the future, the other begin or begin again) is, on Freud's turf and terms, the psychic ready position that is there before the event or advent of machinic externalities.

In "A Mathematics of Finitude" Friedrich Kittler generates genealogies of "progress" in science, mathematics, and media spanning centuries out of a single story by E. T. A. Hoffmann. Media machines are shown to intervene as makeshift stopgaps where the

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ability to produce certain material effects is not yet theorized or understood. In Hoffmann's "Jesuit Church in G." a painter performs the heroic feat first of constructing perspective under technically difficult conditions. The semiround altar niche the painter has been commissioned to simulate cannot be caught in the right angles and lines of Renaissance perspective. The painter proceeds and succeeds by ignoring analytic geometry. He improvises with a technical medium where he would otherwise have required trigonometry and higher math. The painter sets up a torch with which he projects the shadow of the square grid onto his semicircular canvas on which he can fill in the dotted outline in perspective.

But when the narrator, who turns out to be a Romantic author, encourages the painter to serve a higher genre than architectural painting, which merely illustrates mathematics, the painter proposes in response a divine division of labor: God requires man for math just as man, even though himself machinelike, still requires the machine; man's purpose, moreover, is to be better at math than God or Satan. Against the reign of the subject's introduction into literature, which the narrator author champions, the painter replaces God, man, and animal with the trinity of God, man, and machine—and thus in effect introduces literature into the industrial age. But following the introduction of a working model, understanding nevertheless arrives after the fact, creating shifts in the discourse of mathematics and new gaps for media machines to fill. In Kittler's reading, the story skips the direct line from linear perspective to the machines of Hoffmann's age and goes directly to the computer. God, Devil, and man, all of the above, have by now been surpassed by the machine's mathematical *overskill*.

In *Book of Kings,* Klaus Theweleit charted the devastating effects of technology and group psychology on gender relationships. The woman must go, so that Orpheus, the artist-thinker, can renew his vows with his productivity over her dead body. Through the cabling system that thus gets laid, he keeps in teletouch with all the ghostly coordinates of his unstoppable line of production. *Book of Kings* also differentiated the sound bytes that cultural critics tend to broadcast on the basis of Benjamin's directive that fascism folds out of the "aestheticization of politics." Theweleit introduced instead the notion of "artist states" running parallel to the political states with which they must negotiate their own diplomatic status and immunity. Theweleit interrogated the psychosocial formations in artist states as models for the new native habitats of relations with new technologies. The prospect of future generations coming soon is not the immortality plan of choice for the artist. In states of art,

productivity, energy flow, and merger with the machine take over where reproduction, couplification, and mourning were already left undone because outmoded.

In "Radio Nights," originally a section of *Book of Kings,* Theweleit interprets instances of catastrophe and concomitant installation of a new technical medium (together with its media czar). In the case of Juan Péron's rise to power, for example, Péron first rose to the occasion of catastrophe (a 1944 earthquake in San Juan, Argentina) by turning up the newest media technology (radio at that time in Argentina) full blast. Catastrophe, to be sure, creates momentary displacements. But when mediatization meets match and maker in catastrophe, the consequential relationship is turned around or internalized as one of preparedness. Péron succeeded at sustaining his emergency power surge via the mass medium of readiness by allying himself with the radio star Evita, whose continued existence, live or as corpse, stood surety for Péron's absolute rule.

In "Sublimation as Media," Craig Saper attends to the liminality of a concept that already as word lies disjunctively between noun and verb. In Freud's reading of the figure of Prometheus, the bequest of fire becomes technology's eternal flame only once the homosexual impulse to match the flames with streams of urine can be renounced. Thus, as Saper emphasizes, sublimation, as the midstream renunciation of the urge to piss on the fire, is about the by-production of smoke just as it would appear that in its sustained liminality as concept it produces its own smoke or clouds. Over and beyond its association with artistic activity, its duo dynamic and race with repression, sublimation is one of the stray leads media technology takes in Freud's science. But its disjunctive situation between celebration and mourning means that sublimation is mediated by the fragments, details, and digressions it would contain as concept. Like smoke and mirrors, these sublimation effects undermine the conceptualization of sublimation—as, for example, the common high ground for understanding creativity—with imitation, excess, trickery. In Saper's reading, sublimation is not only one of the placeholders for a psychoanalytic theory of media but also becomes the discursive hot spot where psychoanalysis and media have already met and crossed over.

While Saper takes Victor Tausk's reading of the delusional cinematograph in the case study of Natalija A. on an update not as hypnotic suggestion but as interactive influence, Gregory Ulmer in "Walden Choragraphy" balances the rise of new media with a commemorative inclusion of literacy. To mourn *Walden* means to remake it as its electronic version. Thoreau belonged to the

correspondence school of macrocosm and microcosm: anything and everything in and around Walden Pond could be turned into a device for exploring a value, a belief, a question. Ulmer's approach, derived thus from the inter-net of associations and questions that Thoreau could already cast out while remaining on location between his pond and the train line, opens up a relay of references to and through a wider world of free association. In Saper as in Ulmer the googly I of consumer eclecticism contains itself as computeracy.

Ulmer gives an account of a prosthetics of the unconscious that returns with computing to restore to thinking the spirit of place or locale. Ulmer's "choragraphy" refers to the sense of place Derrida derived from Plato's *Timaeus*—one that would admit being and becoming at once. What would also thus be admitted, and here lies Ulmer's investment, is a coming together of theory and practice. While the pages of literacy were formatted according to topos, computing's monitor screen, interface, virtual reality mechanisms press for a place of their own in chora. The electronic link, which goes from particular directly to particular rather than via the general, means that thinking no longer books passage through the various -ductions that the writing of passage established throughout the history of literacy. Affect and sensation rush back in from the edge of their page-old exclusion once the local thinking of a particular body finds support in front of the computer screen.

All media technologies of the day were engaged in the impossibility of Proust's memory search, which is at the same time the form of its possibility. In "Impressions: Proust, Photography, Trauma," Rebecca Comay reads the prints of hand and photograph in *Remembrance of Things Past* as twisting in the winding sheets of loss. Following Benjamin, Comay sees photography offer against the advertisement of the camera's supersavings for and through memory the counterevidence of shocks that extend all the way through life, even into the afterlife of mourning.

When the narrator visits his grandmother, he sees or foresees her reduction to a ghostly version of herself and, at the same time, his own absence. This self-omission in the face of the other's departure coming soon meets the uncanniness of photography more than halfway. The narrator's role is that of a photographer summoned to take pictures of places no one will ever see again. Indeed, the process of proleptic mourning whereby he counted himself out, as seen on the visit with his grandmother, was, the narrator concludes, already a photograph. When the narrator revisits this photographic scene in the absence of his grandmother, who,

in the interim, is gone, the death wish does not so much fulfill as exceed itself. While undressing for the night, he finds he has taken his grandmother's place: in this place it was she who would get him ready for bed. The narrator stumbles across a retraumatizing relay of substitutions right at the most intimate moment of self-proximity. The moment in passing cannot be internalized in memory. Instead the self finds itself an empty apparatus, wherein loss keeps getting lost.

By following out Philip K. Dick's famous android test through a relay of texts in which the mediatic reception in psychosis as in our relationship to the animal is, as rehearsal or repetition, put to this test, "Half Life" rereads Freud's notion of reality testing as the very work of mourning to which, in theory, he assigns it as auxiliary support. In the course of mourning, the ego revisits all the scenes in which the relationship to the object was happening. But even as the ego reality-checks out the scenes as blank, the relationship to the lost object is at the same time extended. In time the decision, which at the start of mourning is so pressing, whether to join the departed or turn away and affirm one's own survival, need no longer be made. Reality testing opens the frontier of "loss reality." Both parties to the loss can be conceived, along the lines of Dick's science fictions, as each losing and remembering the other, as each lost to the other, whose memory each keeps and is.

In the closing three contributions we are presented close readings of the genealogy of media in Nietzsche—as the background for his highest thoughts, as the context for his declaration of future wars of transvaluation, and as the call he took for revalorization of "technology" in the opening up of its testing sites. In "On the Future of Our Incorporations," Barbara Stiegler discovers in Nietzsche the diagnosis of all the ill effects coming our way when media influence understood and applied as extension cord of the nervous system undermines spontaneity, empathy, and digestion. In lieu of the existing metabolism of adaptation, Nietzsche called for incorporation of flux. Flesh slows down the flux, which accumulates and organizes itself in the flesh. Only thus can the surging of events become possible. Media require a certain slowness that only the incorporation of the flux in flesh—in the mode of Eternal Recurrence—can provide. Hence the importance of music for Nietzsche: it is the slow-mo medium through which we first learn to love the things we love. But is this recasting call of media as new organs of incorporation descriptive or prescriptive? The catastrophe of Wagner in Nietzsche's thought makes this undecidable as issue or delegation.

In "Zarathustran Bird Wars," Tom Cohen takes the reading of Nietzsche's genealogy of media to the movies, also because that's where Wagner's total work of art went when it died as opera. For a post-global era Cohen conceives a countergenealogy that challenges the notion of media as lying between. He turns to Hitchcock, for whom the film medium was on one continuum with buzz and nuclear bombs. But these bombs are not split off from their destructiveness and projected into the dread future: they've already exploded and the era we've lent them lies in pieces, which are in turn destructive or toxic. As the *n*th strike in retaliation against a prior dose of annihilation, Cohen dedicates his essay to the bird war effort pitching prehistorical technemes and animemes against the auratic community of earth-eviscerating humans.

In "Nietzsche Loves You," Avital Ronell catches "the test drive," her postulation of the plain test of modern philosophical and/or scientific inquiry, in acts of love between endurance and low-fidelity improvisation. Love is how we test ourselves: in turn, it is the excess or "narcissism" of love itself that drives the experimental disposition beyond its assumed goals. Since it is not clear that something is known until there is a test for it, it proves to be the nature of testing to be ongoing indefinitely. But when Nietzsche recognizes the heady interminability of testing as incarnated in the "American," identified as the one who believes that he can play any role, he heads himself off at the impasse between being on location with experimentation and the dire exile of improv nightmare. We are left, then, with ambivalence as the personal trace arising when the test site, proving uncontainable, makes ethical demands.

A Mathematics of Finitude: On E. T. A. Hoffmann's "Jesuit Church in G."

Friedrich A. Kittler
Translated by Laurence A. Rickels

For Horst Bredekamp

I

German Romanticism—we know this since the time of German Romanticism itself—converted literature into subjectivity. This description collapses into tautology once the study of literature no longer serves as handmaiden to the philosophy of the subject. When the concept and practice of a writing subject or a subjective writing fail to offer explanation but rather require explanation, literary scholarship gets assigned the contrary task of deriving subjectivity as such from historically well-defined media technologies. The position occupied by the Romantic subject as narrator or as artist was first made possible by the history of appearance or apparition. We can find this demonstrated in a brief narrative by E. T. A. Hoffmann, which was too precise media-technically (and thus mathematically, too) to receive special attention by the interpreters.

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Among Hoffmann's *Night Pieces,* as they appeared in 1816 and 1817 in Berlin, not one does greater justice to the book's title than "The Jesuit Church in G." The story tells of a painter named Berthold and his heroic deed: the construction—at midnight, of course—of a linear perspective under technically difficult conditions. The first-person narrator, who has been detained in the Lower Silesian town G. (alias Glogau) by a mail-coach accident, gives this account:

> It must have been midnight when the sky grew clear and the thunder rumbled from a distance. The mild air, impregnated with pleasing smells, wafted through the opened windows into the gloomy room. I couldn't withstand the temptation, even as tired as I indeed was, to go for a stroll; I succeeded in waking the sullen house servant, who probably had already been snoring away for two hours, and instructed him that it was not madness to go for a walk at midnight. Soon I was on the street. As I was passing the Jesuit church I noticed the blinding light that beamed through one window. The side portal was unlocked. I entered and saw that a wax torch was burning before a niche located high above it. Closer up I noticed that a net of threads was suspended in front of the niche; behind the net a dark figure hurried up and down the ladder and appeared to be drawing something inside the niche. It was Berthold, who was carefully outlining with black paint the shadow cast by the net. Next to the ladder the drawing of an altar stood on a tall scaffold. I was amazed at the ingenious notion. If you, fortunate reader, are somewhat familiar with the noble art of painting, then you will know right away, without further explanation, what the significance of the net casting shadow lines is, and why Berthold was drawing them inside the niche. Berthold was supposed to paint an altar that appeared to project out of the niche. In order to transfer with accuracy the small drawing to the large one he had to cover both the sketch and the surface on which the sketch was to be executed with a net in accordance with the conventional technique. But it was not a flat surface, rather it was a semiround niche, onto which he was to paint; the correspondence between the squares that the curved lines of the net cast inside the niche and the straight lines of the original sketch and the correction of the architectonic relations that were supposed to be represented as projecting outward could only be accomplished by this simple brilliant method.[1]

At the center of the story stands a technical problem of painting that could be posed only under the media-historically constitutive conditions of European modernity. To say that linear perspective, as that which distinguishes this culture from all others, is the subjection of all that appears optically to the perspective of an empirically placed subject would still be underdetermined. It is rather the endeavor—beginning with Filippo Brunelleschi—to capture the three dimensions of buildings in the two dimensions of painting to such an extent that the virtuality of a subject or point of view

first emerges in the play between space and surface, orthogonality and trigonometry. Around 1520 Brunelleschi (according to the testimony of his biographer Antonio Manetti) painted a (now lost) small-format panel picture that showed the Florentine Baptistry (for which he designed the bronze doors) from the perspective of the middle door of Santa Maria del Fiore (a church that would be graced by a dome of his design).[2] Brunelleschi's painting thus brought about the first transfer of architecture into linear perspective. That is why there was a small conic hole in the middle of the canvas so that all viewers of the picture, inasmuch as they stood at the same place in the doorway of Santa Maria del Fiore, held the back of the picture directly before the eye, and made recourse to a mirror, could make the comparison between the actual and painted architecture. In other words, every subject—and that means every subject or vassal of linear perspective—could convince himself of the accuracy of the depiction because the hole in the painting had already preprogrammed the empty place of his own eye.

This empty place or hole is, according to a thesis advanced by Jacques Lacan, the holy or sacred. Egyptian pyramids or temples of antiquity erected masses of stone only in order to enclose an empty space that in turn enclosed the absence of the corpse or of the gods. Such architectonic celebrations of emptiness were not, however, as Lacan emphasizes with irony, exactly "economical."[3] Thousands of stones or dozens of columns built up a mass representing its opposite. It was for no other reason that European painting—to replace "the holy emptiness of architecture"[4] with a more cost-effective alternative—developed linear perspective, which builds up all that is visible around the zeros of eye and vanishing point[5] and indeed virtually exhibits its central hole in Brunelleschi's panel painting.

This transfer of the sacred from buildings to paintings, from spaces to surfaces, as Lacan does not neglect to note, had its impact in turn on the buildings themselves. There arose "an architecture that subjected itself to the perspective of painting."[6] This became evident at the latest when the Jesuit pater Andrea Pozzo adorned the church of the founder of his order, Saint Ignazio in Rome, with a painted ceiling that Jacob Burckhardt could not avoid celebrating or excoriating as the "playground of all lack of conscience."[7] For this painting not only extended the actual church architecture into the illusionary heights of the heavens but also subjected all its columns and saints, cornices, and clouds to a monstrously distorted linear perspective that depended even more on the elliptical curve of the vaulted dome than on the subaltern earthly perspective of

the churchgoers. As Gauß demonstrated in 1827, curves belong to an "inner geometry" of surfaces, which "can be developed without relation to the surrounding space"[8] and which made possible, via Bernhard Riemer and then the theory of relativity, the physics of a noninfinite universe.

Hoffmann's painter is working precisely at the media-technical level of Pozzo. Andrea Pozzo had not only provided with his painted ceiling of Saint Ignazio the greatest practical model for a linear perspective mediated no longer by the flat surface of orthogonal panel paintings but rather by the curve of architectonic vaults, niches, or blind windows; he had also provided rigorous theoretical instruction in his 1693 treatise *De perspectiva pictorum atque architectorum*. The geometric construction technique of laying a net of orthogonal and equidistant lines between the model and the pictorial surface of perspectival paintings goes back, however, to Renaissance treatises like Albrecht Dürer's *Instruction in Measurement with Ruler and Compass* [1525] and continues, without coming close to ending, in the wire frames of computer graphics. But since both model and pictorial surface remained on the same plane as the grid or net, the calculation did not extend beyond linear transformations. Pozzo's treatise on perspective was the first to ascribe to quadratic frames or "nets" the revolutionary function of serving as points of support for a nonlinear interpolation, to put it in modern terms, that mediates between surface and curve in the same way as the aforementioned computer-graphics applies it under the title of Morphing.

It is no accident, then, that the painter's first disoriented monologue—the narrator catches him in the act during the day—should commence with the words "What bother—crooked confused stuff—not to use a ruler" (415). A "surface" (*Fläche*) that, at least in everyday German, is "no flat surface at all, but rather a semicircular niche" defies the right-angle and linear constructions on which the architecture and painting of the Renaissance remained dependent. With Dürer's ruler, this straight edge without units of measurement, Euclidean geometry as a whole, to the extent that it tied the appearance of mathematics to compass and ruler, meets its limits. Hoffmann's story, however—far from transgressing this boundary—sets up a monument to it in the formulation itself:

> The correspondence [*Gleichung*] between the squares that the curved lines of the net cast in the niche and the straight lines of the sketch and the correction of the architectonic relations that were supposed to be represented as projecting outward could only be accomplished by this simple brilliant method. (415)

Contrary to its sound shape, *Gleichung*, "correspondence" or "equation," designates not any algebraic or transcendent equation, one that functions to approximate mathematically height, width, length, but rather a geometric or optically controllable "equation" or similarity between two pictures: the flat altar drawing and its semicylindrical projection. In other words, Berthold's "simple brilliant method" for solving the problem of an affine depiction consists in the avoidance of all modern—and that means analytic—geometry. Otherwise he would have had to convert the Cartesian coordinates of his altar model and net into the cylinder coordinates of the architectonic cavity; in other words, pursue trigonometry in particular and higher mathematics in general.

In 1816, while Hoffmann was writing "Jesuit Church in G.," an engineer and lieutenant in Napoleon's Grand Army sat in the Saratov prison on the Volga. Jean-Victor Poncelet, polytechnical student of Bonaparte's friend Gaspard Monge, ended up a prisoner of war during the Russian campaign "robbed of all books and comforts," but "above all" "devastated by the misfortune that had befallen his country and him" (*Treatise on the Projective Properties of Figures*).[9] He therefore conceived a geometry that, because it had to forgo ruler and compass, was that much more general. In principle, this projective—that is to say, perspectival—geometry concerned all possible images that cast all possible figures onto all possible surfaces; for simplicity's sake, Poncelet, too, adhered, first, to flat figures and surfaces and, second, to nonalgebraic proofs.[10] In this way, while Hoffmann's Berthold was conducting his midnight experiments, a modern geometry was just the same founded—one that still finds invariants where before it could only complain of "crooked confused stuff." Under computer conditions nothing is easier than to project baroque altars in linear perspective onto equally baroque surfaces. Every play console by Sega, Sony, or Nintendo calculates so-called environment mappings in fractions of milliseconds.

The precise point at which mathematics takes place (following Monge and Poncelet) is represented or replaced in Hoffmann's story by a media-technical apparatus. "The Jesuit Church in G." is a "night piece" not because Berthold, like so many pathological genius-artist figures of Romanticism, paints through the night, sleeps during the day, and moreover is suspected of having vampirized his wife. What makes the story qualify is an optical projection trick for which the story must guarantee maximum effectiveness. The "blinding light" without which the narrator would never have been drawn into the nave of the church at night emanates from a wax torch that, like a simplified magic lantern, casts the distorted

shadow of a quadratic net onto Berthold's semicylindrical painting surface, thereby enabling him to draw an equally black copy. This torch, then, takes the same place that the hole marked as origin of projection in Brunelleschi's Baptistry picture in order to preprogram media-technically an artificial or virtual eye. When Berthold runs up and down the ladder as a "dark shape" in front of the niche, he is merely carrying out and embodying this program. The painter is in the picture—not like the Far Eastern painter who in all humility could enter his own painting after ten long years of labor, but rather like a robot following media-technical algorithms.

These algorithms, however, simply coincide with linear perspective. Ever since Giambattista della Porta it is possible to produce perspectival projections even without undergoing the handiwork toil of ruler and compass; henceforward it suffices completely—at least until the advent of photography—to draw a copy of the picture projected by a camera obscura. Ever since Thomas Walgenstein and Athanasius Kircher, it is possible to cast perspectival projections, that is, thoughts and mental images of a subject (in the strict sense of Heidegger), onto other subjects: it suffices to insert a painted mental image into a magic lantern that projects its light onto flat or (for a Gothic Romantic setting) curved or vanishing surfaces. Thus the passive camera obscura of the Renaissance and its active baroque counterpart, the laterna magica, first mechanized imagining and then the imagining of imagining. The modern subject is, at least in the optical field, a media effect.

It is hardly gratuitous that a Florentine chronicle celebrated Leone Barrista Alberti, the first theorist of linear perspective, as having developed his invention at the same time as Gutenberg's invention of movable type. Without the camera obscura and magic lantern it would scarcely have been possible to add to Gutenberg's liberation of texts from the individuality of copyists the deliverance of technical drawings from all painterly individuality. This linkup between book printing and science, the script religion of the Reformation and aesthetic-technical reproducibility, can also be turned against their inventors. No Catholic order subverted Luther's *sola scriptura* more successfully than the Jesuits, who with Loyola introduced multisensory hallucination, with Kircher the laterna magica, and with Pozzo the linear perspectival ellipsis of the heavens.

The sacred as trompe l'oeil, the optical majesty of which entices obdurate believers in letters back into the only church that can confer salvation, is of course "of this" and not "of the other world" (414). Everything that Hoffmann's painter Berthold invents, paints, and says, he invents, paints, and says in the name of the Jesuit order

that, beginning in 1796, modernized his Glogau church. Aloysius Walther, "professor in the Jesuit college" (413), explains to a narrator whose Romantic yearning for the Middle Ages much prefers the "spirituality" of Gothic buildings to "Italian" (and thus sensual) Jesuit baroque: "Our homeland is indeed up there; but as long as we dwell here, our empire is also of this world" (414). The narrator dismisses this, albeit only silently, with the sarcastic observation that the Jesuits had "demonstrated through all their activities that their empire was of this world, indeed only of this world" (414).

Dwelling in this world determines all the alterations Berthold introduces into the house of God. What the painter refers to as "building artfully" (418) remains, in the strict sense of mathematical topology, superficial, without holes, and thus uninhabitable. Since "the marble" in Lower Silesia is too expensive, the Jesuits make recourse, "in keeping with the latest fashion," to all sorts of "surrogates." As Professor Walther enlightens or disillusions his visitor, "More often than not the painter produces the different types of marble as is happening right now in our church" (414). Replacement of three-dimensional blocks of stone by two-dimensional marble gloss observes thus the same economy that leads, inside the wall niche, to the simulation of an altar, the centerpiece of all church interior architecture, in two dimensions but in linear perspective. In the Here and Now of the Jesuits, even and especially the Beyond, in strict accordance with Lacan, is subordinate to an economy of cost cutting.

II

All economies, however, are in turn subordinate to mathematics. It is precisely because Berthold's nightly activity comes down to saving by a "simple brilliant method" the cumbersome equation systems of affine depictions that mathematics advances to the center of the story. Hoffmann—who in a letter to Hippel dated 20 July 1796 announced his "eccentric notion" to "help" with the "new" painting of the Glogau "Jesuit church," and later in Bamberg had good financial reasons for testing all the illusionist tricks of theater set painting—knows, as always, of what he speaks. The narrator, who by the end unmasks himself as author, deals in the fiction on a completely professional basis with the trompe l'oeil painter Berthold. Since he is "accustomed to such things from an earlier period in his life," the narrator offers the painter praise that is as professional as it is ambiguous:

> You may indeed be the most accomplished architecture painter there is. But I believe you are qualified for something better than decorating church walls with marble columns. Architecture painting will always remain something subordinate; the history painter, the landscape painter enjoy without question a higher standing. Even the one fantastic element in your painting, the perspective that deceives the senses, depends on careful calculation, and thus the effect is the result not of brilliant conception but only of mathematical speculation. (418)

The Romantic narrator picks up the old European distinctions of history painting, landscape painting, and architecture painting, the same distinctions that are just then imploding in the chronologically coordinated museums of his epoch. He turns to these distinctions once more to attribute to them a ranking that in turn coincides with the hierarchy obtaining between fantasy and calculation, Romanticism and architecture, brilliant conception and mathematical speculation. The subject constituted through linear perspective throws away the very ladder that, beginning with Brunelleschi, first enabled his ascent.

In an unconditional manner that practically quotes Hegel's subordination of mathematics or the quantitative to the concept as subjectivity and quality, the effect celebrates itself as cause. At the precise point where once perspectival peepholes took over and architectonic cavities left off, the "phantom of our own ego"[11] leads the parade as historically new figure of the sacred. And because this subjectivity exists only as narrative perspective—as we will see in considering the second part of Hoffmann's story—the illusion has reached its goal at the end of a long passage through architecture and painting: it becomes, again strictly following Lacan, the play of signifiers named literature (169).[12]

But first it should be underscored that Berthold does not let his narrator's criticism pass without contradiction. According to him, it is not only in general heresy to wish to "arrange the different brands of art according to a hierarchy" but even an as much specific as special presumption of subjects to want to be "creators" like Prometheus and "animate" their "dead figures" (418). The reception strategy of Hoffmann, who in "The Sandman" wants to "articulate with all glowing colors and shadows and lights" "inner images" "like an enterprising painter" (343) and in *The Devil's Elixirs*[13] explicitly equates his narrative technique with the image projection of a camera obscura, encounters a resistance that originates in painting, the art that, for effect, this literature regularly summons as model. Berthold, as though already on the track of Wagner's definition of effect,[14] can demonstrate with linear perspective that it is indeed effect without cause, black box without interior:

> And what would we make of this dry tiresome life if the Lord in heaven had not given us a good number of colorful toys!—Whoever is good does not, like the curious knave, aim to break the box that emits the barrel organ sound when he turns the external crank.—One says it is quite natural that it resounds inside; I am after all turning the screw!—Because I recorded this framework correctly from a fixed point of view, I know for certain that it will appear fully formed to the viewer. . . . Now I finish painting it in the correct coordinated colors[15]—it appears to recede four yards. I know all that for certain; oh! one is surprisingly clever—how is it that objects at a distance grow smaller? The single dumb question of the Chinese gentleman could discomfit even Professor Eytelwein; yet he could help himself out with the barrel organ and answer that he had turned the screw on a number of occasions and always experienced the same effect. . . . The ideal is an insolent lying dream created out of fermenting blood. . . . The Devil fools us with dolls on which he has pasted angel wings. (420)

Berthold's discourse, the "literal" "repetition" of which proves nearly "impossible" for a Romantic narrator (420), traverses or raves deliriously throughout the entire space between God and Devil, angelic toys and satanic automata. But its "cuttingly ironic" (420) theology only delivers the technical proof that the illusional effect of linear perspective on its "viewers" or subjects is as strictly calculable as it is impossible to comprehend.[16] Despite all Hegelian concepts of the concept, not even an engineer like Hoffmann's Berlin colleague Johann Albert Eytelwein is able (in his two-volume *Handbook of Perspective* of 1810) to explain the effect of perspective other than tautologically or illusionally. For the "I" or ego that takes its certainty that it turns the crank to signify that it is the very cause of the thereby reproduced automatic music simply confuses, in the terms of Julius Robert Mayer, cause and release (*Auslöser*). The creator subject outside the black box is therefore illusion, whereas inside the black box, in contrast, there is only the algorithm of illusion.

This algorithm bears, nonetheless, historical traits. That "the single dumb question of the Chinese gentleman could discomfit even Professor Eytelwein" says nothing less than that linear perspective has become possible and effective only under the conditions of modern Europe. It is not gratuitous that the "dumb question" that otherwise only Berthold raises is Chinese. When Catholic missionaries (who, once again, were Jesuit fathers) made the attempt around 1630 to export to China technical scientific books with equally technical—in other words, linear perspectival—illustrations, the reproduction of these treatises (and thus the modernization of an empire) regularly foundered on the linear perspective: in the absence of ruler and compass, the Chinese calligraphers and

painters, to whom the Jesuit fathers entrusted the copying by hand of all the reproduced mills, cranes, magic lanterns, etc., fell short of the precision necessary for the translation of technical illustrations into new mills, cranes, or lanterns.[17] Fortunately for Ming emperors, Tokugawa shoguns, and the arts, there were no "subjects" in the Far East in 1630. In "Chinese pictures," which Hoffmann elsewhere described as "without harmony and without perspective,"[18] lines in two dimensions simply did not "recede four yards."[19]

It necessarily follows from this that linear perspective cannot be derived from the singularity of a foundational subject nor from the generality of the human species. It is at once deterministic and contingent, mechanical and without basis. That is why perspective just the same eludes the grasp of theology or philosophy (in spite of the admirable start Schelling made in regard to ellipsis in his *Philosophy of Art*).[20] Only in mathematics can regularity and contingency, the unequivocal and the singular, coexist. With a turn that knocks out two centuries of Western mathematical philosophy, Berthold explains to his narrator:

> How glorious is the rule!—the lines join together for a specific purpose, for a specific explicitly conceived effect. Only the measured is purely human; what goes beyond that is evil. The superhuman must be God or Devil; have not both been surpassed by man in mathematics? Is it not conceivable that God created us for the express purpose of furnishing his household with whatever can be represented according to measured recognizable rules, in short, that which is commensurable, just as we for our part construct sawmills and spinning machines as mechanical master builders of our supplies. Professor Walther claimed recently that certain animals were created only in order to be eaten by other animals, and that this would serve our purposes in the end, just as cats, for example, would have the inborn instinct to devour mice so that these mice will not gnaw away at the sugar that has been put out for breakfast. The professor is ultimately right—animals and we ourselves are well-organized machines for processing certain materials and molding them for the table of the unknown king. (419–20)

To a superficial or philosophical reading, Berthold's teleology of God and man, cat and mouse, appears at first to be a parody of vulgar materialist instructors or, closer to home, Jesuit fathers—a parody that Hoffmann, according to evidence presented by Ellinger, lifted almost verbatim from Gotthilf Heinrich Schubert's *Dream Symbolism* [1814]. Such a reading overlooks, however, that in place of the trinity of God, man, animal that Schubert addresses (as does therefore Professor Walther, too), Berthold, Walther's erudite mouthpiece, introduces instead a trinity comprised of God, man, machine, within which the machine ultimately subsumes both animals and humans. Thus Schubert's eternal circulation between

eating and being eaten becomes a theorem of universal division of labor. God, because he is the inferior mathematician, requires humans to do the math just as these humans, since they lay claim to machine abilities but, as evident in the case of the barrel organ, do not in fact possess such abilities, in turn need sawmills and spinning machines. It all comes down to this thesis that humans, precisely because they are not creators like the Greek Prometheus or the Judeo-Christian God, were explicitly created in order to surpass God and his adversary in mathematics.

Mathematics, however, is the realm that two-thousand-year-old traditions have reserved for God's omniscience and/or omnipotence. The Greeks honored in geometry and in the harmony of the spheres laws of the heavens that men on this earth could always imitate only as dim or fading away. The Jews honored in the universe a God who set up everything according to measure, number, and weight. Leibniz finally, because he recognized that measure and weight were redundant circumlocutions for number, brought all the mathematics of God or infinity together in the inimitable sentence that the world only is insofar and as long as God does his math.

The despairing architecture painter in Hoffmann's story parts with this tradition. If God or infinity is surpassed in mathematics by mankind, then a mathematics of finitude is proclaimed instead[21]—a mathematics that the twentieth century (from David Hilbert to Alan Turing) could not establish or substantiate but could just the same implement in universal digital machines. Computers as "the dominion of the rule"[22] make Berthold's exclamation, "How glorious is the rule," literally true. And indeed: from linear perspective, which the exclamation addresses, there folds out a direct technical-historical line to sawmills and spinning machines, on the one hand, and to computers, on the other hand. Wind or water mills as the fundamental innovations of the European Middle Ages first made possible the introduction of a paper economy before they also served the processing of grain, wood, and ore. It is not surprising that mills figure among those technical book illustrations that were not reproducible in imperial Peking in the absence of knowledge of geometry. In exact accordance, the spinning machine, the fundamental innovation of the eighteenth century (if only because it ran twenty times faster than the spinning wheel turned by hand),[23] rang in the transition from manufacturing to industry and thus forced the development of weaver's looms, which, because they were programmable, inspired Charles Babbage's protocomputers.

Hoffmann's story, written less than ten years before Babbage's Differential Engine [which he began building in 1822], is at the highest technical level of its time. Mathematics and the machine

cease to be earthly imitations of heavenly principles; they become processes of a "processing" that, so as not to founder on Turing's holding problem, fundamentally come to an end and, accordingly, must be finite. This finitude is so radical that ultimately it loses the very name of infinity. The nonmathematician, whom Berthold at first called "God," is referred to at the end only as "unknown king," in whose service—as if in anticipation of Büchner's Danton[24]—men, "as well organized machines," manufacture "certain," namely mathematical-mechanical, "materials." "The Jesuit Church in G." does not therefore introduce any subject into literature, but rather brings literature into the industrial age.

Hoffmann's interpreters, however, tend to this day (with the laudable exceptions of Leonard Wawrzyns and Wolfgang Coys) to read the omnipresent motif of automata in his writing poetologically or aesthetically. They concern themselves with dolls (who in the fantasy life of subjects represent women or angels), not with a machine mathematics that first makes possible the dolls and angels, camera obscuras and magic lanterns, sawmills and spinning machines. For that reason alone, Hoffmann's "Jesuit Church in G." still has a second part, which, via the biographical reconstruction of Berthold's prehistory, explicitly supplies the connection between mathematics and eroticism, linear perspective and female automata.

III

The Jesuit professor, Walther, who does not realize that he is addressing the "author of the fantasy pieces in the manner of Callot"—whose "manner" of subject-oriented narration is "mad" (424)—hands the narrator "a couple of pages of writing." On these pages a nameless student recorded the fragmentary autobiographical confessions of Berthold, in the course of which he practiced Callot's manner to the point that—to continue to cite Walther—"the writer without any indication or warning transfers words of the painter literally into the first person" (424). That is precisely the stylistic innovation that Hoffmann in "The Sandman" celebrates and substantiates as his very own (344). Without realizing or desiring it, the Jesuit "makes" the "writer" "a present" that (in the strict sense of Lacan) brings back his own message in reversed form and therefore already transfers the linear perspective of painting into literature's play of signifiers.

The tale of Berthold's sad love affair is quickly told. It must only explain how a promising Romantic artist could become a

subaltern architecture painter, rule-guided automaton, and presumed wife killer. Hence both student and narrator make a long story short—but with the dramatic consequence that the myth of subjective self-formation and the phantom of a painterly collected work dissolve, respectively, into discursive mechanics and proto-photographic media techniques. Berthold's artist biography only proves his statement that the Devil fools us with dolls and automata on which he has pasted angel wings.

As usual, the artist subject commences in the days of childhood and discourses of the other. An old painter advises Berthold's poor parents that their "son," although already endowed with "a pure authentic artist sensibility," can arrive at his "own thoughts" only by first taking the requisite trip through Italy (424). As is also usually the case, this command to think for oneself[25] leads to its exact opposite. At the start of his stay in Italy, Berthold chases the *fable convenue* that history painting occupies the pinnacle of his art. To climb up to the next developmental stage named landscape painting, it suffices either for Berthold to converse with Philipp Hackert or for Hoffmann to reach for the pertinent book by Goethe. That is the full extent to which Luhmann's celebrated autonomy of art, which allegedly had its origin around 1800, is subordinate to the discourse of art theories or art professorships. And because all good things come in three, only one more wise old man must appear in order to play off the ideal of a painting that is subjective-objective, historical-natural, and therefore truly speculative against Hackert's mere imitations of nature. From that point on, Berthold is himself the painter genius according to dream or possibility—but according to empiricism or application he is a nil:

> I tried to represent hieroglyphically in the manner of my dream what lay deep inside me only as dark intimation, but the elements of this hieroglyphic writing were human figures who moved around a point of light in whimsical entanglement.—This point of light was to be the most glorious shape that had ever entered a visual artist's fantasy; but I struggled in vain to grasp its traits when it appeared in the dream surrounded by celestial rays. Every attempt to represent it failed ignominiously, and I withdrew in hot yearning. (432)

To borrow once more words from Hoffmann's "The Sandman," Berthold has, then, an "inner image," which, however, does "not in the least" want to step outside (344). And yet this impossible interiority is always already outside: in the first place as "glorious shape" (of woman) and, in second place, as "point of light" that like the origin of the rays of a magic lantern "draws" all other "figures"

"with flame strokes in the air" (430). An interiority surrounded by all sorts of "whimsical entanglements" renders the distinction between inside and outside nearly untenable (as the curves thesis of Camille Jordan demonstrated in 1893).[26] Thus the pivotal ideal of woman, in whom the Romantic artist is known to find his calling, prefigures nothing else but Berthold's nightly experimental order. One need only set the wax torch in place of the point of light and in place of the whimsical entanglements the nonlinear distorted net to recognize that the hallucination is in linear perspective.

It is no wonder, then, that the profoundly inner ideal of woman steps forthwith into external life. "Not far from Naples," where Berthold has just recanted Hackert's false doctrines, there happens to lie "the villa of a Duke which, because it offers the most beautiful view of Vesuvius and the ocean, is hospitably open to foreign artists, in particular landscape painters" (432). As always in Hoffmann, ducal villas, princely gardens, and royal picture galleries are just now for the first time open to the middle class and artists to summon up out of museum, park, university, etc., the veritable "Bildungsstaat" (the "state" of culture, education, development, formation). And so it happens as it must: in the same park grotto where Berthold received his inner vision, the daughter of the Duke stands before the gaze of the artist, which immediately translates the proper name "Angiola T. . ." into the "angel face" of his impossible vision (432–33). At once Berthold is "completely turned around," "commences producing paintings himself," receives "commissions" for "great works," and produces "altar drawings" in which the central saint by all accounts resembles "Princess Angiola T. . ." "in face and form" (433). The inner image thus enters the external individuality named Berthold, but this individuality alone is fortunately incapable of such pattern recognition.

Not until "Bonaparte's victories," as "the French army nears the kingdom of Naples," does that change.[27] "French commissars" collect immeasurable contributions while plebeian "hordes" "set fire to the houses of the high and mighty who, they feel, sold them out" (433). Thus Berthold, too, finds his way from the suburban villa into the Duke's city palace. He saves Angiola from the counterrevolutionary "rabble," and with his "loot" (which is how this rabble views the Duke's daughter in his arms) he can flee home to Germany (434–35). Only now does Berthold recognize his dream image, and Angiola, too, considers herself fortunate to have been designated by Berthold's pious altar pictures as impious love object. With this knowledge (in the double biblical sense), only marriage is left for both of them, the decision to place their Romantic nuclear family of father, mother, son inside the altar picture.

But this is where Berthold precisely fails. Unfinished—and covered with "a blanket" to protect it—the painting of the Virgin Mary finally ends up hanging in the Jesuit church of Glogau (416), where (just as today) works no longer count but only processes or algorithms. It is well known that no woman of the Age of Goethe can be at the same time "heavenly Mary" and "earthly woman," algorithm and object of love (435). Angiola, Berthold's ideal, becomes "on the canvas a dead wax image that stares at him with glassy eyes" not only "when she sits for him and he wants to paint her." But it is also because the empirical Angiola recognizes Berthold's "hatred" and death wish against mother and child, that he can "read" "in Angiola's corpse-pale face" his "raving heretical origin" (435).

Whether or not Berthold murdered Angiola is left open right to the end of the story. Berthold threatens the narrator, who confronts him with this rumor, with a double murder—before he himself is pulled "one-half year" later out of the Oder River dead. But murder or madness is not at all at issue here. For already with the unfinished picture, painting itself comes to an end. Ever since Hoffmann's "Jesuit Church in G.," all literary attempts to create the picture of all pictures fail. Balzac's unknown masterpiece remains unfinished, chaotic, and covered up; Poe's oval portrait robs the painter's beloved of blood and life at the same time that it takes on life and color. Finally, Hebbel's poem "The Painter" includes the following two stanzas:

> He painted her cheeks red,
> The eye's gleam at the same time,
> Then her eye was blind and dead
> and her cheek pale.
>
> And as she stood completely realized,
> The graceful form,
> I took the girl's hand,
> But it was damp and cold.

All these stories, macabre or not, only demonstrate the factual circumstance that depiction changes its essence around 1820. Depiction ceases to be the projection in linear perspective of a multiplicity of points into other, namely, affine multiplicities of points. In place of this relational definition of depiction, there arises a material one. "Depiction should"—in the words of Rudolf Arnheim—"not only resemble the object but should also provide the guarantee for this resemblance by being, as it were, a product of the object itself,

that is, mechanically produced by the object itself—as the illuminated objects of reality impress their image mechanically onto the photographic surface."[28]

The demand for material resemblance poses problems for painting that can be solved only through media techniques like camera obscura and laterna magica or by magic. Such contact magic is at work, for example, not only when Angiola as painting is paralyzed "into a dead wax image" "with glassy eyes" but also when Angiola as model turns toward her painter a "corpse-pale face." To "fool us with dolls on which he has pasted angel wings," "the Devil" must depict in each other the materiality of human and automaton, of primal image and copy. This same contact magic is also at work when Balzac confesses to his photographer Nadar his fear that after nine sessions he would be left a corpse simply because every ensuing picture taken would take away another layer of its model.[29] That is how plainly and simply depiction as material resemblance makes the media-historical switch from painting to photography.

The inventor of photography, Daguerre, started out, not so different from Hackert or Berthold, a painter of Vesuvius tableaux; his partner and precursor Nièpce, by contrast, had been involved in problems of mass reproduction. Nièpce's so-called heliography was intended to advance lithography, just then developed by Senefelder, to the point of automating the Gutenberg reproduction techniques of woodcut and copper etching.[30] The grand Napoleonic project to provide access to the totality of all books, documents, and images[31] thus influenced Nièpce and his insane brother, too, who long before Edison sought to invent invention itself. For it was this project that first demolished in museums like Denon's Louvre the old European hierarchy of landscape, history, and architecture painting in order to push through the general image concept of modernism that Berthold's theory also observes; this project burst open for the first time on the European continent the secret doors behind which palaces, churches, and monasteries had preserved and concealed books, documents, and images. The Neapolitan princess Angiola T. . . could only under these new conditions be the "loot" of a bourgeois painter, because in 1799 the kingdom of both Sicilies was the loot of the French armies in Italy. Hoffmann's work belongs, then, to that great image-looting campaign that around 1800 hunted down the insignia of old powers like the Jesuits in order to establish a new power of knowledge. To collect from Italian cities a "contribution" of artworks appropriate for the General Staff, General Bonaparte delegated a connoisseur and scientist who was at the same time his closest mathematician friend:

Gaspard Monge invented, in addition to projective geometry, the art of looting. Hoffmann's story reveals that the two are one.

Whether our era has escaped such world conditions is written in the stars. Certainly computer graphics liberated projective geometry from the materialism of photochemistry and elevated it to the dignity of a once-more strictly relational topology. But the relationship of God, man, and machine, which make loot for each other, is more finite and thus more algorithmic than ever before. Hoffmann's question, whether God and Devil "are not both surpassed in mathematics by man," is more likely posed today to God, Devil, and man: all three would appear to be surpassed in mathematics by machines.

Notes

[1] Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, *Fantasie-und Nachtstücke: Fantasiestücke in Callots Manier / Nachtstücke / Seltsame Leiden eines Theater-Direktors,* ed. Walter Müller-Seidel (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1967), quotation on 416–17; hereafter cited in the text.

[2] See Bernd Busch, *Belichtete Welt: Eine Wahrnehmungsgeschichte der Fotografie* (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1989), 63ff.

[3] Jacques Lacan, *Le sèminaire,* livre VII: *L'èthique de la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), quotation on 162.

[4] Ibid.

[5] On the structural homology between linear perspective, the Indian-Arabic zero, and modern monetary economy, see Brian Rotman, *Signifying Nothing: The Semiotics of Zero* (London: Macmillan, 1987).

[6] Lacan, *Le sèminaire.*

[7] Jacob Burckhardt, *Der Cicerone: Eine Anleitung zum Genuß der Kunstwerke Italiens* (Leipzig: Alfred Kroner Verlag, n.d.), quotation on 986.

[8] Manfredo P. do Carmo, *Differentialgeometrie von Kurven und Flächen,* trans. Michael Grüter, 3rd ed. (Braunschweig, Germany: Vieweg Verlagsgesellschaft, 1993), 178.

[9] Quoted in *A Source Book in Mathematics,* ed. David Eugene Smith (Mineola, NY: Dover, 1984), 315.

[10] Ibid., 316f.

[11] Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, "The Sandman," in *Fantasie- und Nachtstücke* (see note 1), 331–63, quotation on 341.

[12] Lacan, *Le sèminaire,* 169.

[13] Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, *Die Elixiere des Teufels,* ed. Walter Müller-Seidel (Munich: Winkler Verlag, 1977).

[14] See Richard Wagner, *Oper und Drama,* ed. Klaus Kropfinger (Stuttgart, Germany: Philipp Reclam, 1994), 101. With great elegance, Wagner anticipated Julius Robert Mayer's theory of the thermodynamic "trigger" (*Auslöser*).

[15] In addition, Berthold has carefully numbered all his colors (Hoffmann, *Fantasie- und Nachtstücke,* 420).

[16] Johannes Kreisler accordingly speaks "as complete machinist" of the "effectiveness" of the theater "machines" that contribute with "magical power inexplicable to the audience" to "the intended total effect" (quoted in Hoffmann, *Fantasie- und Nachtstücke,* 59).

[17] See Samuel Edgerton, *The Heritage of Giotto's Geometry: Art and Science on the Eve of the Scientific Revolution* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991), 254–87.

[18] Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, *Seltsame Leiden eines Theater-Direktors,* in *Fantasie- und Nachtstücke* (see note 1), 611–707, quotation on 677.

[19] See Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Lichtblicke: Zur Geschichte der künstlichen Helligkeit im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1983), 183.

[20] Friedrich Joseph Wilhelm Schelling, *Philosophie der Kunst* (Darmstadt, Germany: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1966).

[21] See Brian Rotman, *Ad infinitum: The Ghost in Turing's Machine; Taking God Out of Mathematics and Putting the Body Back In—An Essay in Corporeal Semiotics* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993).

[22] See Bettina Heintz, whose book bears this title (*Die Herrschaft der Regel: Zur Grundlagengeschichte des Computers* [Frankfurt am Main/New York: Campus, 1993]).

[23] For the path from the Spinning Jenny to Jacquard and Babbage, see Wolfgang Coy, *Industrieroboter: Zur Archäologie der zweiten Schöpfung* (Berlin: Rotbuch, 1985), 41ff.

[24] "But we are poor musicians and our bodies the instruments. Are the ugly sounds that are cheated out of them only there in order to press higher and higher and finally subsiding quietly to die like a voluptuous aspiration in heavenly ears?" (*Dantons Tod,* act IV, in Georg Büchner, *Gesamtausgabe: Werke und Briefe,* ed. Fritz Bergemann [Leipzig: Insel Verlag, 1968], 78).

[25] See Heinrich Bosse, "Der geschärfte Befehl zum Selbstdenken: Ein Erlaß des Ministers v. Fürst an die preußischen Universitäten im Mai 1770," in *Diskursanalysen 2: Institution Universität,* ed. Friedrich A. Kittler, Manfreid Schneider, and Samuel Weber (Opladen, Germany: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1990), 31–62.

[26] See Hans von Mangoldt and Konrad Knopp, *Höhere Mathematik: Eine Einführung für Studierende und zum Selbststudium,* 16th ed. (Stuttgart, Germany: Hirzel, 1990), 2:411f.

[27] In historical fact the capture of Naples by General Jean-Étienne Championnet had less to do with "Bonaparte's victories" in 1796 than with the rash desire for revenge on the part of Naples's queen, a sister of Marie-Antoinette. However, this makes it all the more significant that Hoffmann makes the connection.

[28] Rudolf Arnheim, *Kritiken und Aufsätze zum Film,* ed. Helmut H. Dieterichs (Munich: Hanser Verlag, 1977), 27. We find a similar view, albeit presented in physi-

ological terms, in Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994).

[29] Nadar (Félix Tournachon), *Quand j'ètais photographe* (Paris: E. Flammarion, 1899), 26.

[30] See Friedrich von Zglinicki, *Der Weg des Films* (1956; repr., Hildesheim, Germany: Olms Verlag, 1979), 145.

[31] See Jacob Burckhardt, *Napoleon I: Kulturgeschichtliche Vorträge,* ed. Rudolf Marx (Leipzig: Alfred Kroner Verlag, n.d.), 159.

Radio Nights: Evita Out of the Waves

Klaus Theweleit
Translated by Laurence A. Rickels

On 15 January 1944, on a warm Argentine Saturday evening, the city of San Juan, separated by a thousand kilometers from Buenos Aires, is leveled in an earthquake lasting twenty-five seconds.

Compared with the European housing collapses and liquidations at that time, the ten thousand dead in San Juan represent a relatively light sentence by Father Earth during his earthshaking production of political earth map no. 1945, but this event suffices to shape decisively the Argentine portion for the next three decades. The Argentine "nation" is born (again) out of this event, as is its future leader Juan Perón.

What do the dead count—when they are counted—and who accounts for them? What counts and is recounted are the births.

* * *

> In Santiago, the capital of the kingdom of Chile, at the moment of the great earthquake of the year 1647 in which many thousands lost their lives, a young Spaniard named Jeronimo Rugera, who had been accused

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> of a crime, was standing beneath one of the pilasters of his prison cell and was about to hang himself.[1]

Jeronimo Rugera wants to hang himself because he is the father of a child who is not allowed to live. The mother, Josepha, a nun, is to be beheaded at that moment by the royal-pontifical lynching justice of 1647. Then the earthquake shows some compassion. It reduces *everything* to rubble; it saves father, mother, and child; it unites them outside the city for a few wonderful moments. "Meanwhile," in Kleist's earthquake prose, "the loveliest of nights had descended upon them."[2] The hangmen have forgotten their business, but only until the following afternoon. Then death catches up with all of them but one, Josepha and Jeronimo's boy, Philip, whom Kleist has destined for survival via a second birth out of the quake: assuming the place of a legal child, *Juan,* who is "dashed . . . against the edge of a church buttress,"[3] he is taken in by Don Fernando and Donna Elvira. The rest is ashes.

An earthquake (as is the case, too, with the downfall of Sodom and Gomorrah) does not suffice to pull the ground out from under Evil for more than *one* day (which Heinrich Kleist, once again more precise than even Yahweh, knew for sure).

* * *

Out of the great Hamburg flood of 1962 that united everyone for one day, Helmut Schmidt emerged with a life preserver; out of the earthquake in San Juan, Argentina, 1944, Juan Domingo Perón emerged rapid fire:

> While the president of Argentina, General Pedro P. Ramírez, ordered all places of public amusement closed and all radio stations to broadcast only news and sacred music, Colonel Juan Domingo Perón took charge of the relief effort on behalf of San Juan. . . . The tragedy of San Juan provided the colonel and his new Secretariat of Labor and Social Welfare with instant national exposure [or, in this world, instant karma—K.T.].[4]

The earthquake, says Perón biographer Joseph Page, galvanized the Argentines in an unprecedented manner into a nation of mutual aid: when Colonel Perón put out the call on the radio for blood donations, more donors came than the blood banks could accommodate.

More genders showed up, too. Perón's blood drive on behalf of the wounded of San Juan calls into being a type of radio listener nonexistent publicly or politically in Argentina prior to 1944; what

English and German women had obtained during the First World War, participation in jobs essential to the war effort and thus in public spheres shaken by war, Argentine women first attain with Perón's earthquake: the aid campaign for San Juan gathers on Argentine streets for the first time large numbers of women who see themselves as "citizens of the nation."

What the typewriter achieves for women's emancipation in New York around 1900, a natural catastrophe broadcast over radio waves must accomplish in the Catholic subcontinent in 1944. This not only testifies to the greater democratic power of purely technical as opposed to divinely created catastrophes. This single radio-exploited catastrophe engenders in Argentina the class of voters that eight years later, at the time when the men were all "used up," provides the leader Perón with the necessary extension of his term in office: "The first election I won with the men. . . . This one I shall win with the women . . . and the third I shall win with the children" (254). (The latter then became the *montoneros.*) Thus spoke the wise earthquake/radio product Juan Domingo Perón in 1952 regarding the sequence of political manipulations of those animated by earthquakes and media for dictatorial reelection in the South American non–banana republic of Argentina, the eighth largest country on earth (254).

While President Ramírez allows a Mass to be said on the Plaza de Mayo and then visits the disaster area, Colonel Perón mobilizes the country's leading stage, film, and radio personalities for a large benefit gala in Luna Park (Buenos Aires's Madison Square Garden) on 22 January, the Saturday night one week after the quake: the *Luna Park Extravaganza,* the final four hours broadcast live on state radio.

The woman, on whose arm the organizer will leave Luna Park that night, he does not yet know, the actress and radio announcer Eva Duarte. Completely lost still on the afternoon of 22 January in the cloud of polished cadets, stars, and starlets who cling to the heels of Colonel Perón at the street parade for the earthquake victims, by that evening she sits next to Perón at the gala, placed there by an officer she knows from Perón's staff, Lt. Col. Aníbal Imbert: the woman who will become a few years later the motor and angel of Juan Perón's presidencies, Argentina's Joan of Arc: *Evita Perón.*

> Though she was not beautiful, sexy or particularly talented, Eva Duarte (Evita to her friends) was blessed with a tenacity that had lifted her from an obscure, small provincial town to a career in theater, radio and film. (4)

That Evita could advance to Argentine saint (and later to the title figure of an English musical) rests above all on her radio origin.

Eva Duarte is born a country girl, fifth in a line of illegitimate children, whose father, farm-landlord Juan Duarte, is in a position to support two families (not unusual for men of his class): one legal family that lived in the nearby city (three children) and an illegitimate family living on the farm (five children) that must disappear whenever the legal family visits the farm. Upon the death of the father in an auto accident, when Evita is six, only *one* family is allowed to enter the cemetery. A brother of the deceased at least arranges finally to secure a place at the end of the burial procession for Juana Ibarguren, the illegitimate wife (of Basque extraction), and her five children. At the cemetery gate, however, the paternal relationship ends.

After her experiences in Smalltown Juín (formerly known as Los Toldos), Eva Duarte at the age of eleven comes to Buenos Aires, Argentina's Big Apple; by fifteen she is determined to become an actress; possible marriages with halfway-secure men like those her sisters enter into she declines, for some time now already coupled with the fan magazines available in Juín that unfold before her eyes the life of film and radio stars. "She sang all the time," says a neighbor (82). At age eight, she herself identifies her future life as "actress."

The first small film role at seventeen; then radio, radio roles being more significant back then because they connect with a mass public (every third Argentine household has radio access in 1937).

Eva Duarte is not alone in Buenos Aires; the only male offshoot of her family, her older brother Juan, is there with her. Speculations by her future enemies that she "slept" her way to success do not hold up; her brother was no pimp. He also later remains in her proximity as Evita's lifelong confidant. Her husband, Juan Perón, makes him his personal secretary. After Eva Perón's cancer death in the year 1952, he shoots himself in a hotel room (under the pressure of financial affairs). The illegitimate farm siblings at the head of state—united in death.

In the first year of World War II, Eva Duarte ended up in a bigger radio production as costar of a soap opera: "Eva was good at conveying suffering. When she found the soaps, she found her acting career" (83). Curiously, her brother works at that time for a soap manufacturer who sells his product under the name "Radical Soap"; Radical Soap subsequently sponsors several productions in which Eva Duarte performs; she appears in magazines: "Publicity shots show her as a typical 1930s starlet, youthful, alabaster-skinned,

hair often swept back, a coy expression often on her face" (83). There are the obligatory half-nude photos (later distributed as postcards by the First Lady's political opponents). The tango city Buenos Aires conducts its political business from 1940 on (North-) American-media style.

In 1943 Eva Duarte can be heard in a radio series titled *Heroines of History,* in which she recites the roles (one after the other) of Sarah Bernhardt, Isadora Duncan, Tsarina Alexandra, Empress Josephine of France (Napoleon's Josephine), Queen Elisabeth I, and Madame Chiang Kai-shek. "For Evita, life would soon imitate art," says her biographer (84). She is a moment away from standing at Colonel Juan Perón's side.

Eva is twenty-four years old, Perón forty-nine, when they find each other: a couple that could not be more radio-esque. Perón was mad about her from the first moment of *his* becoming a radio star at the earthquake gala; from then on, throughout the next eight years, the political and the performing radio mouths are inseparable except for Juan Perón's short prison stay at the end of 1945: Eva, in her first large-scale political campaign, mobilizes the warehouse workers and labor unions and gains the colonel's release from jail. Perón marries her right after this undertaking.

The radio-microphone woman (and wife) becomes in this way a political speaker just as seamlessly as her husband, the head of state, becomes an actor. Beginning in 1946, Eva delivers her radio speeches as First Lady at the side of the Argentine leader. She takes on for him, the military man, the task of making the government's concern about worker's interests credible and plausible to the Argentine workers, the *descamisados,* a view that would have been difficult for Perón himself to sell. Evita with her underdog persona finds it easygoing; she kept the underdog attitude alive her whole life long in manner of speech and gesture:

> Evita proved invaluable. She served as secretary of labor and welfare. She was in virtual command of the Confederación General del Trabajo [General Confederation of Labor]. She sparked the movement that resulted in the extension of the vote to women, and she then organized the Women's Perónist Party.[5] She created the Eva Duarte de Perón Foundation, which was given exclusive control of all charitable activity. Put in charge of the Ministry of Health, she founded hospitals and clinics and organized Argentina's first effective campaign against tuberculosis and malaria.[6]

Publicly, she was always strictly the wife of the leader, superloyal, but at the same time his *more radical half* as far as political

propaganda was concerned: plebeian media star, undemocratic and connected to the masses, agent of the workers, a South American left-wing fascist.

Her death in 1952 counts (because of the loss of her contribution to his public persona) as the beginning of Perón's decline (he is toppled for the first time in 1955). Perón now had to deliver Evita's speeches himself (which did not suit him). He could no longer play the part of *moderator* that he played best of all: the rhetorical conciliator of the political powers of Argentina.

Once the microphone symbiosis of the two falls apart, the leader falls too.

* * *

Back to the beginning, January 1944: Juan Perón was so immediately enchanted (bewitched) by Eva's media qualities that, without hesitation, he was ready to put his military and political career on the line to make this connection, which he then did not need to do because he was right in his assessment, in his object choice.

She also knew this was it:

> Evita probably took the initiative in rapidly cementing the relationship. She found new quarters for them in a building on Posadas Street . . . not far from Radio Belgrano. . . . Perón must have been fascinated by the uninhibited aggressiveness of his new companion. He did nothing to conceal their liaison. Indeed, on February 3, both he and Mercante allowed themselves to be photographed with her on a visit to the radio station. . . . Evita's artistic career lurched forward at a frenetic pace, undoubtedly propelled by her association with Perón. She continued the *Heroines of History* series while at the same time participating in thrice-weekly propaganda broadcasts sponsored by the Secretariat of Labor and Public Welfare. Entitled *Toward a Better Future,* these programs filled the airwaves with praise for the progress of the Revolution of June 4 and for the military officers at its helm. (84)

> In addition to these professional activities, Evita found time to share her *compañero*'s interests. She sat in on meetings Perón held in the apartment with military and civilian associates. (85)

Remarks like "*he* cannot be chosen for the position; he is a piece of shit" have been handed down. Perón paid attention to them. He took Evita Duarte along everywhere, and she did not remain in the background but stole the scenes, often without restraint and inconsiderately, if not brutally.

Following her promotion, Evita gives herself a makeover in 1943: she turns herself into a blonde for a film role and then stays a blonde, a Madonna blonde.

On 6 September 1944, the U.S. embassy includes a memo in its observations of the Argentine scene: the star of Colonel Perón is waning because of the "Eva Duarte connection."

Officer colleagues are, befitting their rank, "shocked"; Perón is a "bad example" for the army.

In response to such criticism on the part of his staff, Perón arrives at the classic formulation that became famous: "They reproach me for going with an actress. What do they want me to do? Go with an actor?" (85).

The response is even wittier than it looks: the military officer's obligatory homosexual page (an actual lieutenant or one from the municipal theater) saw the end of military service in the radio age, says the modern Perón, who proudly shows himself everywhere with his uncouth radio woman, who will make a First Lady and a Labor Minister like the media world (both inside and outside of soaps) had not yet seen.

Not until August 1953 does the radio, which was inaccessible to the political parties in Argentina but wide open to the government, become something other than the media private property of the Peróns. Under pressure from the growing opposition, Perón declares in 1953 the end of his "Argentine revolution," appoints himself president "of all Argentines," and admits opposition groups on the radio. Thus, for the first time since Perón became president, the nation's airwaves carried voices of dissent (313).

This continues for one month and, as anti-Perónist demonstrations and campaigns mount, is again revoked. Once the situation becomes threatening to him, Perón lets his resignation be announced: over the radio; the effect: he is recalled to office by the masses overflowing the Plaza de Mayo (315).

Evita had achieved the same effect a year before in 1952, at the time of the failed coup that General Menéndez led against Perón. After the coup, mortally ill, she thanks the Argentines on the radio for their loyalty to Perón and implores her listeners to "pray to God to restore me to the health I have lost, not for my sake, but for Perón and for you, my *descamisados*" (249–50).

Evita knows that her illness is incurable, but that does not matter on radio waves that never (or always) lie.

And, dying, she does not entrust her legacy to their effects alone. She pauses to reflect. Her final wish is the arming of the *descamisados* as a militia for Perón—to be financed by their own

private fortune. Perón grants this wish (though *not at all* willing to arm the workers). That the *descamisados* alone would in fact be ready and in position after her death to support Perón in case of civil war is entirely her idea.

In the last year of her life, Evita attends the large state holidays of Perónism wearing a corset under her fur coat. No longer able to stand upright on her own, she nonetheless shows herself at parades standing in the car and on balconies, propped up by corset and Perón; her voice can hardly be made audible anymore, even via microphone. Even still "from her death bed" the "Spiritual Chief of the Nation" (258)[7] whispers the radio message to the simple spirits: don't ever withdraw support from her spouse.

A populist true *guerillera* from the rural lumpenproletariat who was loved by the workers, then Smalltown, actress, radio creation, died of cancer at age thirty-three as the wife of a populist dictator:

. . . what would have become of Marlene Dietrich had she made the leap in Germany from film to state career at Hitler's side, which was (allegedly) offered her?

Not an Evita by any means: the division of labor Hitler/Goebbels (in rabble-rousing and solicitude) was successful enough without requiring any "Marlenes" for German *descamisados*. Hitler and Goebbels themselves became the radio stars (binding those who would otherwise not submit not through media women, but rather through concentration camps).

What to do with the dead Evita? Does one simply lay such a media creation in a grave and "end of broadcast"? No. The corporeal part of Evita was embalmed, like the nontubular parts of media girls still must be, and then placed on a monument on the Plaza de Mayo. There her Snow White radio body became the object of unending Catholic-Perónist soap-kissed Virgin Mary veneration. That remained the same after Perón's forced resignation in 1955. The pilgrimages continued while Perón had to keep going, first to Paraguay, then Panama, then Venezuela, and finally into Spanish exile.

A state campaign to discredit Perón's memory failed in 1955 and resulted in extension of the waiting lines in front of Evita's mausoleum. The Aramburu government found itself "obliged to act": Evita's corpse was removed from the Plaza de Mayo and kept at alternating sites that each time did not remain secret, and so was finally lodged in the headquarters of the General Confederation of Labor (CGT). Her body always attracts floods of Perónist fans. On 22 December 1955, a group of officers under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Carlos Eugenio Moore Koenig, head of the

Army Information Service, steals it from the CGT building. Because of government indecisiveness about her final resting place, Evita is stored, packed in a crate labeled "Radio Equipment," in the office of Lt. Col. Moore Koenig.

In June 1956—"Heartbreak Hotel" climbs to the top of the American radio charts—Col. Mario Cabanillas replaces Lieutenant Colonel Moore Koenig as Army Information Chief. Moore Koenig forgets to inform his successor about the crate. A few days later, while tidying up, Cabanillas discovers the embalmed body of Evita Perón in the crate with the radio equipment.

"Where is Evita?" . . . this is meanwhile a public outcry in the form of thousands of rumors . . . death by fire . . . death in the river . . . "Evita lives." . . .

The claim that there once were Peróns and a Perónism had already been pulled from circulation months earlier by the Aramburu government (public and legal prohibition against representation of Juan, as of Evita Perón; in the newspapers, Perón is given the state-approved name "the fugitive tyrant").

Yet where to put Evita's corpse? The stressed-out government would gladly grant her a "Christian burial" . . . but *where,* without the continual stream of political pilgrims?

The head of the Catholic world himself is contacted; with the aid of Pius XII, Evita reaches Europe and an unidentified Milanese cemetery, from where she establishes and maintains contact with Juan Perón. When he reaches his Spanish exile, Perón has her brought from there to his house in Madrid, on the upper floor of which she peacefully sleeps away the time until Perón's return to Argentina (until she lands again, in silver casket, at the Plaza de Mayo).[8]

"Don't cry for me, Argentina / The truth is I never left you . . ."[9]

Perón later tried it once again—it had worked so well—with a media woman in the government palace. In exile, he marries the Argentine dancer María Estela Martínez, stage name "Isabel." The future Vice President Isabel Perón is twenty-four years old when Perón meets her (twenty-four, like Evita Duarte eleven years earlier). After Perón's death, Isabel, the dancer, becomes Argentina's president.

This was, like the reanimated love in exile, more a parody of the microphone symbiosis of Juan and Evita: Juan Perón had grown senile; Isabel was in league with younger people around him who pursued their own political agendas and who used the figure and name Perón only as label; he was, now played out, Isabel's puppet on the microphones when he died.

Argentina's media star (next to TV star Maradona) remained Evita, the country girl on the radio waves, wife of the leader who rose up out of the earthquake.

What does one conclude from all this: better a Reagan (from the screen) than a burning Bush from the CIA? If with Reagan we had been primarily dealing with an actor, perhaps; but he was an actor only so he could, under this pretense, work as an undercover CIA agent in the actor's union before he came forward as the public front man of the California Right. *Always* already a professional politician, in the final analysis. . .

Leadership, God, Medium

In most countries emerging from colonialism, a relatively thin aristocratic upper stratum faces the masses of the working and the poor. The training ground for the ruling intelligentsia is above all the military. There exists no broad bourgeoisie and barely a middle class with its typical institutions: schools, polytechnical colleges, chambers of commerce, clubs, community associations, lobbies, and professional associations. But an all-comprehensive state church is already there and waiting with a strong tendency toward religious fundamentalism.

This is also, with exceptions, the case in Argentina, otherwise the "most European" of South American countries. Between domination/power and the population there are few intermediary circuits. A direct leader-people relationship via mass movement is much easier to produce in such countries than in societies with a differentiated infrastructure; that much easier when the political leader succeeds in establishing the bond between his political populism and religious fundamentalism. For a country like Iran, for instance, this is the case even more so than for Argentina.

The new *communications media* furnish the decisive missing link (and also the missing piece of the Holy Trinity). In the Argentina of the 1930s, radio simply moves as the third power into the place between the political leadership and the will of God. Perón/the military plus Virgin Mary worship plus radio soaps are the big three of political power, evident to the senses in Evita, who assumes the representation of this connection.

New technical media in "underdeveloped" societies lead directly to political dictatorships, either by inheriting the prevalent religiosity or bonding with it.[10]

The voice of God, the voice of state power, and the voice of the medium coincide in one and the same; it follows from this in the

Argentina of the 1930s that the voice of God, the voice of Perón/Evita, and the voice of tango cannot be distinguished and that tango therefore is *direct* propaganda for the leader. In Germany this led to the transformation of jazz, insofar as it could be played on the radio (not to mention Bach and Mozart), into direct Führer propaganda.

This does not exclude that "below" this level, in the gradual *becoming commonplace* of the new medium, a completely opposite process takes place: a type of democratization of those who stay tuned transpires along the lines of McLuhan's Global Village or what Diederichsen calls the *tribalization* of people through media into the clan of jazz, soul, punk, and hip-hop members, especially when the Holy Trinity of leadership/God/medium breaks apart through the failure of the political leadership. Thus it is conceivable that the bit of democratic potential that was around in Germany in the 1950s came from the nursing breast of the radio: for following the words from the *Führer*-voices the music always comes on, and, no matter which selection, plays not as or at the order of the high command but as smaller and more scattered, more dispersed sensations, *sounds* instead of the thunder of sense.

Gottfried Benn becomes (halfway) democratic in the 1950s with the resumption of the lyrical production of his 1920s sounds, with the cessation of the primeval uproar of Beethoven, with the casual dropping of the Wagner effect. Evita finds peace, transformation, and redemption in the *Evita* musical by Tim Rice and Andrew Lloyd-Webber, who had already created *Jesus Christ Superstar.* The phantom of power disappears into the *Phantom of the Opera;* the expanded media spectrum detaches political leadership from the God function; cable connections worked not toward divinization of Chancellor Kohl but rather, through the violence of its own flat trajectory, promoted at that time an increase in social violence.

Where they acquire media dominance, new media elevate the level of open societal violence *everywhere* during the time of their introduction and acceptance.

The "fundamentalist violence" that emerges at the end of the 1970s in Iran belongs to a comparable trinity of Khomeini/the mullahs plus radio plus cassette recorder and is set in motion (on the way to power) by a movie-theater fire. But first, we must pass through another birth by catastrophe.

David Sarnoff: Seventy-two Hours in Hades

On 14 April 1912, shortly before midnight in New York, radio operator David Sarnoff emerges from the waves of a catastrophe made

for him, only twenty-one years old and soon to become in all media "industry's No. 1 wonder boy in the United States":[11] in 1922, thirty years old, he is general manager of RCA, the Radio Corporation of America; in 1926 he founds NBC, the National Broadcasting Company; beginning in 1928, he experiments with TV . . . he will be known after 1940 as "father of television in America."

On 14 April 1912 at exactly 11:40 p.m., the twentieth century receives its model catastrophe and David Sarnoff gets the call from Pluto's catastrophe administration office. He sits at night on the roof of the John Wanamaker department store in New York sending and receiving radio signals. Wanamaker, one of the most renowned department stores of the time, invested a good sum of money to set up America's largest radio station on its roof, installed by the then largest American radio company, American Marconi. David Sarnoff is an employee of American Marconi and performs his nightly duty on Wanamaker's radio roof.

With course set for the tip of his transmitter mast, the ship plows through the ocean a few hundred miles away, the enormous sister ship of the gigantic *Olympic* (White Star Line, Liverpool, associated with Pierpont Morgan's International Mercantile Marine, IMM, Connecticut), launched to outrun and run down the competition not through velocity but through luxury and mass. Correspondingly heavy and in light spirits, Captain Smith and his *Titanic* make their way into the malicious iceberg. In New York, David Sarnoff decodes the message on Wanamaker's radio equipment: "S. S. Titanic ran into iceberg. Sinking fast."

American media historian Erik Barnouw:

> He alerted other ships in the area, and informed the press. While President Taft ordered all other American transmitters to stay silent, young Sarnoff stuck to his key for seventy-two hours, relaying news of survivors to anxious relatives. He was the one link with the scene of disaster, and won world fame. Member of a poor immigrant family—from the Russian village of Uzlian, a cluster of wood huts—he had started with American Marconi at $5.50 a week; within a few years after the *Titanic* events, he was commercial manager. As American Marconi grew, he grew with it. He was, heart and soul, a company man. And the company was turning into big business, and winning government contracts—in spite of navy misgivings.[12]

For his seventy-two-hour performance at the keys of Wanamaker's electric piano of the beyond, the president himself appoints Sarnoff solo operator of a radio line into the heart of the *Titanic:* connection to government contracts, media empires, big business. From "sole" catastrophe broadcaster in 1912, Sarnoff rises up "with

heart and soul" to become lord of *all* wireless connections by 1922. The American *Dream* . . . who *built* such media *models?*

In 1900, Sarnoff, oldest of five children, reached New York with his mother, where they rejoined his father, who had gone on ahead. Two days later he is selling newspapers on the streets of New York and from then on is in business. When his father dies, fifteen-year-old David is the provider for six people. He signs on with Commercial Cable Company at $5 a week. For a while, as a budding broadcaster must, he goes to sea . . .

At sea the yarn grows. What all does one not think about sitting around at night on rocking ships in front of radio equipment and picking up the phantom voices of navigational reports? Now and again an SOS mixes with the voices . . . somewhere out there bodies are thrashing about in the water again; at some point there will be a big fish out there . . . perhaps, for once, one will be nearby . . .

For the seventeen-year-old family breadwinner, rescue fantasies are the stuff of dreams of course. That is the beauty of Sarnoff's *Titanic* story, that it is made up, a yarn of upward mobility through *catastrophe.* The story, part of several American books on radio history, always had its source in Sarnoff himself: his own "oral oracle." Promoted to the top of his company after the World War and then his own media boss, he recounted it over and over again until *his story* was in fact history—had it not been for Edward Bliss, who took an interest in the journalistic side of the affair. Bliss wanted to know what the New York newspapers during the third week of April 1912 reported about the seventy-two-hour hero Sarnoff—and found: nothing. If not entirely fabricated, the story was at least totally exaggerated, pieced together from all sorts of rumors about the sinking ship and the miraculous radio station.

During the World War *so much* had happened . . . who would ever check what a media czar recounted about his calling and ascent . . . nobody. Nobody.

1,517 souls went down with the *Titanic.*[13] Through Sarnoff's little construction, they advance to sacrifices buried in the foundations of RCA.

Even the kings of America's technology empires require Elias Canetti's "mountain of corpses," the imaginarily piled-up pyramid in front of the broadcast palace. And where there is no mountain of corpses in *personal history,* one must be *invented* or at least attributed to one; otherwise the king is not a real king and his empire possibly only a castle of sand, a castle for the waves . . .

RCA was itself only just born in 1922 as the product of a rapacious act, a dispossession that America, triumphant in war, could

allow itself in the light beaming across of the Russian Revolution. The American firm of Guglielmo Marconi, the radio inventor who was the first to be patented, was commercially part of British Marconi, the head company of this young Italian, who, because of the acknowledged lack of interest by the Italian monarchy in his invention, slipped away (with his British mother's encouragement) to the more radio-dependent Great Britain: sea routes. Then on to America.

Congress in Washington did not want one more foreign finger in the American radio sky after experiencing the importance in war of wireless broadcast and reception. Endeavoring to keep the new pearl of public control under state influence, it passed a law according to which no foreign firms were allowed to maintain majority interests in American technical communication institutions. American Marconi was compulsorily transferred to the Radio Corporation of America, established specifically for this purpose. Employee David Sarnoff was expropriated with it—compared to the British Italian Marconi, a veritable *Ur*-American—and thus qualified for promotion all the way to the top of the corporation.

Worse was planned and could have turned out worse: the American Navy, which controlled all broadcasting and reception during the World War, wanted a law that kept radio an absolute Navy monopoly even after the war. This did not come to pass, but leading Navy personnel (along with the former Marconi people) were given leadership positions at RCA as compensation and consolation. The military monopoly (which is then only allowed again during wars) hid behind sports broadcasts and the like: Sarnoff's first "live" broadcast is the Dempsey vs. Carpentier boxing match on 2 July 1921, heard by an estimated 300,000 listeners; lacking their own radios, the majority of these auditors listened in halls and bars.[14]

His bosses ignored young Sarnoff's proposal to manufacture a Radio Music Box series (as early as 1916). The establishment of an imperial world news network stood in the foreground.

During the development of sound-film technologies at the end of the 1920s, RCA in Hollywood worked closely with RKO, the company in which Joseph Kennedy, father of John F. Kennedy, invested money made from whiskey smuggling during Prohibition. RKO is the abbreviation for Radio Keith Orpheum: *one* firm at any rate that emblematically carries in its name the Orphic dimension that at this historical-technological moment was being recast and redefined.

I have not checked to see whether there was also a feminine-Eurydicean being during Sarnoff's transformation into supreme

media commander who introduced her part into the empire; the origin from the clean technical hertz-wave field alone did not suffice as line of ascent in the *consciousness* of this king: the waves of the ocean *themselves* and what they swallowed, the great pond as *Hades,* must have been the origin from which the message emerged that catapulted the radio operator to the positions of radio boss, czar of the record company, and finally Father of TV (as the Russian musician of the spheres, advanced to Goliath, is ultimately enthroned in the columns of the *American Biography of New Technologies*).

* * *

. . . "and the Lorelei did that with her singing?"

No. The "blue band" does not flutter over the oceans in a woman's golden hair, the glance of the sailor *with wild woe* does not climb "up to the heights;" he follows a clock and a concept: that of velocity, with which the titanic century sought to escape itself on the wrong path. The old *mechanical* tempo, the *titanic,* earth- and water-bound tempo, resigns (attended by major opening of the floodgates of the beyond) and rises (in the following decades) into the air.

There, Sarnoff, lord of the airwaves, waits to pick up the wand. For seventy-two hours he was *over there* as *wireless* angel of death embodying and boding another *sort of velocity* and other *kinds of transfer,* and as the first messenger of future wars *constituted otherwise* in the long, long night at the Wanamaker ticker . . .

. . . in the (by presidential decree) *contrived* narrative of his *broadcast.*

The dead do not always sleep *soundly* . . . they operate keys . . . shake hands (from the beyond) . . . make connections.

Catastrophic Births, Continued

Gertrude Stein chose the great 1906 San Francisco earthquake and fire as the big shock that "completely changed" her life. Not that she had "experienced" the catastrophe: thirty-two years old, living in Europe for some time, commuting between the art venues Florence and Paris.[15] The earthquake, however, *sent* something to her from across the ocean, exactly what she needed to be happy: . . . a slim, dark, Polish-Jewish, piano-playing American. For Gertrude's oldest brother Michael and his wife Sarah, the great fire was cause to return for a short time from Paris to San Francisco to

settle property matters. Three paintings by Henri Matisse traveled with them, the first to cross the Atlantic. Michael and Sarah Stein show the paintings in San Francisco to, among others, art enthusiast Alice B. Toklas, that young unattached woman who is somewhat unenthusiastically stuck in her training as a concert pianist. Alice, fired with enthusiasm for something as beautiful as a Matisse, decides to go to Paris and see firsthand all the things the Steins so enthusiastically describe.

"Do you believe in love at first sight?—Yes I'm certain that it happens all the time . . ." This is the case with Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas, in any event, except that it was perhaps not first sight but rather first sound. Gertrude's *voice* was "velvety like a great contralto's, like two voices" in one.[16]

"She came and saw and seeing cried I am your bride."[17]

Alice from the earthquake is the gift that transforms Gertrude Stein's life into the life "of the genius" she (together with Alice) becomes. This time, *love* comes from the earthquake, one that even has staying power, a gift for the second half of Gertrude Stein's life; the first half she spent with her brother Leo (and in unhappy relationships with women).

Gertrude Stein placed this story right on page 2 of her *Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas:* "The earth itself wanted it thus . . . the two of them as a pair . . . the earth itself as fiery and trembling father of the greatest female writing pair on earth."[18]

* * *

"Nearer, my God to Thee," hundreds of passengers, certain not to be saved, had sung on the Titanic as the ship was going down. The way to God is outlined in this hymn with the words "Sun, moon and stars forgot / Upward I fly . . ." *Naturally,* the song is continually "cited" in contexts where someone was involuntarily moved into the greater proximity to God with slapstick blows to lamebrains and wherever the rug, on which it had just been so good to lie, stand, or fly, was pulled out from under someone. From the beginning, satire sticks to the lines.

"Sun, moon, and stars forgot / Upward I fly" is also the song of Sarnoff's own (from this point onward) ascending telegraph-operator self. Of course Sarnoff *knew* that this had been the song on board when he later invented his story and recounted it *again* and *again* . . . knowing it would transform him in the ears of his listeners into the great one lifting off and upward. . . . One is brought

Nearer, my God to Thee, to a religious or political place of power, via media . . . while the 1,517 unmediatized ones must take the longer flight through the depths.

Helmut Schmidt invented the "Hamburg Flood Catastrophe" also for himself—or so one thinks when listening to him on the radio in 1992 on the thirtieth anniversary of the "event." It is all very fresh . . . everything is in the present tense . . . *I* have . . . *I* . . . again "I" . . . personally forged the trident with which Neptune drove the waters over Hamburg's dikes . . . and then put the North Sea in my pocket . . . he himself had flung each sandbag into the torrential Elbe River . . . and has not taken off the Prince Heinrich cap, the captain's lid, since then . . .

The great captain Winston Churchill could never forget the *stranded ship* that his nurse showed him when, ten years old, he was spending summer vacation on the Isle of White. Run aground on a reef, it lay partly over, partly under water, dead in the ocean, its bow concealing a number of dead soldiers, who were intent on returning from South Africa, but in the meantime, with their nearby destination just before their eyes, had to make do with a watery grave instead of the one hoped for, at the end of the lifeline, in England's soil. This ship had its hold over Churchill. He repeatedly gives account of it in his various memoirs and also gives its name. It was the *HMS Eurydice.*

The schoolboy who takes in the sunken *Eurydice* in 1884 advanced at the beginning of World War I to British Minister of the Navy. In the Dardanelle Offensive (Entente troops against Turkish troops allied with the Germans), Winston Churchill seizes the opportunity to lend to the catastrophe dormant within him, whose mere *observer* he had been, a more real body. His disastrous decisions (he ensures that his troops land at a very well fortified, invulnerable site) result in losses of around 90,000 men. For this he is not celebrated as the "Orpheus of war," but is instead for now dismissed. But twenty-five years later (the story of the sunken *Eurydice* with the dead Boer War soldiers in the bow is recounted again and again) his moment in the light, in the flak and flames of the Second World War, arrived after all. Catastrophes, apparently, keep their promises (to their chosen relatives).

Can one do anything about it? Beseech the earth to stop the catastrophizing as planetary labor pains at the birth of leaders? Hardly. Where there are no real catastrophes on gigantic waves for the kings, they make them up or they help themselves to some . . . The catastrophe king himself makes the pretext that he needs to prove his "legitimacy." This is his entry into the *occult* dimension of

political media worlds; without a telegram from the desk of Pluto, there can be no *calling* there.

And: the telegram comes in rhythms . . . every ten years a great man . . . "who covers the expenses" is no longer a question, was it ever one?

* * *

The one person who could also have received Pluto's call slept right through it: the radio operator of the ocean steamer *California,* which was just a short distance away from the *Titanic* at the time of the disaster. He had just switched off his equipment and gone to sleep when the sinking giant sent out its distress signals. *Everyone* would have been saved, except the ship and the blue band, of course . . . the century would have had to seek to distinguish itself with another catastrophe. . . . Sarnoff would have had to come up with a different one. Perhaps *this* radio operator would have then become the boss of RCA and *Father of Television* in America or a Juan Domingo Perón in Washington[19] . . . as it stands, no one remembers his name.

. . . Ayatollah Out of the Fire

On the evening of 18 August 1978, the *Cinema Rex* burns in the Iranian oil city of Abadan. It is a full house, with over a thousand audience members attending the late show. The people rushing to the exits register in panic that the doors of the theater have been bolted from the outside. The fire department is on the scene within fifteen minutes, but for some reason no water flows from the hydrants. Over six hundred people burn to death. The other four hundred are taken to clinics. This is "without doubt the single most horrible event in Iran's recent history," writes Amir Taheri in his history of Ayatollah Khomeini and his ascent to political power.[20]

The Shah is on his last legs in August 1978 . . . the fire is what one calls a *fanal* (particularly since the film shown was a pro-Shah documentary of progress in Iran). But the stench of the burnt bodies weighs so heavily on the country that even the political statements, otherwise stopping for nothing, skip a beat: "The tragedy created such widespread shock that for two full days neither the regime nor its opponents knew how to react."[21]

Ayatollah Khomeini in his exile in Paris ultimately makes the first move: via the BBC Iranian program in London, he alleges that

the Shah himself commissioned his Brigadier General Razmi with the staging of the cinema catastrophe . . .

"Model: Reichstag fire." *Navid,* the news magazine of the mullahs—illegal in Iran at that time—receives the "report" and disseminates it further . . .

This was not the only, just the largest, of a *series* of arson attacks on cinemas during the Iranian "Revolution" . . . and not the last: the cinema was a well-chosen enemy of the *fundamentalist opponents* of the Shah's regime . . . the clearest expression of the "Westernization" of Iranian Islamic culture . . . one of the primary causes of the many unveiled women on the streets of large Iranian cities. The Shah was the (predominantly US-controlled) emancipator in the eyes of the mullahs . . . in the eyes of the Left, just the opposite, a suppressor of democracy . . . Leftists and fundamentalists ultimately fight him together . . . the most peculiar coalitions are formed in history (the history of catastrophes).

The last Shah-appointed regime quickly decides, before going down, to close all four of the country's casinos and imposes a ban on exhibition of films with "sexually suggestive scenes" . . .

Bans, fires . . . the last and first wing beat of coming and going dictatorships . . .

How did Khomeini, exiled commander of the Iranian fundamentalist revolution with residence in Paris, gain access to the Protestant BBC? World power poker . . . Khomeini profits from the trouble the Shah is in with the British because of his splendid relations with the Americans. Iran belonged traditionally to the British sphere of influence until the Second World War: the majority of Allied relief deliveries for the Soviet Union during the war passed through Iran. In this way the country advanced, also with the Americans, to the *Bridge of Victory* against Hitler. After the war, Iran, as a potential site for deployment of American nuclear weapons against the Soviet Union, and because of its oil, became an increasingly important ally of the USA in the Cold War. In the 1960s the U.S. influence increased still: the same applied to the trade relations of Iran with the Federal Republic of Germany. The Shah consequently fell out of favor with the British. Already in the 1960s, the British opened to the fundamentalist mullahs BBC broadcast channels meant specifically for Iran. When in 1977 Khomeini in Paris settles into his final exile before his return as ruler, he discovers to his astonishment another Shah opponent in Giscard d'Estaing. France also hopes for advantages from the overthrow of Reza Pahlavi and his dynasty . . . and the Americans, too, are less favorably disposed toward the Shah than was earlier the case: . . . they fear his regime is too weak to keep the increasing

leftist tendencies in Iran under control. Iran is possibly falling "to Communism" . . .

Under the injunction to back off on public attacks against the USA and the West in general, Khomeini receives support in his Parisian suburb of Neauphle-le-Château—the local post office connects two telex and six direct telephone lines to Iran. For the first time in the sixteen years of his war against the peacock throne, Khomeini is in a position to "communicate" hourly with Motahari, his representative in Tehran. What is more: a rented local recording studio produces thousands of tapes in the following months with daily messages from the Ayatollah "to his people." Sermons, speeches, interviews reach Tehran hourly and the BBC daily.

"In that Parisian suburb the Ayatollah gave a total of 132 radio, television and press interviews during his four-month stay. He issued some fifty declarations which were quickly published and distributed in Tehran."[22] The Ayatollah, absent in Iran, acoustically gains a *daily presence* for Iranians: over the same portable radios and radio cassette recorders from which, at the same time, western youths feed themselves the remaining musical spasms of the 1970s and the beginning of punk . . . the modernization commandments of the hour.[23]

The burning *Rex* in Abadan ignites the "hot phase" of the revolution. . . . Parisian telephones, radios, and cassette recorders accelerate the victory of the Islamic revolution. . . . Shiite fundamentalism triumphs via the western industry of transistors and transformers.

A little later (twenty years after Eisenhower) Khomeini becomes the first Islamic TV president. . . . We see television in Iran in the 1980s as agitation medium for a nation-state militarism . . . the *most direct* connection of the political and religious leader with "the people" . . .

"Cool medium" . . . "hot medium" . . . Marshal McLuhan's value scale is wrong for Iran; here radio, *as well as* television, were *hot hot hot* and continue thus.

Each new medium is in the *moment* of its seizure of power an absolute sovereign, of course in accordance with the given surroundings, but sovereign nonetheless. For Iran in 1978: tape recorder yes . . . *Shiite* tape recorder. Compact cassettes with *Read Only Memory*. Cinema no . . . *infidel* cinema, erotic cinema, Cinema World West.

Their Masters' voice blasting from the technologized mosques . . . the generators of state-creating late-show catastrophes.[24]

The industrial fascist magic formula of *Dual Use* opens up unheard-of possibilities in the current state of global media nonsimultaneities. What will young Chinese conquer with their ghetto

blasters . . . their girlfriend? . . . markets for Phillip Morris? . . . Europe? . . . or *their* country?

* * *

Who could have known anything about the Iranian media war in Berlin on 2 June 1967? Mayor Schütz and his police force protected the undisturbed gaze of the Shah upon the Brandenburg Gate with *liverwurst tactics* and the shooting of the student Ohnesorg; the Shah, who was condemned *to fall* in the BBC, in the Palais d'Elysées, in the Pentagon . . . the Shah, who even in Iran was *screened* from view, was, in other words, *media backward.*

Who reckoned with mullahs and *radio studios*? Shadows of new leaders in (of all places) the trailblazing transistors of the West?

No one. Out of *our* suitcases came jazz and rock . . . our *fundamentalism* . . . jazz and rock . . . and *never again,* for our sound-saturated brains, would there be voices of "priests and politicians" at our entries and exits, where the final stages are wired together with the brain . . .

Medium Supergold

Beginning in 1492 the royally dispatched conquistadors expected gold and silver in raging currents flowing from the wonderful catastrophe of the new Atlantis surfacing from the blue Caribbean waters . . . great Atlantis . . . Columbus's news . . .

Rio de la Plata is called "silver river" . . . so named by its discoverer Díaz de Solis because of its "metallic" hue . . .

Argentina (from the Latin *argentum,* "silver") was supposed to be the land of silver as Mexico was the land of gold . . . and if not Mexico, then Eldorado.

The morphologies were deceptive, but prospects never cease: in the designations of subsequent hopes in all things "gold," America stuck to shining metals: tobacco, the foundation of the first North American wealth, advanced to "brown gold,"[25] cotton to the white one . . . "black gold" coal . . . supergolden gold oil. Then came the media silver screen—the film screen in America—and the radio tube's crystal valve. In its interior, the crystal philosopher's stone sparkles so enchantingly like the promised metal of the silver screen of cinema light (what the Germans call instead film's "canvas screen" is completely un-American). And the Aztec on top of the record group distributes gold records to the king of diamond needles . . . Platinum Records . . .

. . . *Record and Play* . . . technical alchemies, processes from the world of *making gold* . . . originally an American technomedia occultism. Export hit No. 1 . . . virus . . . spread out into the occult of everyday life.

Notes

[1] Heinrich von Kleist, "The Earthquake in Chile," trans. Michael Hamburger, in *German Romantic Novellas: Heinrich von Kleist and Jean Paul,* ed. Frank G. Ryder and Robert M. Browning (New York: Continuum, 1985), 122–35, quotation on 122.

[2] Ibid., 127.

[3] Ibid., 135.

[4] Joseph A. Page, *Perón: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1983), 2; hereafter cited in the text.

[5] Women receive the right to vote on 23 September 1947.

[6] Lester A. Sobel, ed., *Argentina and Perón: 1970–75* (New York: Facts on File, 1975), 10.

[7] The Congress bestowed upon her the title *Jefa Esperitual de la Nacion.*

[8] Sobel, *Argentina and Perón,* 34.

[9] In politics and literature, *Evita* (the musical, as well as her actual political history) plays with the figure of Inez de Castro, famous in the Spanish-speaking world as the "dead queen on the throne." Inez was the secret wife of the Spanish King Pedro (reigning from 1357 to 1367). He married the commoner after the death of his proper wife. His father prevented her enthronement during his lifetime. Pedro fought him and set the embalmed body of Inez on the throne after his father's death. The court and the world had to parade past her and kiss the hand of the dead (cf. Martin Nozik, "The Inez de Castro Theme in European Literature," *Comparative Literature* 3, no. 4 [1951]: 330–41).

Camões deals with the story in the third canto of the Portuguese national epic *Os Lusíades* (1572). From then on, "the dead to be honored on the throne" becomes a subject of world literature: over two hundred adaptations and several operas. In Spanish-Portuguese literature, Don Pedro and Inez are probably better known than Orpheus and Eurydice.

Luis Vélez de Guevara (1579–1644) wrote one of Spain's best-known and most often staged plays about the fate of Inez de Castro (to give a broader historical basis to the later famous statement that one who speaks of Castro must not remain silent about Guevara). The possible date of origin for the drama is around 1607.

Whoever speaks of Fidel, must not keep silent about Che . . . another dead person on the throne . . .

[10] This is also feasible in more developed crisis-ridden societies.

[11] Quoted in Maxine Block, ed., *Current Biography 1940: Who's News and Why* (New York: H. W. Wilson, 1940), 713.

[12] Erik Barnouw, *Tube of Plenty: The Evolution of American Television,* rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 17–18.

[13] 1517: Cortez with the Aztecs—one of Montezuma's vengeful number games.

[14] Westinghouse broadcasts the entire opera season of the Chicago Civic Opera on its own KYW station in 1921–22. Only opera, nothing else . . . like the women's chant from the convent church in Hildegard von Bingen's time in order to promote Christianization. The opera songs increase the number of radio sets sold in the Chicago area from November 1921 till summer 1922 from 1,300 to 20,000. At the end of 1924 there are an estimated 3 million receivers in the USA. In Germany, civilian radio does not *begin* until 1922–23.

[15] Gertrude Stein, "Didn't Nelly and Lilly Love You," in *Gertrude Stein: In Words and Pictures,* ed. Renate Stendhal (Chapel Hill, NC: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill, 1994), 65.

[16] Stein, "Didn't Nelly," 65.

[17] Alice B. Toklas, *What Is Remembered* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1963), 23.

[18] Cf. also ibid., 16–23. Her travel companion Harriet Levy read *Lord Jim* (discontentedly) on the crossing from New York to Cherbourg (19).

[19] *Domingo* means "the Sunday child" . . . born under the star of the real catastrophe . . . turned into real medium.

[20] Amir Taheri, *The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini and the Islamic Revolution* (London: Hutchinson, 1985), 223.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid., 231.

[23] Weakened by cancer and despondent, the Shah is not seen for months in his medium, the state medium of television (the medium that Khomeini will unswervingly occupy and monopolize for himself a few months later).

[24] One can study the religious instructions of Khomeini to Iranians in his *Clarification of Questions* (Ayatollah Sayyed Ruhollah Mousavi Khomeini, *A Clarification of Questions,* trans. J. Borujerdi [Boulder, CO: Westview, 1984]). It presents numbered life and relationship instructions for each everyday situation, for everything legal, commercial, and so on: 2,897 paragraphs in all.

Paragraphs 394–499, for instance, stipulate conduct for menstruating women (105 rules for the 6 principally different "sorts" of menstruating women, according to Khomeini).

Paragraphs 2,889 and 2,890 ban the sale and purchase of radios and televisions by Iranians, who want them for anything other than religious use (391–92).

[25] When, after over one hundred years of tobacco cultivation, the soil was exhausted and other useful crops were cultivated for regeneration (grain, among others), the original tobacco region in Virginia was dubbed the Golden Tobacco Belt. Old Gold is a popular brand in the nineteenth century. In 1926, it is brought on the market as a new brand and changes in Germany after 1948 to the well-known Golddollar (filterless in a green pack; youth weed smoked on the railway embankment).

Sublimation as Media:
inter urinas et faeces nascimur

Craig Saper

> The lack of a clear and coherent theory of sublimation remains one of the lacunae in psychoanalytic thought.
>
> —Laplanche and Pontalis,
> *The Language of Psychoanalysis*[1]

> *sublimate*[2]
> 1. To change from a solid to a gas or from a gas to a solid without becoming a liquid.
> 2. To express potentially violent or socially unacceptable impulses in a modified socially acceptable manner.

Cloud Machine

In his exploration of the "influencing machine" experienced by schizophrenics, Victor Tausk describes something that very closely resembles the cinematic apparatus and also suggests virtual reality. His article "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia," published in 1919,[3] represents one of the most important contributions to the psychoanalytic reception of the media. This machine, as described by schizophrenics, "consists of boxes, cranks, levers, wheels, buttons, wires, batteries, and the like."[4] This detailed technological explanation of the strange influence

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the schizophrenics report demonstrates how they use science to explain the sense of persecution that, at first, appears beyond scientific explanation. In describing how the mechanism works, patients describe how the machine produces pictures similar to those projected by a "magic lantern" or "cinematograph." These pictures are not hallucinations, but rather two-dimensional single-plane images projected on to walls. This description is remarkable not just for being an apparent invention of a paranoiac, but also, and more importantly, for its suggestion of the cinema as an influencing machine. Although the "influencing machine" described does not appear in a socially acceptable way (i.e., the general community does not see these movies), it so closely resembles the cinema that one cannot help but wonder whether Tausk's analysis can apply also to film and, more aptly, electronic media's latest developments. The machine produces and removes thoughts and feelings by means of "waves or rays," and patients sometimes describe the machine as a "suggestion machine" if they have less familiarity with technology. Those familiar with contemporary and future trends in technology will recognize that the electronic machines will *influence* rather than *suggest* as in hypnosis. We do not follow in a trance the images on the screen; we interact with them, allowing them to influence our movements, thoughts, and feelings.

Cloud of Scandal

William James "produced the first thoroughgoing Darwinian epistemology. He proposed that creative ideas were the results of selection of fit thought variations from among the multitude spontaneously generated."[5] James Mark Baldwin criticized James for ignoring the social aspect of knowledge and for not having any constraints on the production of mental variations. Baldwin proposed the notion of social heredity.[6] His definition of truth included "social confirmability," which required other people to agree and similarly understand variations. "Social confirmability" was about choosing "fit ideas" according to the "fitness for imitative reproduction and application."[7] This theory allowed Baldwin to explain how society continues to evolve event though physical selection might no longer play the crucial role in human evolution.

Unfortunately, Baldwin's own fate seemed to confirm his theory that social context plays a crucial role in determining the truth value of ideas. If "fitness" depended on imitation and application, then an unpopular theorist may doom creative variations. The scandal that sent Baldwin from the ranks of the "most important

psychologists" in America, and from his position at the Johns Hopkins university, also appears to have buried his theories in an eighty-year hibernation. Behavioral and, then humanistic, theories would not merely dominate explanations of creativity during those years, but they would also efface any social evolving system theories. Those theories that did mention social contexts never made use of the evolutionary or social selection schema. Baldwin's unfortunate personal history appears to have played a role in determining the course of the selection of ideas. Indeed, most psychologists know little about this previous leader of American psychology.[8]

Anyone who might guess that extracurricular activities do not play a role in the evolution of thought may find this story instructive. For, after the scandal that sent Baldwin to Europe, his name was literally erased from psychological theory. Many of the major academics in the field quietly denounced him and made sure his theories would fade away. The sin that Baldwin committed against society consisted of an alleged visit to a "House of Negro women" in 1908. His behavior unacceptably added interracial encounter to adultery and prostitution.

Cloud People

In ritual dances, the Hopi kachina functions as a "person" who travels and mediates between realms: *hopi/kahopi* (Hopi/un-Hopi), living and dead, liquid (e.g., rain) and flesh (i.e., life). The kachinas function as "cloud people" wandering through the sky and raining upon the earth. The literal translation of kachina as "a sitter" suggests how these masked figures mediate among gods and people. The kachina "comes to sit and listen to the petitions of the people."[9] Usually the Hopi pray to these cloud people for rain, but these messengers can bring any needed resource (e.g., money). The kachinas do not appear directly from the gods, but appear in the masked dancers who channel the kachinas. During the dance, the masked participant loses any personal identity.

Seven Clouds

Alfred Rosenberg, the Nazis' chief philosopher, describes the Jewish version of paradise. He writes, "The Tree of Life will grow, radiating 500,000 kinds of taste of scent. Seven Clouds will lie over the tree and the Jews will knock its branches so that its magnificent perfume is wafted from one end of the world to the other. This

land of milk and honey grew with religious sanction and then celebrated its rebirth in Jewish Marxism and its 'splendid' future state. The greed of the Jews exists because of their bankrupt theology, whether of the past or the present. At the same time they almost completely lack a truly and artistic creativity."[10]

Smoke

Already these fragments suggest a "fantastic sounding" speculation about the control of fire by renouncing the urge of "putting it out with a stream of urine." It is a speculation Freud describes in terms of a renunciation of a desire. In the context of this essay, the result of the activity described is crucial. Freud writes that "the first person to renounce this desire and spare the fire was able to carry it off with him and subdue it to his own use. By damping down the fire of his own sexual excitation, he had tamed the natural force of fire." These activities also suggest "the connection between ambition, fire, and urethral eroticism." Many commentators have pointed to this discussion in a footnote to *Civilization and Its Discontents*.[11] What this activity of starting to urinate and then renouncing the urge produces—that is, what sublimation literally creates—is smoke.

Projection of Smoke

Protocinematic exhibitions in the nineteenth century depended on the widespread acceptance, or at least fascination with, spiritualism. The audience would enter a dark room decorated appropriately with flying skulls and other signs of spirits. Large urns would produce clouds of smoke, and a projector would illuminate floating images of ghosts. The excitement over these seances, with men drawing their swords and women fainting in fear, provoked entrepreneurs to find other ways to continue to make the mere play of light and shadows on smoke into images of spirits and guides from beyond everyday life. In short, cinema began with smoke and mirrors.

Fumeblemation

In a discussion of Lewis Carroll's inventive practices, Gilles Deleuze[12] points to an exemplary case of the portmanteau construction. He finds the word in the following passage from *The Hunting of the Snark:*

> If your thoughts incline ever so little towards "fuming," you will say "fuming-furious"; if they turn, even by a hair's breadth, towards "furious," you will say "furious-fuming;" but if you have that rarest of gifts, a perfectly balanced mind, you will say "frumious."

Deleuze concludes from this that the "function of the portmanteau word always consists in the ramification of the series into which it is inserted. This is the reason why it never exists alone."[13] Discussions of Freud's theory—or lack of coherent theory—of sublimation often attempt to abstract a mechanistic or hydraulic model that can explain events outside of the series of events within which sublimation occurs. Further, abstract models of sublimation necessarily discount the disjunction of activities condensed in events Freud attempts to describe. One might argue that the process involved a certain fumbling around in the dark; and this fumbling can suggest the fumbling-bumbling of putting out the fire. One might focus on the fumes produced or the fuming of the participants. The disjunction within sublimation between noun and verb, memory and potential future, and renunciation or mourning and celebration makes the term sound more and more like an (im) possible portmanteau word. Of course, James Joyce also uses this disjunctive strategy not only in Molly Bloom's literalized stream-of-consciousness-and-urination, but also in *Finnegan's Wake* (1939), where Joyce writes about "potting the po to shambe."[14]

Sublimation Box: Smoke and Mirrors?

In the United States by the middle of the twentieth century, behaviorist models of creativity partially eclipsed, just by the sheer volume of psychological studies, psychoanalytic theories of sublimation. In the enthusiasm surrounding breakthroughs in learning theory later closely associated with B. F. Skinner's learning boxes, psychologists set out to mass produce the traits of creative activity; that is, they investigated the possibility of teaching everyone to be "more creative," if not exactly better at sublimation. Many commentators use J. P. Guilford's presidential address to the American Psychological Association members in 1950[15] as the watershed event that sparked widespread interest in creativity in the United States. The staggering increase in the number of citations in *Psychological Abstracts* during the 1950s indicates the growth of interest in studying creativity. Guilford's own research cataloged the characteristics of creative geniuses. The traits he discovered included a generalized sensitivity to problems or an ability to notice inadequacies in situations,

an ability to offer solutions (what Guilford called "fluency of thinking"), and the flexibility to see old problems in new ways. In solving problems, they offered original and uncommon responses, redefined or reorganized their knowledge, and usually combined two or more of these abilities in constructing often complex solutions. The apparent obviousness of these traits does not arise from their poignancy but from their generality. Guilford sought to map the parameters of creativity, but he offered a tautological definition: if creativity requires an original response, then original responses are traits of creative individuals. Merely to state the obvious in the most general terms does not help guide applications for the encouragement of creativity. In spite of these problems, psychologists at the time attempted to find individuals with these traits in the general population. No mention was made of the fires of desire nor the smoke, steam, and fog of sublimation.

While Guilford extrapolated traits from accounts of creative geniuses, E. P. Torrance[16] developed a creativity test and attempted to work toward a program to teach creativity. The test, initially devised in the mid-1960s, asks participants to manipulate objects in unusual ways, draw pictures from abstract shapes, or solve a riddle. Unusual answers are encouraged. For example, one question asks the participant to list possible uses of a brick. The evaluator grades the test according to four factors that closely resemble Guilford's traits: fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality. In grading the test, one counts the total number of solutions to determine fluency, and counts different types or kinds of solutions to determine flexibility. For example, if you wrote down two uses for a brick, then you would have a fairly low score on fluency. If you suggested different types of uses, then you would have a high flexibility score; using a brick as a sheltering device in a brick house is a different type of use than using it as a water-displacement device in the tank of a toilet. Elaboration depends on how much extra information a participant supplies for each solution. For example, the answer "to build things with" is less elaborate than the answer "to use in the tank of my toilet to save water every time I flush the toilet." An unusual but appropriate or possible answer determines the score for originality. An inappropriate use would be an impossible use. According to Torrance, any creative individual will have a high cumulative score on this test. Another question required participants to solve a riddle. Left in a room without any tools whatsoever, the participant must devise a way to get a ping-pong ball out of a small hole too deep and narrow for fingers. The solution is, of course, to urinate in the hole, allowing the ball to rise to the surface.

Criticisms of narrow notions of creativity have invariably alluded to Torrance's test. Critics complain that knowing ways to use bricks has little to do with innovations or creativity in a large-scale social context. By defining creativity outside of cultural contexts, Torrance does not explain how a high score leads to innovation. And, by focusing on individual traits, he does not explore which social contexts might encourage these traits.

The use of practical building objects (e.g., bricks or nails) in tests of creativity may suggest a link between conceptions of language and architecture. For example, Wittgenstein described language games by alluding to the discussion between a carpenter and a helper. His conception of the building trade as somehow linked to the very foundations of language resembles Torrance's implied suggestion that creativity has something to do with understanding how to use a brick. It is as if Torrance answered Wittgenstein by claiming that participants can build alternative language games from the raw materials of their current language games.

Many years later, Torrance added two more traits. He wrote, in the 1980s, that "falling in love" with the endeavor and the perseverance to overcome hostility toward that love are the major factors for predicting creative achievements later in life. In making this argument, he describes a boy who "was in love with nature, especially birds. He was a social outcast in his youth because of this [love of birds]. . . . This has been a common experience of many of our most eminent inventors, scientists, artists, musicians, writers, and so on."[17] On the one hand, Torrance appears to describe a commonplace many take for granted: creative people love their endeavors even if that love alienates them from their own community. He seems guilty of nothing more than the common social scientific trait of stating the obvious. And he seems to find company in his argument with critics who defend writers against censorship.[18]

Herbert Blau, for example, describes how he defended Ginsberg's *Howl* (1956) at a censorship trial. He spoke of the "'furious negation' of its hysterical cadence as part of a 'literature of disorder, psychosis, and fear and trembling,' perhaps the most honored tradition of the modern, 'a sustained elegy to the loss of power in a time of power' which made an affirmation of perversions 'out of motives so intensely serious that the placidly conformist mind cannot even feel them,' no less question 'the legitimacy of the intent, or its right to an open hearing.'"[19]

On the other hand, analyzing the ideological assumptions of this supposedly innocent love and the corresponding alienation uncovers a more malignant problem in this particular combination

of love and creativity. Although Torrance argues that the love of creative individuals makes them easy targets of a narrow-minded conservative community, Paul Feyerabend explains how a loving faith in an endeavor creates many dangers for an uninvolved community. Both of these scholars argue that whether the community finally forces the individual into alienation or not, the individual's love and faithfulness initiate that alienation. Torrance never examines if, and how, the community benefits from those individuals' love of the endeavor. More importantly, he fails to examine how creativity functions in the context of a sociopolitical structure. That social structure includes what science considers objective, reasonable, and creative. The relationships among these terms help Feyerabend explain the dangers of an unfettered love for the endeavor.

Freud's discussion of sublimation already suggests this uneasy and, often, disjunctive relationship among desire, love, and socially sanctioned, and accepted, innovations. His *Civilization and Its Discontents* copiously analyzes the connections among sublimation, libidinal development, and the process of civilization. In fact, he argues that love of a sexual partner opens the door to many dangerous dependencies. A few people can "make themselves independent of their object's acquiescence by displacing what they mainly value from being loved onto loving; they protect themselves against the loss of the object by directing their love, not to single objects but to all men alike; and they avoid the uncertainties and disappointments of genital love by turning away from its sexual aims and transforming the instinct into an impulse with an inhibited aim" (*C&ID,* 102). And yet, even at this point in his argument, Freud adds that "a love that does not discriminate seems to forfeit a part of its own value, by doing an injustice to its object" (*C&ID,* 102). He goes on to explain that love has an ambiguous relationship with civilization: it resists the interests of civilization, and civilization attempts to restrict its bounds. More importantly, "it is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness" (*C&ID,* 114). Love jams the utopian project of the sublimation box even as it sets it going.

Black Cloud

A number of late nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century commentators associated prostitution with "primitive" societies. Further, as Sander Gilman[20] notes, the supposed connection

between the sexuality of "primitive" people and prostitutes also included the connection with black sexuality. The association of hypersexuality and primitive society made sense to scholars who saw civilization as an outgrowth of sublimation and control over the world. Significantly, efforts to gain control over diseases led to control of slaves as sexual objects. Gilman explains that "the connection made in the late nineteenth century between this earlier model of control and the later model of sexual control advocated by the public health authorities came about through the association of two bits of medical mythology. First, the primary marker of the black is taken to be skin color; second, there is a long history of perceiving this skin color as the result of some pathology. The favorite theory . . . is that the skin color and physiognomy of the black are the result of congenital leprosy. It is not very surprising therefore to read in the late nineteenth century . . . that syphilis was not introduced into Europe by Columbus' sailors but rather was a form of leprosy that had long been present in Africa and spread into Europe in the Middle Ages. The association of the black and syphilophobia is thus manifest. Black females do not merely represent the sexualized female, they also represent the female as the source of corruption and disease."[21] Later in his argument, Gilman goes on to mention again that blackness becomes "an image of the power of sexuality [not] in general [but] a damaged, corrupted, and corrupting sexuality."[22]

From the Clouds

In "The Moses of Michelangelo," Freud concludes by arguing that "what we see before us is not the inception of a violent action but the remains of a movement that has already taken place. In his first transport of fury, Moses desired to act, to spring up and take vengeance and forget the Tablets; but he has overcome the temptation, and he will now remain seated and still, in his frozen wrath and in his pain mingled with contempt. Nor will he throw away the Tablets so that they will break on the stones, for it is on their especial account that he has controlled his anger; it was to preserve them that he kept his passion in check. . . . He remembered his mission and for its sake renounced an indulgence of his feelings."[23] Freud uses this passage to describe Moses's feelings and actions; later he connects his reading to a general theory of sublimation. The statue is a "concrete expression of the highest mental achievement that is possible in a man, that of struggling successfully against an inward

passion for the sake of a cause to which he has devoted himself."[24] In this description, Freud suggests that the artist sublimates passions in order to protect something that benefits the entire community, whether they like it or not. This benefit seems to arrive from a greater source even more powerful than either the inward passions or the ability to constrain the furious fuming. That source is, on the one hand, god, and on the other, artistic expression or, perhaps, the Pope's power and money.

Sublimation requires a series of factors rather than a singular hydraulic action. Few commentators mention the importance of the "gift" of the law or commandments in Freud's model of sublimation. But whatever happens up there in the clouds also motivates the effort to constrain the passions. Certainly, Freud does not want to adopt a theological model of creativity, nor does he want to depend on a completely cynical model in which God's or the Pope's power constrains the artist's passion. He does argue in *Civilization and Its Discontents* that "first comes renunciation of instinct owing to fear of aggression by the external authority" (*C&ID,* 128). The artist sublimates this anxiety and anger by expressing a love, which necessarily involves the disjunctive hate, in the form of a gift. The gift, as an expression of renounced passions and sublimated anger, only finds itself exposed in the paranoid and punishing civilization that fails to acknowledge it as a creative achievement. In any other case, the expression remains unconscious to all involved; no one, not even the artists, has a transcendent awareness of the clouded overdetermined origins. More importantly, once the clouds part, once there is an unveiling, then the aesthetic achievement disappears as though in a magicians' puff of smoke. The veiling itself, the confusion between sublimation as noun or verb, produces the effect described by Freud.

In his analysis of the "herd instinct," Freud describes the mechanisms of social justice through which "we deny ourselves many things so that others may have to do without them as well, or, what is the same thing, may not be able to ask for them. This demand for equality is the root of social conscience and the sense of duty."[25] The demand for renunciation out of a sense of duty reinforces Freud's claims about Michelangelo's and Moses's restraint and achievement. It is unclear from these remarks how precisely sublimation relates to a sense of social justice. Although they are not exactly synonymous, they have some striking similarities. Freud continues his discussion of social justice by making reference to a particularly apt example and then goes on to summarize his argument in terms similar to his conception of sublimation. He writes

that social justice "reveals itself unexpectedly in the syphilitic's dread of infecting other people, which psychoanalysis has taught us to understand."

> The dread exhibited by these poor wretches corresponds to their violent struggles against the unconscious wish to spread their infection on to other people; for why should they alone be infected and cut off from so much? Why not other people as well? And the same germ is to be found in the apt story of the judgment of Solomon. If one woman's child is dead, the other shall not have a live one either. The bereaved woman is recognized by this wish.
>
> Thus social feeling is based upon the reversal of what was first a hostile feeling into a positively-toned tie in the nature of an identification.[26]

Freud's use of the syphilitic condition as part of his explanation would seem strange outside the context of the late nineteenth-century and early-twentieth-century medical interest in stopping the spread of sexual disease especially through social and psychological control. Further, the quote takes on an almost allegorical cast when placed beside other fragments in this essay on the relationships among the spread of disease, stereotypes, prostitution, social (in)justice, and sublimation. It is as if the sense of sublimation takes place with these motifs recurring. It is a scene we only overhear as though in the next room, and which we almost certainly misunderstand (at least until much later).

Instead of conceptualizing creativity as a pragmatic strategy or as a fount of innovation, Freud's great achievement is to conceive the threatening aspects of creative achievement as something that pulls desires and passions into a form that, then, more powerfully pulls others into its sexual/renunciative collapse of space: as more people give into sublimation, more people will fill the limited space of civilization with increasing numbers of veiled hostile and discontented expressions. Paradoxically, this intense collapse of love, hate, and anxiety continues to seduce civilization into giving up pieces of order and control. In short, Freud's model of sublimation more closely resembles a cultural black hole than an individual's personal enlightenment. With most commentators seeking to find a common hermeneutic ground for understanding creativity in terms of sublimation, few have appreciated Freud's political maneuvering against a humanism that sees individuals and civilization working smoothly together for the common good. Instead, he conceives of sublimation in much the same way as something like a primal scene taken in as details, fragments, digressions. Although this is not the sexual primal scene, we invariably (mis)

understand it in a similar way (as hostile and fear-provoking) without further interpretation.

Hollywood Sublimation

Laurence Rickels in *The Case of California*,[27] a text with a scope large enough to investigate the connections between Germany before World War II and its literal extension/critique in the emigrant culture of California after World War II and into the contemporary scene, stresses how psychoanalytic and psychological researchers have argued for a strong link between media-technical apparatuses and the psyche. Psychoanalysis appears to have a particular fascination with media screens and outlets. Media researchers in turn often use cinema as an analogy for the machinations of the psyche. Examining the cinema and psyche connection, Rickels traces the history of investigations conducted by researchers as different as Münsterberg and Staudenmeier linking particular mental processes and the cinema. Herbert Marcuse,[28] a German Frankfurt school emigrant to California, uses the cinema as a crucial example for his argument and also suggests that the cinema creates the massification of privacy. When the projector turns on, everyone has the same media, the same Other, the same Unconscious. What is lost in this massification is the ability to create movies in your own head; it becomes difficult to turn off the theater's projector and begin projecting your own desires and utopian fantasies.

Using this negative criticism of the cinema and of the feel-good culture it reinforces, the American sentiments for creativity (shared by the Nazis, as well) look like the "California" version of Freud's Germanic sublimation. Creativity, especially during the 1950s, epitomized the continuing collective effort to "feel good about one's self"; its big-screen familial version of the European mix of *Übermensch* and sublimation made heroes out of happy-go-lucky technicians who followed the rules for the ultimate in individuality: homespun safe creativity. Freud's sublimation contained all of the angst involved in the family drama. To borrow Marcuse's criticism of the cinema, sublimation allowed for the "emptiness," self-hatred, and personal dreams exiled from, and recuperated into, the Hollywood-psychological soft version of creativity. Rickels notices the threat to this model of creativity lurking in the diabolical seductiveness of imitation. He concludes, and partially summarizes, his extended serialized essay on the case of California with a discussion of creativity and invention in terms of its tenuous situation:

> The dialectic of the enlightenment turned on two types of invention: the invention of stories and that of machines. But since invention is always invention of oneself, as soon as the creator of either type of invention has to be identified (and identified with), the invention belongs to the other. At first invention implies illegality, and the breaking of a contract. . . . Invention, which was always invention of the subject, produces via its backfire (via depersonalization) the impostor, gadget love, the leader and the pack. But invention (like citation) still belongs to the other who's not new but who's the future, the time to come.[29]

This passage is dedicated to Derrida's work on the invention of the Other and the pregnant desire associated with creativity's double, sublimation: a time to come. But Rickels uses the term *backfire* to describe the paradoxical outcome of "invention," and, in doing so, alludes to a usually effaced second fire involved in sublimation. It is no longer merely a matter of a fire burning or a fire extinguished; now, every fire (sublimation) has its backfire (as in the explosion of "unburnt exhaust" that produces smoke and no fire power). It is this smoke, this acting-out sublimation, that is more than a form of the colloquial expression "don't piss your life away," which hints a potential disjunction between sublimation and creativity.

Sublimation Principle

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* Freud introduces the term "ethical sublimation."[30] Considering the harsh treatment he gives this concept, the reader might suspect that he wants to distinguish it from sublimation. Later in the same passage, he refers directly to the term *sublimation* as a synonym for ethical sublimation. First, he discounts the possibility that people have a sublimation instinct that will propel them toward perfection and development into *Übermenschen.* Second, he argues that sublimation will not relieve repression's effects. He equates the drive toward perfection with a self-persecuting repressed hostility and an overblown superego. The generous and compassionate parental figure produces the chip off the old block, who, in turn, represses hostility against the authority and strives, instead, to improve his or her own self even if it means directing the hostility inward. Of course, this discussion about sublimation occurs in the wider context of an analysis of the possibility of a death instinct. The desire to return to the inanimate state might correspond to a death instinct according to Freud. He writes of a "sublime necessity" of death as a manifestation of adaptation. While he connects libidinal drives to the Eros

of poets and philosophers, he connects this sublime necessity to a desire to return to the womb. In this context, sublimation, distinguished from the sublime, involves the compulsion to continue to leave the womb with all of the trauma involved in that evacuation. Just as Freud extends his analysis of the pleasure and reality principles to include the possibility of a death instinct, opening the way for Jacques Lacan's work on lack, Freud also hints at something beyond the "feel-good" pleasure usually associated with sublimation and creative achievement. Just as death occurs before birth, not merely after birth, the process of sublimation requires both the sublime necessity of a return to the womb and a continual libidinal and traumatic rebirth. Of course, the maternal figure in this scenario finds herself in a particularly troubling situation.

Lacan's conceptualization of desire as a ratio between emptiness or lack and Symbolic structures explains sublimation by alluding to Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* as well as to Heidegger's writings. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis,* Lacan uses the making of a pot to illustrate how lack and sublimation might function together.[31] In this way, he connects his reading to a linguistic approach. When the potter makes the pot, the user can then look inside and, for the first time, see that it has "nothing" in it. Just as the potter organizes a structure around a void, the Symbolic forms in relation to a void. Discussions of creativity usually reduce the pot to its literal form and function. Creativity describes a relation only with presence. For Lacan, the sublimation occurs not according to a sexualized hydraulic model, but as an effort to symbolize a lack or impasse; paradoxically this lack exists (in the present and as presence) only after symbolization. Mary Ann Doane connects Lacan's theory of lack and sublimation to courtly love "which is dependent upon the very inaccessibility of its object."[32]

Trouble

In the context of French psychoanalysis, Laplanche's work on sublimation does not seem to suggest a great departure from other optimistic appraisals; on this side of the Atlantic, on the other hand, his work puts *trouble* into the equation of creative achievement. By separating sublimation from the principle of repetition, which is associated with repression, Laplanche seeks to define sublimation in terms of innovation rather than pathology. Further, he attempts to find in sublimation a mobile concept that can function both in opposition to sexuality and in conjunction with it. Doane notices

Freud associated sublimation with *epistemophilia,* the drive to know; and this drive to know commonly gets mixed up with *scophophilia* especially around childhood fascination with sexual difference and secrets. Doane argues that Laplanche's use of "investigation" to explain sublimation opens the door to sexuality. For Doane, "Laplanche's researches keep tripping against the difficult relation of the sexual and the non-sexual. And it would seem that in each of Freud's readers, the concept of sublimation is brought back to sexuality" (255). Doane also finds this trouble in Freud's work itself and in Lacan's, as well:

> It is quite striking that Lacan locates sublimation, which Freud associated with the sphere of the non-sexual, in a desexualized sexual relation between man and woman. Shot through with sexuality insofar as sexuality for Lacan is always infused with absence, courtly love would also represent the opposite of sexuality in what Lacan calls the "crude" sense. In any event, the difficulty of desexualizing sublimation is manifest in Lacan's discourse as well as in Freud's. (257)

Discussions of sublimation easily fall into a clouded effort to distinguish and join sexuality and nonsexuality. Perhaps sublimation itself clouds the issues and confuses desires.

Desire, in Laplanche's model of sublimation, functions as the term that grows out of a destabilization of a preexisting state of equilibrium. It falls on the side of the life instinct. Sublimation works to transform desire. One commentator notes that, contrary to Laplanche's approach,

> Freud would insist, in opposition to this optimistic view of sublimation, that the eruption of instinctual energy into the life of the self is a traumatic occurrence: the self is wounded by desire. Desire is experienced as a threatening intrusion, an influx of energy throwing the organism into a state of panic. The traumatic eruption of desire introduces dissonance into a harmonious whole. It threatens to overturn the self's existing system of meanings. As Melanie Klein remarks, the "depressive anxiety of disintegration," a terrifying experience of ontological insecurity, is a crucial motive for the sublimation of desire."[33]

Later this same commentator, Eric White, argues that Laplanche does in fact suggest that sublimation requires "traumatophilia." By separating out sublimation from repetition, Laplanche also refuses to suffer the traumas of the new part of an effort to repeat the past as the present; that is, someone unable to sublimate merely lives each day as if it were the same. In making this argument, Laplanche alludes to Freud's account about the myths concerning the early control of fire as the inaugural act of sublimation.[34] Freud

describes both the practice of renouncing the urge to urinate on the fire and the myth of Prometheus stealing the fire from the gods. Both stories illustrate the benefits gained by directing desire away from immediate physical and instinctual satisfaction toward a contemplation of future rewards. Desire appears in deferred fantasies of satisfaction. Although Freud suggests that when he invents civilization, Prometheus inevitably condemns humanity to unfulfilled desires and frustrations, Laplanche argues that Prometheus steals fire, sexual excitement, from the gods and offers the world "bliss without limit." For Laplanche, the myth involves two penises: a penis of water and a penis of fire. Eric White identifies the crucial fulcrum in Laplanche's reading of this dynamic of fire and water. Laplanche juxtaposes the career of Prometheus with that of Hercules, who rescues Prometheus when Zeus punishes him for his theft:

> Hercules, Laplanche argues, is undeniably a libidinal hero, associated with an unfettered expanse of desire, as when he floods the Aegean stables. The relationship between the two figures recapitulates the relationship between the primary and secondary processes and in effect defines the space within which an ideal sublimation of desire must situate itself. Thus, where Hercules represents an incoherent desiring frenzy seeking an ultimate discharge, Prometheus stands for a channeling of instinctual energy that renews rather than extinguishes the movement of desire. And where Prometheus stands for a repudiation of present pleasure and consequent retreat into dogmatic fantasy, Hercules would be that intrusion of instinctual energy which bursts through every structure intended to contain its flow: a traumatic eruption of desire enabling a new beginning.[35]

In this description of sublimation, we see the interplay between water imagery and the birth metaphor as a model of traumatic innovation.

Steam Heat: Prostitution Sublimation

Doane examines the distinction between symptomatic readings, common in media and cultural studies, and potential readings of sublimation in, for example, the cinema. In her careful and copious unpacking of the concept, she notices how the terms get caught up with sexuality:

> [W]hile the source or origin of sublimation is sexuality, sublimation is sublimation by virtue of a radical disjunction between the two, a gap which is unbridgeable—the displacement is irreversible. This is what marks the distinction between repression and sublimation—the symptom is interpretable, readable as the delegate of a repressed sexual conflict.

> Repression is in the final analysis reducible to sexuality. Sublimation, on the other hand, designates a realm of meanings which are not interpretable as sexual; they are excessive. Sublimation, in other words, marks the limit of psychoanalytic interpretation. (255)

At the limits of interpretation, she finds the mise-en-scène of sublimation. She finds Freud using the figures of the prostitute. These "bad copies of a work of art," in Luce Irigaray's terms, upset the economy of sublimation. Doane writes that

> the economy which subtends psychoanalytic theory is strongly influenced by a nineteenth-century version of thermodynamics in which the notion of the conservation of energy dictates the arrangements and displacements of a finite amount of libido. Sublimation is an exemplary consequence of this economy since it depends upon the notion that sexual energy is displaceable and modifiable and can be released, liberated for cultural work. This economy, however, is also used as a buttress against another kind of economy, one which involves prices, labor, and exchange value. What is at least partially at stake for Freud in the fragile concept of sublimation is keeping the two economies separate. (261)

Threatening the oppositions between sex and work, cultural value and perverse sexuality, the prostitute like the love gadget tempts true sublimation with a diabolical seductiveness: imitation. Doane notices that Freud associates prostitutes with primitives and regressive polymorphous perversity. The problem with the prostitutes is that they imitate rather than truly embody this. Their exploitative performance functions as one more shadow or ghost of sublimation threatening it with imitation, excess, and trickery.

Fog

"The Dachau Memorial Museum is open year round except for Christmas and national holidays. As with most of Europe, crowds are at their peak during the spring and summer. The morning hours, however, will afford the viewer the most intimacy. Visitors during the fall and winter will find the camp most depressing as the Bavarian weather will shroud the sight in a gray blanket."[36]

Clouded Thought

A group of researchers presented the Kpelle farmers with a set of twenty items, five each from four categories: food, clothing, tools,

and cooking utensils.[37] They asked the farmers to sort the objects into groups that go together. Instead of putting objects into the four taxonomic categories, the farmers would, for example, put the potato with the pot. "After all," they would explain, "one needs the pot to cook the potato." A "wise" man, they reasoned, would group these things in the same way. Startled, the experimenters asked how a "fool" would group the objects; the farmers explained that a fool would put the objects into four categories: food, clothing, tools, and cooking utensils. Although the Kpelle had the ability to do the rational taxonomic classification, they chose an alternative method.

Living with Angels

In his study *Creativity and Madness,*[38] Albert Rothenberg ends with a chapter on the effects of psychotherapy on creativity. He begins by recounting a number of artists and writers expressing fears that psychotherapy will interfere with their creative endeavors. Rothenberg argues that, in fact, therapy will alleviate blocks that interfere with Janusian and homospatial processes among other creative operations. In explaining how therapy works to increase creativity, he quotes at length a dream. In this dream "a man with a long sword was standing in front of you. Several unidentifiable people were also nearby. Suddenly, the man's sword turned into a sheath of fire, and he started to set three of the nearest people ablaze, all the while saying that it could not hurt them. They burned up" (177). Rothenberg explains how successful therapy sessions work through this dream. In interpreting the dream, a series of repressed and unacceptable associations were connected to the image of the swordsman and burning sword. It was both the abusive father's punishments and the therapist's enlightenments about making conscious unacceptable thoughts. In the dream, "the swordsman/therapist had reassured you that enlightenment and expression of your feelings about the people in your life who were nearest and most important to you would not hurt either them or you. Instead, however, these people ended up burned and completely destroyed. You also experienced your mother's lack of interventions with your abusive father, and feared your own feelings of unbearable rage toward her. . . . Over the months to follow, you begin to feel increasingly better. Finding yourself to be more relaxed and better able to get along with women of all types, you also seem to notice more about the physical world around you. When you sit down to work

now, or when you walk near the park, you feel a sense of increased energy and freedom" (178).

This story illustrates a successful sublimation of fear and anger without repressing or extinguishing the thoughts. Usually, commentators have difficulty distinguishing between repression and sublimation, yet this example appears to demonstrate how the two are not synonymous. Only by relieving the repression can the analysand begin to sublimate his "burning sword" of enlightened anger and fear into a "sense of increased energy and freedom." Of course, this particular dream has overtones of the Prometheus myth, which Freud draws on to explain sublimation. The analysand discussed by Rothenberg has another dream, discussed in the same session, that suggests another element involved in myths about taming fire. In that dream "you descended to the bottom of the ocean and there found yourself in the midst of a large, unfamiliar city . . . finding yourself standing in front of a pile of layered earth, you lift up each layer, and after taking off two or three, you became concerned about having to take responsibility for what you were doing" (177). The analysis suggests that going to the bottom of the ocean is analogous to going to the bottom of your difficulties. So, the two dreams are intimately connected. The solution to how to sublimate, without repressing, the burning sword, lies at the bottom of the ocean beyond the mere extinguishing/repressing water. Likewise, the renunciation of the urge to urinate on the fire allowed people to control and use fire. Water and fire imagery, and digging around in piles of earth reappear, in many descriptions of sublimation. For the archaeologist digging deep down inside himself, the goal appears to be to dig yourself right through to the other side, giving a new birth to yourself *inter urinas et faeces.*

Notes

[1] Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis,* trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (New York: W. W. Norton, 1973), 433.

[2] Peter Miles Westley, *The Bibliophile's Dictionary: 2,054 Masterful Words & Phrases* (Cincinnati, OH: Writer's Digest Books, 2005), 116.

[3] Victor Tausk, "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 11, nos. 3–4 (1933): 519–56.

[4] Ibid., 186.

[5] Robert Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 475.

[6] James Mark Baldwin, *Social and Ethical Interpretations in Mental Development: A Study in Social Psychology* (New York: Macmillan, 1897). Book 1 of the collection, titled *The Person Public and Private,* begins with a particularly apt epigram from the Gospel of Luke: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." "And who is my neighbor?" These sentences summarize the tensions surrounding Baldwin's public and private life and, in doing so, also comment on a social theory of sublimation.

[7] Baldwin, as quoted in Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence,* 475.

[8] For an indication of the reemergence of Baldwin's importance for studies of social-symbolic interactions, see Sheldon Stryker, *Symbolic Interactionism: A Social Structural Version* (Menlo Park, CA: Benjamin/Cummings, 1980), 23–24.

[9] Alexander Stephen, *Hopi Journal* (1936; repr., Eastford, CT: Martino, 2005), 1:103. See also Louis B. Hieb, "Masks and Meaning: A Contextual Approach to the Hopi Tüvi' Kü," in *Ritual Symbolism and Ceremonialism in the Americas,* ed. N. Ross Crumrine, Studies in Symbolic Anthropology (Greeley: Museum of Anthropology, University of Northern Colorado, 1979), 62–79.

[10] Alfred Rosenberg, *The Myth of the 20th Century: An Evaluation of the Spiritual-Intellectual Confrontations of Our Age* (1930; repr., Newport Beach, CA: Noontide, 1982), 81. No translator is listed for this translation into English of the German-language original.

[11] Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents,* in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud,* trans. James Strachey, vol. 21 (London: Hogarth, 1955), 90n; hereafter cited in the text as *C&ID.*

[12] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense,* trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

[13] Deleuze, *Logic of Sense,* 46–47.

[14] James Joyce, *Finnegan's Wake* (1939; repr. New York: Penguin Classics, 1999), 622.

[15] J. P. Guilford, "Creativity," *American Psychologist* 5, no. 9 (1950): 444–54.

[16] E. Paul Torrance, "The Nature of Creativity as Manifest in its Testing," in *The Nature of Creativity: Contemporary Psychological Perspectives,* ed. Robert Sternberg (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 43–75.

[17] Ibid., 68.

[18] E. Paul Torrance, *Role of Evaluation in Creative Thinking,* Report of Project 725 (Washington, DC: U.S. Office of Education, Department of Health and Human Services [HEW], 1964), 4–5.

[19] Herbert Blau, *The Eye of the Prey: Subversions of the Postmodern* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

This quote appears in the chapter "(De)Sublimating the Sixties."

[20] Sander Gilman, *Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, Madness* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1985).

[21] Ibid., 101.

[22] Ibid., 123.

[23] Sigmund Freud, "The Moses of Michelangelo," in *Standard Edition* (see note 11), 13:211–38, quotation on 229–30.

[24] Ibid., 233.

[25] Sigmund Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,* in *Standard Edition* (see note 11), vol. 18, quotation on 120–21.

[26] Ibid., 121.

[27] Laurence A. Rickels, *The Case of California* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).

[28] Herbert Marcuse, *Five Lectures: Psychoanalysis, Politics, and Utopia,* trans. Jeremy Shapiro and Shierry Weber (Boston: Beacon, 1970).

[29] Ibid., 337–38.

[30] Sigmund Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle,* in *Standard Edition* (see note 11), vol. 18, quotation on 76.

[31] Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis,* ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1979), quotation on 165.

[32] Mary Ann Doane, *Femme Fatales: Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (New York: Routledge, 1991), quotation on 257; hereafter cited in the text.

[33] Eric Charles White, *Kaironomia: On the Will-to-Invent* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), quotation on 190. See also Jean Laplanche, *Problematiques III: La sublimation* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1980).

[34] White, *Kaironomia;* and Laplance, *Problematiques III.*

[35] White, *Kaironomia;* 194; and Laplance, *Problematiques III.*

[36] Ken Baron, "A Haunting Memorial in Dachau: Death Camp Visit Leaves Lasting Impressions," *St. Petersburg Times,* 4 February 1990, 11f.

[37] See Michael Cole, John Gay, Joseph A. Glick, and Donald W. Sharp, *The Cultural Context of Learning and Thinking: An Exploration in Experimental Anthropology* (New York: Basic, 1971).

[38] Albert Rothenberg, *Creativity and Madness: New Findings and Old Stereotypes* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990); hereafter cited in the text.

Walden Choragraphy: Frog Maintenance

Gregory L. Ulmer

In this life, there is a pool that is below, and one draws from it.

I start with *Walden,*[1] by Henry David Thoreau. It could be any work, for if choragraphy is any good it must function with any work in any medium. I start here because it is this classic that gives me access to my book fetish. The starting point should be motivated, not random. The motivation need be nothing more than the fact that I cannot forget Thoreau; that among all the books I have read, *Walden* persists with a vividness in my memory. It is a mnemonic strange attractor. I want to inquire into the organizing operations of this attractor, of its ability to live on, to stimulate the imagination into our own time. What might be learned from the force of this one work about the force of writing itself? The future that interests me is not just that of *Walden,* but of literature and even of literacy as such.

I am mourning literacy. *Mourning:* the psychodynamics of separating from a nurturing surround, relinquishing this provider at the material level but internalizing, introjecting it, while gaining in exchange for the material loss the symbolic power of a new language. My method is the remake: to remake *Walden* in an electronic version. The version I am talking about now is not in one medium or the other, but is a cognition, a mode of reasoning into which this mourning introduces me. The form is the remake, and the method

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is the fetish. To justify and rationalize this combination is beyond the scope of this prospectus. An inadequate substitute for the book that it would be necessary to write is the inference that might be drawn from my desire to locate materially (choragraphically), to localize, the emotion, or more deeply, the mood, that the pond in Walden Woods reveals to me: not Thoreau's mood, but my own. I want to learn how to use this mood as a mode of research:

When I wrote the following pages, or rather the bulk of them, I lived alone, in the woods, a mile from any neighbor, in a house which I had built myself, on the shore of Walden Pond, in Concord, Massachusetts, and earned my living by the labor of my hands only.

Jonas Mekas supplies a relay for my remake in his diary films, *Diaries Notes and Sketches Also Known as Walden:*

Street and subway noise

Close up of the Author

IN NEW YORK WAS STILL WINTER

Central Park, scattered snow

BUT THE WIND WAS FULL OF SPRING

naked branches in wind

the author playing accordion

BARBARA'S FLOWER GARDEN

Chopin

Barbara planting flower seeds on the window sill

Film Makers' Cinematheque, 4th St.

Street and subway noise

SITNEY IS FINGERPRINTED BY THE POLICE, AS DIRECTOR OF THE CINEMATHEQUE

Sitney, CU of his hand

I CUT MY HAIR, TO RAISE MONEY, HAVING TEAS WITH RICH LADIES

the Author, showing his haircut, turning around

daily expense notes

SUNDAY AT STONES

the Author, eating: also, David & Barbara Stone

I WALKED ACROSS THE PARK. THERE WAS A PHANTASTIC FEELING OF SPRING IN THE AIR

apple blossoms[2]

Some of my earliest memories are of my father reading books to me. I know that these memories are overdetermined, that they include the dimension of *screen memory,* a possibility that makes them all the more useful for my experiment. One point of perplexity in these memories is that my fetish appears to be related to my father, a possibility that calls attention to the inadequacy of conventional psychoanalytic definitions of fetishism (an inadequacy already addressed in the "impossible" practices of female fetishism). My favorite books as a preschooler were in the Mother West Wind series by Thornton W. Burgess.[3] I still have several of the books. The inside of the binding is covered with an illustration of the meadow in which Mother West Wind released the Merry Little Breezes every morning. In the foreground is a pond surrounded by many of the creatures who populate the stories. In the center of the pond sitting on a lily pad is a large bullfrog. The second chapter of the volume I am holding tells why Grandfather Frog has no tail.

"Grandfather Frog was old, very old, indeed, and very, very wise. He wore a green coat and his voice was very deep. When Grandfather Frog spoke, everybody listened very respectfully." In the old days when frogs ruled the world, they kept their tails all through life. The king of the frogs had an especially grand tail, and all he did all day was sit and admire it. All the other frogs followed the example of their king, and did nothing but eat, sleep, and admire their tails. This behavior so angered Mother Nature that she punished the frogs by causing them to lose their handsome tails as they grew up. "'Now you all know that people who do nothing worthwhile in this world are of no use and there is little room for them.' Old Grandfather Frog stopped and looked sadly at a foolish green fly coming his way. 'Chug-arum.'"

I especially liked it when my father read these lines in his bullfrog voice. I realize now that my father believed the lesson imparted by the tale and was speaking for himself through the voice of the frog. What I remember experiencing then, however, was the *magic* of writing. I asked how it worked; how he just looked at the book and told the story. He explained the principles of writing, and promised that one day I would be able to read the stories for myself. I recognized the feeling that this act of reading gave me when I read accounts of first encounters between literate and oral peoples, how the natives described as magic the power to retrieve meanings stored in writing.

One of Heidegger's translators commented on the distinction between the beast fable and the Upanishads as reflecting a

difference between two kinds of thought or even two world views. The beast fables describe a science of survival, a calculative view of life and its possibilities. The clear formulations of problems or lessons of the fables contrast with the opaque, obscure, mystical messages of the sort found in the Upanishads that attempt to reveal the ultimate nature of things. It is the difference between Aesop and Hesiod: "Heidegger finds the outlook of the beast fables represented in modern society by the calculative thinking of contemporary science and its applied disciplines. Here is the clear realism of animal life, the sharp and realistic view, the unsentimental outlook quick to take advantage of circumstances to attain an end. With this Heidegger contrasts another kind of thinking which he calls meditative, and which he says is implicit in man's nature. To think in this way requires two attributes not at all common, two stands which man can take, and which he calls *releasement toward things and openness to the mystery*."[4]

How might Thoreau be classified in terms of this opposition? The winter that the pond froze over, for example, a hundred men came to remove the ice and ship it abroad to sell in hot climates. "As I looked out I was reminded of the fable of the lark and the reapers, or the parable of the sower," Thoreau observes. Later, drawing water from his well, he thinks about the ice from Walden Pond melting in a drink drawn from the Ganges: "In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the Bhagvat Geeta. . . . I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo there I meet the servant of the Bramin, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas." Thoreau indicates the possibility that the fable and the cosmology may exchange features or effects.

> the old pond—/ a frog jumps in, / water's sound
>
> (Basho, *Two Western Journeys*, 1648–88)[5]

"Basho was seated in his hut, facing Kikaku. Suddenly, breaking the stillness, a frog jumped into the pond. A sudden shift from stillness (no sound) to movement (sound), and then a return from movement (sound) to stillness—this, combined with the old pond and a frog, created an atmosphere of infinite *yugen* and tranquility. And that perfectly matched the sentiment that was ripening within Basho at the time. It symbolized his innermost feelings.—*Shida*."[6]

I am immediately attracted to this term naming an experience whose nature I cannot quite understand: *yugen*. The commentators note that the originality of Basho's haiku was in the combination of

the frog and the pond. The many *waka* and *renga* devoted to frogs always feature their croak. In a standard anthology organized by topics, none of the poems in the section devoted to *ponds* refers to a frog. Moran suggests that to understand a poem this delicate and mysterious requires many years of experience. Gozan on the other hand does not hesitate to name the unexpressed sentiment of this haiku: "I am all alone."

With this selection of the leap of the frog, Basho created his own style, adds another commentator. The effect is achieved by a perfect balance of the humor, typical of *haikai*—the emphasis on plainness and familiarity (the "plop" of the frog in the water)—juxtaposed with the sense of loneliness and desolation. The poetic mood is evoked in this delicate equilibrium:

In the mean while all the shore rang with the trump of bullfrogs, the sturdy spirits of ancient winebibbers and wassailers, still unrepentant, trying to sing a catch in their Stygian lake,—if the Walden nymphs will pardon the comparison, for though there are almost no weeds, there are frogs there,—who would fain keep up the hilarious rules of their old festal tables. . . . The most aldermanic, with his chin upon a heart-leaf, which serves for a napkin to his drooling chaps, under this northern shore quaffs a deep draught of the once scorned water, and passes round the cup with the ejaculation tr-r-r-oonk, tr-r-r-oonk!

Someone might think of the proverb "I fished and caught a frog," glossed as meaning "to bring little to pass with much ado." Perhaps Thoreau had that piece of wisdom in mind when he mentioned that "at long intervals, some came from the village to fish for pouts,—they plainly fished much more in the Walden Pond of their own nature, and baited their hooks with darkness,—but they soon retreated, usually with light baskets." It is a different story when a philosophical friend comes calling: "We waded so gently and reverently, or we pulled together so smoothly, that the fishes of thought were not scared from the stream, nor feared any angler on the bank, but came and went grandly." The fishes of thought.

Gene Youngblood described *The Reflecting Pool* (1977–99), a video by Bill Viola, whose work he characterizes as "metaphysical structuralism." "The sound of a passing airplane announces the solitary image of this work. The setting is mythical—a swimming pool in the forest. The pool, which fills the bottom half of the frame, mirrors the trees above it. We hear the sound of a stream that feeds the pond. Viola emerges from the woods by a winding path that

leads to the far end of the pool. After forty-five seconds he suddenly leaps into the air with a shout—but his image freezes at the zenith of its arc. He is suspended over the pool in a fetal position. Nothing else changes; ambient sounds are heard, the water undulates, but in it there is no reflection of the figure suspended above. On the water, sixteen different images appear over the duration of the piece."[7] Viola wrote that *Pool* concerned "themes of emergence"; the images of transition, motion to stillness, suggested "the spiritual birth of the individual."

In the backyard of my Florida home is a swimming pool. It is a relatively old pool, dating from 1962, when the house I now own was built, of a type no longer in fashion. It is an Esther Williams design—walk-in steps at the shallow end, with a shallow walkway all around the pool (excellent for younger children). The shallow half of the pool has a flat bottom at a depth of only a few feet. At the deep end the walls of the pool slant from the walking ledge in toward the drain, eight feet deep. The design was discontinued because the only safe place to dive into the pool is from the diving board. Swimmers diving in from the side risk hitting their heads on the slanted wall.

Esther Williams did not start out in the swimming-pool business. Billed as Hollywood's Mermaid because of the roles that translated her abilities as a champion swimmer into underwater spectaculars, Williams got her start in an Andy Hardy film in 1942.[8] After my friend, Robert Ray, wrote his book on Andy Hardy meeting the avant-garde (*The Avant-Garde Finds Andy Hardy,* 1995), I started to think about my Esther Williams pool. I wished I had a copy of the Edward Ruscha "artist's book" called *Nine Swimming Pools* (1968).

"Whoever inhabits that bull's hide stretched between the Jucar, the Guadalete, the Sil, or the Pisuerga has heard it said with a certain frequency: 'Now that has real *duende*!'" Federico García Lorca "took his Spanish term for daemonic inspiration from the Andalucían idiom. While to the rest of Spain the *duende* is nothing but a hobgoblin, to Andalucía it is an obscure power which can speak through every form of human art, including the art of personality."[9] The ancient topos of the spirit of place; how relevant is it to choragraphy? In Basho the fit between his inner feeling and the sound of the frog leaping into the pool formed a mood that had a name: *yugen*. *Lorca* had a name from the traditions of his place for the mood upon which he drew for his creativity: *duende*. "Black sounds: behind which there abide, in tenderest intimacy, the volcanoes, the

ants, the zephyrs, and the enormous night straining its waist against the Milky Way."[10]

We worship not the Graces, nor the Parcae, but Fashion. She spins and weaves and cuts with full authority. The head monkey at Paris puts on a traveller's cap, and all the monkeys in America do the same.

"If one may judge who rarely looks into the newspapers, nothing new does ever happen in foreign parts, a French Revolution not excepted." Despite, or perhaps because of, the Frenchness of his name, Thoreau shows no sympathy for the French. He never explicitly refers to them as "frogs," but he shares none of my own Francophilia: "Shall the world be confined to one Paris or one Oxford forever? Cannot students be boarded here and get a liberal education under the skies of Concord?" Here we are in agreement: Paris, Florida.

I am collecting as many of the frogs in *Walden* as I can find, using this fetish to organize my reading. *Fetish:* a heterogeneous assemblage of materials held together by a trivial contingent detail. "When I ask for a garment of a particular form, my tailoress tells me gravely, 'They do not make them so now.'" It is unlikely that Thoreau ever requested a coat that buttoned with the ornamental fastening known as a "frog." These frog fastenings are typically to be found on military dress uniforms. I am sure that I have seen a photograph of George Armstrong Custer wearing a dress coat with frog fastenings.

"M is also the first letter of *Mureau,* one of the more unconventional texts in this book. *Mureau* departs from conventional syntax. It is a mix of letters, syllables, words, phrases, and sentences. I wrote it by subjecting all the remarks of Henry David Thoreau about music, silence, and sounds he heard that are indexed in the Dover publication of the *Journal* to a series of I Ching chance operations. . . . Mureau is the first syllable of the word music followed by the second of the name Thoreau.

Reading the *Journal* I had been struck by the twentieth-century way Thoreau listened. He listened, it seemed to me, just as composers using technology nowadays listen. He paid attention to each sound, whether it was "musical" or not, just as they do; and he explored the neighborhood of Concord with the same appetite with which they explore the possibilities provided by electronics."[11]

"Precipitous declines in the populations of some species of frogs, toads, and salamanders around the world have begun to alarm

experts on amphibians, many of whom are undertaking new field experiments in an effort to pin down the reasons for the mysterious trend. Because amphibians breathe through their skin, lay their eggs in water, and have two stages in their life cycle—one in water and another on land—they come into contact with a wide variety of substances. As a result, many biologists believe amphibians are more sensitive than other kinds of animals to environmental changes and pollutants. Like the canaries once used by coal miners to detect deadly fumes, they say, the amphibians may be providing early warning signs of trouble for other fauna, including humans."[12]

Walden Woods itself is in danger of disappearing, threatened by real estate developers. Don Henley, star of the rock group the Eagles, has taken on the preservation of Walden Woods as his personal cause. By organizing charity concerts and contributing percentages of the sale of certain albums, Henley has raised millions of dollars to purchase the acreage around Walden Pond. Don Felder, lead guitarist of the Eagles, grew up in Gainesville, Florida. He started his first band at age fourteen. Second guitar in that band was Stephen Stills. Come to think of it, Marilyn Monroe's sister lives in Gainesville.

I would fain say something, not so much concerning the Chinese and Sandwich Islanders as you who read these pages, who are said to live in New England; something about your condition, what it is, whether it is necessary that it be as bad as it is, whether it cannot be improved as well as not. . . . I see young men, my townsmen, whose misfortune it is to have inherited farms, houses, barns, cattle, and farming tools; for these are more easily acquired than got rid of. How many a poor immortal soul have I met well nigh crushed and smothered under its load, creeping down the road of life, pushing before it a barn seventy-five feet by forty.

How to maintain my swimming pool? Do I have that look as if I were pushing before me everywhere I go a twenty-by forty-foot hole in the ground? After the rains the bottom breaks out in black spot, requiring immediate applications of poisons and considerable scrubbing with a steel brush on the end of a long pole. The skimmer, still with the original iron pipes, has started to leak, causing the water level to drop. I can only open it now when I have to change the filter, so that all the circulation of water through the filter and back into the pool must flow through the drain at the bottom. Storms fill the surface with leaves and pine needles that must be cleared quickly before they become waterlogged and drift

to the bottom where they could block the drain, stopping the flow of water to the pump, which would in turn soon burn out.

Most important of all, acidity, alkalinity, and the amount of mineral salts in the water must be kept in balance to prevent corrosion of metal parts, scale deposits, and etching of plaster surfaces. All water has an acid-alkaline balance that is measured on a pH scale. The scale runs from 0 to 14, with the center, 7, indicating a neutral state. Controlling the chemical balance of pool water is vital. The ideal range is slightly on the alkaline side. Testing pH is not difficult. The water sample in the test kit will change color according to the pH. For example, a phenol-red indicator will turn the sample yellow for acid, orange for little or no alkali, and red for high alkalinity. Every time I do the test for pH, I think of developing a similar test for PhD.

My Esther Williams swimming pool is trying to become a frog pond, to return to nature, and I am doing everything in my power to prevent that from happening. Measuring the chemicals and adding the right mixtures to bring the opposites into balance—acidity and alkalinity—is a kind of alchemy, related to the ancient tradition of the music of the spheres. What Heidegger called "mood" or attunement—*Stimmung*—is an allusion to this tradition, to the theory of temperament as a result of the balance or imbalance of the four humors in alchemical psychology. Yet, as I carry out this chore of mundane chemistry, I experience a sense of chagrin:

"Each time he encounters one of these double words, R.B. insists on keeping both meanings, as if one were winking at the other and as if the word's meaning were in that wink, so that *one and the same word, in one and the same sentence,* means *at one and the same time* two different things. This is why such words are often said to be "preciously ambiguous": not in their lexical essence (for any word in the lexicon has several meanings), but because, by a kind of *luck,* a kind of favor not of language but of discourse, I can *actualize* their amphibology. In French these amphibologies are extremely (abnormally) numerous: *Absence* (lack of person and distraction of the mind), *Alibi* (a different place and a police justification). The fantasy is not to hear everything (anything), it is to hear *something else.*"[13]

Let us spend one day as deliberately as Nature and not be thrown off the track by every nutshell and mosquito's wing that falls on the rails.

The grooved piece of iron placed at a junction of the rails where one track crosses another is known as a "frog," as in this

example from the dictionary illustrating proper usage: "[T]he accident was caused by the train suddenly leaving the rails at a frog."[14] There are many such frogs in *Walden,* a work exemplifying, after all, the problem of the machine in the garden. Thoreau mentions the train and its tracks frequently. In one sentence, he alludes to the semantic sets of two different frogs: "*A mink steals out of the marsh before my door and seizes a frog by the shore; the sedge is bending under the weight of the reed-birds flitting hither and thither; and for the last half hour I have heard the rattle of railroad cars, now dying away and then reviving.*" The Fitchburg Railroad passed the pond near Thoreau's cabin: "*I usually go to the village along its causeway, and am related to society by this link.*" The workmen along the rails saw Thoreau so often they mistook him for a laborer like themselves: "*And so I am. I too would fain be a track-repairer somewhere in the orbit of the earth.*"

In their discussions of dream work, the psychoanalysts Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan noted that every dream has a railroad switch, a switch word, or what I have called a *choral word.* Every dream, that is, to use railroad slang, has a frog. Here is the lesson of *Walden* I want to generalize as a rule of choragraphy—to use the frog as the organizing logic of electronic rhetoric, to design hypermedia by means of *frog.* It is a common enough device, but Thoreau's example makes the case for it especially convincing: "*What I have observed of the pond is no less true in ethics. It is the law of average. Such a rule of the two diameters not only guides us toward the sun in the system and the heart in man, but draw lines through the length and breadth of the aggregate of a man's particular daily behaviors and waves of life into his coves and inlets, and where they intersect will be the height or depth of his character. Perhaps we need only to know how his shores trend and his adjacent country or circumstances, to infer his depth and concealed bottom.*"

Thoreau shows me a way to perform choragraphy across the levels of schooling. It is a lesson simple in form and profound in effect. Tim O'Brien applies the device to perfection in his autobiographical account of his service in Vietnam: "The things they carried were largely determined by necessity. Among the necessities or near-necessities were P-38 can openers, pocket knives, heat tabs, wristwatches, dog tags, mosquito repellent, chewing gum, candy, cigarettes, salt tablets, packets of Kool-Aid, lighters, matches, sewing kits, Military Payment Certificates, C rations, and two or three canteens of water. Together, these items weighed between 15 and 20 pounds, depending upon a man's habits or rate of metabolism. . . . To carry something was to hump it, as when Lieutenant

Jimmy Cross humped his love for Martha up the hills and through the swamps. In its intransitive form to hump meant to walk, or to march, but it implied burdens far beyond the intransitive."[15]

The movement from physical burdens to metaphysical ones is treated with telling effect in *The Things They Carried*. Similarly, anything and everything in and around Walden Pond may be turned into a device for exploring a value, a belief, a question. The principle is as ancient as the theory of correspondences, of an intuited relationship between the macrocosm and the microcosm. The assignment is to position ourselves at the crossing, at this switch or frog between the material environment of Gainesville, Alachua County, Florida, and the mood, the emotional frame that tells me how I am situated, where things are "at" for me, my attunement to the world. I do not—cannot—know this mood in advance; or I can only "know" it. I know in principle or by definition that as a modern person I am *alienated,* for example. I know what the term means, but I do not understand it. I know further or the theory suggests that as the modern condition gives way to the postmodern, so too must the ground mood of dread, of anxiety, give way to another tuning.

The school project is to explore this tuning collectively in our place specifically (*chora*), to extrapolate from our models and relays to find the equivalent of *yugen* or *duende* for our own location; or if we can find no equivalent in our local culture, then to invent a word for the mood whose traces we discover running through the collective entries, or to borrow a term from another culture to help find a dimension of our experience we had not noticed before. The instructions are to form an image—a dialectical image, we might say—by juxtaposing a detail in my own setting with a detail or feature of a cultural text—any work of my choosing in arts and letters. Any work in the standard curriculum of the public schools should serve this purpose well enough. The next step is to explore the resonances thus created as an allegory from which I may infer the nature of a personal emotion, that may in turn allow me to recognize an underlying collective atmosphere. This inference is a discovery, an expression, not a representation of something that I already knew. It is an invention whose proof is in one's recognition of the match, the correspondence, the fit between the outside and the inside, the visible and invisible dimensions of experience.

The effect might be instead a sense of the lack of fit, in which for example the juxtaposition of Walden Pond and my Esther Williams swimming pool forms an abyss, a gap of meaning into which I

have poured just enough bits and bytes to stabilize the terrain, the ground. The frogs have shown me an outline of an ideal, perhaps, an impossibility or a utopia that I may use as a point of reference, as a reminder that there is more tuning to be done. The juxtaposition of my pool and Thoreau's pond, mediated by the choral frog, produces an effect of triangulation, marking out a site in the unknown to which I may now direct my attention.

The project requires that I undertake myself the construction of an allegorical metaphor. *Walden* repeats the device endlessly, as when Thoreau comments on "the forms which thawing sand and clay assume in flowing down the sides of a deep cut on the railroad." His interpretation manifests an explicit use of the traditional schema of correspondences. "What is man but a mass of thawing clay. The fingers and toes flow to their extent from the thawing mass of the body," he states, and then shifts the vehicle of the figure to that of a leaf. He goes on to declare, "The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf. What Champollion will decipher this hieroglyphic for us, that we may turn over a new leaf at last?" Such is his poetics—to begin with an observation of something in the material world and then to turn it in the direction of a maxim relating to human conduct.

This turn of figuration is familiar enough to instructors at all levels: "Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in." Or, "We have constructed a fate, an *Atropos,* that never turns aside. (Let that be the name of your engine). . . . Every path but your own is the path of fate. Keep on your own track, then." We know this figure well, but there is little evidence to suggest that the literal-mindedness of our one-dimensional culture has changed very much despite the continuous training in figuration provided by advertising. The challenge of choragraphy is to add heuretics to hermeneutics, fabrication to interpretation. The goal of reading the figures composed in the arts-and-letters relays is to learn how to make a figure oneself, to use the works in the humanities curriculum as a *chora* or place of mediation in which, in the prosthesis of the Internet, we may think together our personal and collective dimensions, grounded and manifested in our own local setting.

My swimming pool may teach me something about my attunement to life, then; not just something about myself, but about my community, if I am prepared to be a Champollion to the hieroglyphics in my own place. This extrapolation from the models and application to myself are the real challenges of choragraphy and of

the collective online experiment. What is the ethical dimension of maintaining the proper balance of chemicals in pool water? What is the politics of my struggle to purify the water in which my family swims? What is the metaphysics of a luxury whose leisure function belies the deteriorated fragility of its mechanical functioning?

I understand now that the feeling I associated with the ponds of childhood memory was one of security, certainty, order. Hence the fetish power of the frog. How much of my disciplinary devotion to putting order into a body of heterogeneous information draws upon that unforgettable page in the coloring book with the cattails, red-winged blackbird, frog-on-the-lily-pad scene? What about the passage from innocence to experience that includes lessons in ecology, of a Darwinian food chain underlying this bucolic image? "I love to see that Nature is so rife with life that myriads can be afforded to be sacrificed and suffered to prey on one another," says Thoreau, undeterred by accident and death; "tadpoles which herons gobble up, and tortoises and toads run over in the road."

Pool maintenance teaches responsibility: to be not the child who plays in the water, but the one who balances the chemicals and enforces rules for safety. In the large frame of society, the pool is a mortification. Children, mortgage, the entire farm—where did they come from? The pool in its materiality shows me something, makes me confront something—for one thing, my own class position, the patriarchal mood of my values—that otherwise readily slips out of sight and therefore out of mind. The critical power of the project depends upon this anchor or grounding of theories and emotions in the maker's own material existence, which then may be included in the act of reading and writing.

Notes

[1] Henry David Thoreau, *"Walden" and "Civil Disobedience,"* ed. Owen Thomas (New York: W. W. Norton, 1966).

[2] David E. James, ed., *To Free the Cinema: Jonas Mekas & the New York Underground* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton, 1992).

[3] Thornton W. Burgess, *Old Mother West Wind* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1910).

[4] John M. Anderson, introduction to *Discourse on Thinking,* by Martin Heidegger (New York: Harper and Row, 1959), 11–39.

[5] Makoto Ueda, ed. and trans., *Basho and His Interpreters* (Stanford, CA: Stanford, 1991), 140.

[6] Ibid., 141.

[7] Marilyn Zeitlin, ed., *Bill Viola: Survey of a Decade* (Houston: Contemporary Art Museum, 1998), 23.

[8] Ephraim Katz, *The Film Encyclopedia* (New York: Putnam, 1979), 1237.

[9] Federico Garcia Lorca, "The Duende," in *Symposium of the Whole,* ed. Jerome Rothenberg and Diane Rothenberg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 43–51.

[10] Ibid., 43, 51.

[11] John Cage, *M: Writings '67–'72* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1974), i.

[12] *Chronicle of Higher Education,* 26 March 1999.

[13] Roland Barthes, *Roland Barthes,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 72.

[14] *Oxford English Dictionary,* 2nd ed., s.v. "frog."

[15] Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried* (New York: Penguin, 1990), 4–5.

Impressions: Proust, Photography, Trauma

Rebecca Comay

I

A good enough place to begin is with the famous passage in "Intermittencies of the Heart"—alternatively titled in the manuscripts "La mort après-coup de ma grand-mère"—in which the narrator, arriving for the second time at Balbec, comes to touch himself and thereby presses the button that will reveal his own touch as the traumatic touch of the Other. Having arrived exhausted at a hotel whose unexpected familiarity evokes a feeling not of reassuring domesticity but of profound uneasiness, he collapses in his room and begins to undress. Despite its possible overexposure, this passage deserves to be read at length, beginning with its ungrammatical opening sentence—somewhat exceptional, I believe, in Proust—and ending with its oxymoronic appeal to a "complete and involuntary recollection":[1]

> Upheaval of my entire being [*Bouleversement de toute ma personne*]. On the first night, as I was suffering from cardiac fatigue, I bent down slowly and cautiously to take off my boots, trying to master my pain. But scarcely had I touched the topmost button [*le premier bouton*] than my chest swelled, filled with an unknown, a divine presence, I was shaken with sobs, tears streamed from my eyes. The being who had come to my rescue, saving me from barrenness of spirit, was the same who years before, in a moment of identical distress and loneliness, in a moment when I had nothing left of myself, had come in and had restored me to myself, for that being

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> was myself and something more than me (the container that is greater than the contained and was bringing it to me). I had just perceived in my memory, stooping over my fatigue, the tender, preoccupied, disappointed face of my grandmother, as she had been on that first evening of our arrival, the face not of that grandmother whom I had been astonished and remorseful at having so little missed, and who had little in common with her save her name, but of my real grandmother, of whom for the first time since the afternoon of her stroke in the Champs-Elysées, I now captured the living reality in a complete and involuntary recollection. (2:783)

If the refinding of the lost object will prove here to be the occasion of the latter's most irrevocable withdrawal—for it is "on finding her at last" that the narrator learns the unbearable truth that he has lost his grandmother "forever" (2:785)—such a paradox rigorously specifies just what is at stake in the temporal logic of *Nachträglichkeit*. The "anachronism" (2:783) that defines the most intimate encounter with the Other as essentially a missed encounter involves a moment of identification that fissures the self-identity of both parties concerned. At the most intimate moment of self-proximity, the narrator finds himself cast in the impossible role of substitute for his own substitute. As he assumes his dead grandmother's role—her role, precisely, of assuming for him his own role of undressing himself—the most familiar domestic ritual turns into a vertiginous spiral of self-divestment in which the heterological kernel of autoaffection is traumatically revealed.

Inside and outside thus form a chiasmus: the lost object forms a "container that is greater than the contained" (2:783) in which it simultaneously finds itself, such that the self is cast as an "empty apparatus" (3:1116) that is structurally equivalent to the container of its own container. Such a chiasmus inevitably disrupts every notion of consciousness as interiority or inwardness, and thus every model of memory as *Er-innerung*. Floating in the internal crypt that marks a kind of outside on the inside, the contents of consciousness find themselves suspended in an "unknown region" in which, Proust remarks, "it is perhaps equally inexact to suppose that they escape or return" (2:784) such that what is retained is secreted in an interior *extimité* described elsewhere as the "prolonged oblivion" of the archive (1:692).

What is striking is the way in which this scene of traumatic loss unmistakably evokes a certain trauma of seduction. The grandmother's spectral touch speaks simultaneously of the suffocating excess of her "divine presence" and of her irreparable withdrawal. Abandonment is nowhere more sharply underlined than in the exorbitance of a contact impossible precisely through its most

obdurate proximity—the primal *drame du coucher* already staged this exquisite aporia—whereby trauma is figured precisely as the relation with the nonrelational. The "refinding" of the lost object is in this sense the mortifying incorporation of a thing whose excessive presence signals at once its most catastrophic absence.

Such an "agonizing synthesis of survival and annihilation" (2:787) engenders the paradox of the subject's return-to-self at the moment of its own fading or self-evacuation. In dying, the narrator's grandmother effectively eradicates him—why? because she no longer registers him—such that the other's death marks the othering of the self in the endless "allegory" of its own demise (cf. 3:387).

Such reciprocity marks the limits of identification. The specular relation is exposed as the vacuous gleam of a mirror reflecting only the exchange of missed glances and the retroactive annulment of "our mutual predestination" (2:785). As the "bliss" (*félicité*) of recognition yields to the throbbing pain of separation, the narrator finds his grandmother "again, as in a mirror, a mere stranger whom chance had allowed to spend a few years with me, as she might have done with anyone else, but to whom, before and after those years, I was and would be nothing" (2:785). The Other's touch thus "carves out an emptiness in my heart" (2:789)—a void that marks the abyss of the subject's own self-annihilation. Self-stimulation equals seduction by the other equals mourning for the other equals, finally, mourning for the self—who is thus effectively established as nothing other than its own other.

What is striking in this compound equation is that the scene itself—despite or because of its originality—is in fact staged as a rigorous repetition of a previous one. This is not the first time the narrator will experience the postmortem of the Other's death. Such a trauma had already from the outset started to repeat itself. The narrator had begun to be late very early—had anticipated such lateness rather prematurely the day he returned home to find himself precisely not at home, to find his living grandmother reduced to an all-too-fleshly phantom of herself and thus to find himself cast in the curious role of voyeur of his own irrelevance—"spectator of [his] own absence." Crucially, such experience is equated with the uncanniness of photography.

> Alas, it was this phantom that I saw when, entering the drawing room before my grandmother had been told of my return, *I found her there reading*. I was in the room, or rather I was not yet in the room since she was not aware of my presence, and like a woman whom one surprises at a piece of needlework which she will hurriedly put aside if anyone comes

> in, she was absorbed in thoughts which she had never allowed to be seen by me. Of myself—thanks to that privilege which does not last but which gives one, during the brief moment of one's return, the faculty of being suddenly the spectator of one's own absence—there was present only the witness, the observer, in traveling coat and hat, the stranger who does not belong to the house, the photographer who has called to take a photograph of places which one will never see again. The process that automatically occurred in my eyes when I caught sight of my grandmother was indeed a photograph. (2:141f., emphasis mine)

II

It is surely crucial that this ghost scene is figured as a reading scene. In his proleptic mourning for the lost object the narrator here confronts the mirror of his own tomblike countenance—"like a sick man who . . . recoils on catching sight in the glass, in the middle of an arid desert of a face, of the sloping pink protuberance of a nose as huge as one of the pyramids of Egypt" (2:142)—a florid parody of vitality that mimes the hectic flush of the old woman who in her ponderous vacuity embodies the quintessential distracted reader: "For the first time, and for a moment only, since she vanished very quickly, I saw, sitting on the sofa beneath the lamp, red-faced, heavy and vulgar, sick, vacant, letting her crazed eyes wander over a book, a dejected old woman whom I did not know" (2:143).

Might such a reading scene prefigure the essential destiny of the entire book? This possibility will come to haunt the celebrated theory of "impressions" elaborated in the final scene of the *Recherche*. Numerous paradoxes are involved in Proust's enunciation of a theory whose very starting point would be the radical renunciation of all theory: "[A] work in which there are theories is like an object which still has its price tag on it" (3:916). If Proust will, at the moment of his most voluble theorizing, simultaneously condemn the intrusion of "theory" into literature as a "gross impropriety" (*une grande indélicatesse*), such a renunciation stems from neither simple anti-intellectualism nor some kind of pragmatism, and is only partially explicable in terms of the symbolist commitments to which Proust historically no doubt more or less adheres.

The performative impasse registers an essential aporia at the heart of "theory" as such. If Proust's anxiety regarding the very genre of his book—"a sort of novel,"[2] he concedes, but only sort of—is consistent with a general preoccupation with issues of homogeneity (unity, translucency, the intactness of the well-polished surface, etc.), such an aesthetic of purity will defend itself against the

"intrusion of extraneous elements" (3:934) that must therefore be either ejected or fully absorbed. The incursion of theory into the novel marks the point of the book's own overflow and announces the work's fall into fragmentation and delay.

If "theory" injects heterogeneity into the pristine surface of the artwork, this is paradoxically because it infects the latter with the possibility of repetition—conceptualization, idealization—which signals the work's reduction to sheer fungibility or exchange. The very possibility of idealization would announce the work's self-coincidence while simultaneously signaling the threat of a debilitating deferral that would preempt this. Its ultimate "indelicacy" would be to introduce into the artwork the stigma of the commodity that in neglecting to disguise its own value fails to circulate freely as gift. Unsublimated "theory" thus functions as the fetish that in failing to erase its own traces threatens precisely to block the economy of salvation—*qui perd gagne,* triumph through defeat—which determines the very possibility of time's "refinding." This would be the ultimate scandal.

The entire calculus of loss and gain described in the matinee scene—the rehabilitation of misery into profit, despair into work, the incorporation of the writer's disintegrating corpse into the luminous cathedral of the completed corpus (cf. 3:944)—is a consolation that assumes a certain economy of transvaluation that the theory of involuntary memory would seem simultaneously to promise and, as we shall see (this is my argument), to undermine. If the whole pathetic package is redeemed in the end—the wasted time, the wasted money, the dinner parties, the love affairs, the pretexts—this is because the narrator while purporting to function "like a shopkeeper who cannot balance his books" (3:1024) manages precisely in *forgetting* the costs thereby miraculously to turn a profit.

How does Proust's "theory of literature" elaborate such a paradoxical economy of salvation? And why does photography in particular both exemplify and undermine such an economy? If "theory" here indeed protrudes with the manic insistence of an obsession (the narrator's illegitimate digression on literature manages to distend over two hundred pages, to interrupt at least two parties, at one of which he is not even present, and on which he strictly speaking has no business commenting, to bloat the swollen contours of the book to the point of irrecuperable fragmentation), this is ultimately because it is a theory in which the very claims of "theory"—the ideality of pure disinterested vision—are simultaneously advanced and undermined, if not indeed exposed as

contradictory. That is: the visual paradigm will here reach at once its apogee and its utter limit. This limit will ruin the "budget" of gain through loss by presenting the stain of an indelible remainder. Such will be its impropriety and, perhaps, its promise.

III

On the one hand: the official Proustian theory of aesthetic experience redeems repetition as idealization: "Ideas come to us as the successors of grief" (3:944). Familiarly enough, the aesthetic conversion of impression into expression (3:916) reveals the "general law" or "essence" (3:957) in the repeated instance. Such a trajectory defines the metaphorical movement from sense to sense, from matter to meaning, from accident to necessity: the retrieval of a "spiritual equivalent" for the recurrent sensory encounter (3:912). The very compulsion to repeat thus comes to signal not the supremacy of death but in fact its ultimate domestication—having died so many times, I indeed have nothing left to fear (3:1094)—such that what had previously functioned as a cipher of irreparable loss or trauma now promises the very possibility of symbolic binding. Repeated, the fugitive impression becomes the incarcerated metaphor: the retrieval or binding of phenomena "beaten together" and "linked forever" (*enchaîner à jamais*) (3:924; 4:468) within the "necessary rings of a beautiful style" (3:924f.).[3] Such an ideal of aesthetic binding not only promises to bring back all the escaped prisoners of love and war—the mother, the grandmother, the vanished Albertine—but cannot fail to recall the bondage games of Charlus in Jupien's brothel, *l'homme enchaîné,* fixed to the bed like a "consenting Prometheus" (3:868) to his rock, exposed simultaneously to the studded whip of his tormenter and to the fascinated peer of the narrator, who just so happens to find himself lurking in the darkened hall (3:843).

On the other hand: the very proximity of the "cruel law of art" (3:1095) to the sadomasochistic scenarios that precede it suggests a traumatic residue irresolvable within the official economy of salvation. If the narrator, in the brothel scene, operates essentially as cameraman—peering through the aperture of the *oeil de boeuf,* frozen stiff (cf. 3:858) by the sight of Charlus's own petrification—it is worth recalling that this bondage scene elsewhere elaborates itself in the apocalyptic vision of wartime Paris.[4] Beautiful in moonlight and under the "intermittent beams" of enemy airplanes and searchlights, the buildings themselves are seen to bend and sway

like so many submissive bodies prostrated before whatever blows might fall (3:828). The spectacle offers the narrator the strangely reassuring vista of a danger simultaneously enjoyed and parried: the threatening bomb is associated with the moonbeam that would expose it and in turn assimilated to the masturbatory spectacle of luminous fountains reflected in the clouds above the Champs Elysée or Place de la Concorde (3:829f.).

It is worth emphasizing here that this whole nocturnal phantasmagoria is itself explicitly referred to as the operation of a camera. A familiar enough logic (from Jünger to Virilio) will come to associate the ballistic apparatus of war with the optical apparatus of photography, the machinery of destruction with the machinery of preservation, annihilation with reproduction or retention. What Proust adds to this equation is that nature as a whole can function not only as the object but as the very instrument of photographic reproduction. Corresponding to the naturalized technology of the military light show—the "human shooting stars" and wandering galaxies of the planes and searchlights (3:828f.)—would be the technologized nature of a moon whose light has come to resemble the "soft and steady magnesium flare" (strange oxymoron, this "steady flare": it recalls Barthes's "floating flash")[5] of a cosmic camera recording images of a city marked in advance by the traces of its own destruction (3:830).

Moonlight is elsewhere everywhere associated with the melancholic illumination of a death prefigured photographically in the chiaroscuro of an "apparition without substance" (3:758). Paris under blackout becomes a glacial meadow etched with the delicacy of a Japanese painting (3:757): every fountain is a frozen crystal, every woman is a "vision," every shadow is imprinted on the bleached and polished ground like a soul entering the "dazzling" paradise of an endless winter.[6] Such a prolepsis of death has already been anticipated by the narrator well before the war (in a passage written after the war) in the perception of moonlit Paris as a framed and mounted drawing. Entering the Porte Maillot with Albertine, he observes how the buildings have already entered into the process of self-reproduction: every monument has become a drawing of itself, every memorial a memorial to itself—"pure, linear, two-dimensional"—as if "in an attempt to recapture the appearance of a city that had been destroyed" (3:414).[7] (Such a simulacral delirium inspires the narrator to fits of pedantry as he proceeds to subject Albertine to a stream of literary citations, footnotes, references involving lunar metaphors in Hugo, Chateaubriand, Baudelaire, and all the others.)

Charlus himself will soon enough compare the nocturnal city to a Pompeii (3:834),[8] which is in turn conventionally enough assimilated to the figure of Sodom and Gomorrah. Whatever the precise chain of associations linking the optical inversions of the camera with the general logic of "inversion"—that the photographic subject in Proust is inherently a homosexual subject (and indeed vice versa), could, I believe, be easily established—the point of the analogy is here to draw attention to the mnemonic fixing or embalming of gestures "eternized" in midaction (3:834). The lava both recalls the biblical "fire from heaven" (3:864) and is repeated by the camera flash, which itself reiterates the original scene of beating or seduction. If the punishment here inevitably prolongs and arguably even stimulates the very crime it would expiate in memorializing—Charlus could indeed, for example, go to jail: why? for his incarceration fantasies (3:868)—such a continuity will be associated with the rhetorical convention of the *hysteron proteron:* the narrative contamination of cause and effect, before and after, attributed to a Dostoevsky (3:385) and in fact best exemplified by Proust himself. It points precisely to the contamination of jouissance and the law, and as such to an irreducible kernel at the heart of the symbolic.[9] Such an imbrication—the literary expression of *Nachträglichkeit*—indeed registers the perfect complicity of every inscription with its double.[10]

Such redoubling renders undecidable the difference between traumatic impression and expiating or idealizing expression. The inherent doubling of trauma to itself would not only blur the line between origin and repetition but may indeed come to blur any final distinction between trauma and its symbolic "binding." This perhaps includes the distinction between traumatic imprint and the printed volume that would contain it. The initial sight of the lurid red binding of *François le champi* in the Guermantes library at first "unpleasantly strikes" the narrator with the "painful impression" of a dissonance immediately evoking the unwelcome intrusion of an unmourned death, but is thereupon harmonized within the symbolic work of proper mourning:

> I had been taking first one and then another of the precious volumes from the shelves, when suddenly, at the moment when I carelessly opened one of them—it was George Sand's *François le champi*—I felt myself unpleasantly struck [*desagreablement frappe*] by an impression which seemed at first to be utterly out of harmony with the thoughts that were passing through my mind, until a moment later, with an emotion so strong that tears came to my eyes, I recognized how very much in harmony with them it was. Imagine a room in which a man has died, a man who has rendered

> great services to his country; the undertakers' men are getting ready to take the coffin downstairs and the dead man's son is holding out his hand to the last friends who are filing past it; suddenly the silence is broken by a flourish of trumpets beneath the windows and he feels outraged, thinking that this must be some plot to mock and insult his grief; but presently this man who until this moment has mastered his emotions dissolves into tears, for he realizes that what he hears is the band of a regiment which has come to share in his mourning and to pay honor to his father's corpse. Like this dead man's son, I had just recognized how completely in harmony with the thoughts in my mind was the painful impression which I had just experienced when I had seen this title on the cover of a book . . . for it was a title which after a moment's hesitation had given me the idea that literature did really afford us that world of mystery which I had ceased to find in it. (3:918f.; 4:461f.)

From here it is just one step to the consoling "chain" (*chaîne*) (3:920) of memories that will inspire the narrator to formulate his theory of poetic incarceration or "linkage" (*enchaînement*) (3:924).

Note here that the "joy" aroused by the final sight of *François le champi* in the Guermantes library both bypasses and indeed *precludes* any actual reading of the book itself (3:922): at the moment of its supreme vindication the book breaks away from the rule of the pleasure principle and the work of substitutive deferral. If, as Benjamin and Blanchot will in rather different ways insist, the ultimate book is the unread book, the out-of-work book, the unreadable book—this is perhaps the real significance of Proust's famous metaphor of the book as a "huge cemetery in which on the majority of the tombs the names are effaced" (3:940)—the erasure in this case announces not the pristine innocence of the tabula rasa but rather the very persistence of the trace as traumatic residue unassimilable to the interiority of *Er-innerung,* whether that of consciousness or of the book.

Such persistence points to something unspeakable within the very theory that would announce it. For in its very materiality (which is nothing other than the materiality of the book itself) it will undermine the ultimate possibility of idealization as the achievement of disinterested truth and essentiality by signaling the work's inextricable entanglement within the condition of loss (and excess) it would transcend. Such entanglement will complicate the metaphor of the literary "chain" or tether. And it may cast some light on the famous Proustian "joy." If in the course of reciting his final series of epiphanies the narrator is compelled with somewhat manic insistence to profess his "joie" no less than twenty-nine times, such an affirmation may of itself indicate less a regression to the comfortable banalities of the "joys of the spirit"

(Bergotte) (3:904) than point to a kernel of traumatic *jouissance* irreducible to the consoling calculus of pleasure-pain to which the official theory would seem most wed. If in stammering out his "joy" the narrator in fact never for a moment stops evoking something close to utter anguish (everything hits, everything hurts, everything blinds, everything carves itself into the poor limping body like the demonic writing machines of a Kafka or a Nietzsche), the delirium suggests a hypermnesic melancholia testifying to an unassimilable alterity—at once the pulsating pressure of the real and an infinite withdrawal or lack: the "festering wound" of which both Freud and Nietzsche speak.

According to the official Proustian theory of reminiscence, the "mark [*griffe*] of authenticity" (3:913) of involuntary memory is that it comes essentially from the outside as an inscription of the Other: a "little furrow" (*petit sillon*) (3:927) not "traced *by* us" but rather "printed *in* us" or "dictated *to* us" (3:914, emphasis mine) and in turn "prolonged in us" (3:927) through a painful labor of translation, which Proust compares to the loss of our virginity. The *célibataires* or "bachelors of art" are precisely those aesthetes (the critics, the concertgoers, the Verdurins, etc.) who inevitably appear like so many bungled experiments of nature—broken-down flying machines whose "morbid hunger" for "Art" expresses itself in the dutiful raptures ("Bravo! Bravo!") that betray just the "sterile velleity" of the unmarked surface (3:927f.).[11]

But if involuntary memory is determined thus as the traumatic incursion of the Other, there would appear to be little left to distinguish the "joys" of remembrance from the familiar agonies of *temps perdu*. The "little furrow" theorized in the Guermantes library recalls the "mysterious furrow" that death like a thunderbolt had carved earlier within the narrator's torn consciousness—the "supernatural graph" that had awakened him at Balbec to a maternal spectrality registered symptomatically by ghoulish visitations, haunting photographs, and night terrors (2:787ff.). The Balbec inscription had at the time provoked a grandly melancholic response—"I longed for the nails that riveted her to my consciousness to be driven yet deeper" (2:786)—which in its introversion of aggressivity into a triumphant masochism not only converted traumatic loss into the "rivet" of a paradoxical connection but indeed sought in pain itself the narcissistic solace of self-beatification: "My mother was to arrive the next day. I felt I was less unworthy to live in her company, that I should understand her better, now that a whole alien and degrading existence had given way to the resurgence of the heartrending memories that encircled and ennobled

my soul, like hers, with their crown of thorns. So I thought, but . . ." (2:795).

IV

Does the guilty mnemotechnic I have been elaborating in fact forge the celebrated "rings of style" (3:924)? Are we indeed to understand the "darkness and silence" in which the work gestates itself—"real books should be the offspring not of daylight and casual talk but of darkness and silence" (3:934)—as a photographic darkroom?

Triggered by the haptic blow of the chance encounter; stimulated by the impression that arrives not once and for all but compulsively repeats itself (each time a shock, each time an assault, each time bringing back the memory of an "original" sensation barely if at all registered the first time round); announced by the "lightning flash" that signals the blinding simultaneity of past and present (3:906); revealing a stellar "radiance" emanating centuries after the extinction of the original fire (3:932); sequestered in the "long intervals of rest"—the sickroom, the sanitarium, the "Noah's ark"—of the work's gestation (3:945); drawing on the secret reserve of life like a seed or albumen harboring chemical changes only evident in hindsight (3:936); "developed" by the painstaking reading or "decipherment" that involves the translation of the hieroglyphs of feeling into thought (3:933), shadow into light (3:912f.), negative into positive, as if by a "special lamp" designed to reverse the values of darkness and light to the point of absolute illumination (3:933); bringing back the past as through a telescopic time-lapse lens (3:1098); revealing the infinite reproductive circuit that turns every original into an endless series of substitutions (every woman a model for every other, every love affair patterned on every other) (3:946); "fixed," finally, in an image in which will culminate the entire history of the "successive states" of each impression (3:916)—is the act of writing anything other than the event of photography?

The photographic metaphor, in these darkly luminous, never-ending pages, proves on inspection to be a profoundly incoherent one. Where does the photograph begin and end? Is "life" the referent of the photograph, its negative cliché and inversion, or always already from the beginning its own photographic inscription (in which case, then, why need literature in the first place)? Do the redoublings of *Nachträglichkeit* begin with life or literature?

Is translation or "development" an event of voluntary or involuntary memory? Is the accomplished work a product of photography (a finished image) or more like a photographic instrument (a lens, magnifying glass or spyglass)? Is the darkened bedroom a darkroom or a camera obscura? If such questions prove irresolvable within the text itself, the incoherence points to an aporia at the very heart of the Proustian endeavor.

V

A famous Proustian dictum declares that "style is not technique but vision" (3:531). What is at stake in this distinction? Rather more is involved than the familiar fin-de-siècle quarrel over the respective merits of art-versus-industry—the fear of the "hermaphroditic" confusion of the *arts et métiers* of which Benjamin, for one, speaks (in *Passagen-werk*).[12] Or rather, one should perhaps reconsider the force of Benjamin's metaphor.

In an earlier draft (1910), Proust had defined style—later, metaphor—as the synthesis of separate sensations "beaten together on the anvil" until a new object (fused, composite) is "taken out of the forge."[13] Whatever the sadomasochistic overtones here—a more or less contemporary letter speaks of the need to *attack* the mother tongue, to inflict on the maternal body of language the aggressive signature of a "unique accent"[14]—the definition suggests precisely the Nietzschean operation of a traumatic injury turned outward in being reproduced.

Proust will take every pain to distinguish such a beating from the mechanical blows inflicted by technology—here as so often associated with unsublimated death, prosthetic deferral, the banal repetitiveness of habit. The triumphal stiletto of Siegfried's hammer in the *Nibelungen* is rather nervously distinguished ("immortal youth" is at stake here) from the merely "skillful" pounding of a Vulcan (3:158). (One should perhaps here recall—as Proust himself strangely seems to forget—that it was Vulcan or Hephaestus himself who in the first place nailed Prometheus to the rock, thus staging the sadomasochistic ritual that inaugurates human history.) To substitute artifice for art is to undermine the very possibility of "fundamental, irreducible originality" (3:158): to replace Lohengrin's swan with the 120-horsepower airplane—"brand-name Mystère"—whose noisy engine roar blocks you from ever "enjoying [*gouter*] the silence of space" (3:159). Yes, a certain enjoyment is at stake here. In its "frank materiality," technology

is said to present precisely the residue of an inconsolable melancholy (*tristesse*) unconvertible into joy (*joie*) (3:158).

What is to be excluded in every case is the boring, empty repetition that in introducing substitution at the very kernel of identity only confirms the unbearable gap between desire and fulfillment. Such repetition would fragment and multiply any coherent, stable self that might survive the lost object and thus inevitably introduces the specter of a radically failed mourning. Life is in this sense presented as a "slow and painful suicide of the self" (1:657) whose attenuation or fading marks the recursive tendency of every mourning to compensatory intensification. Failing to sustain even my own grief, I now grieve that very grief, find in its inevitable attenuation a fresh despair (1:721), mourn the loss of my own initial sense of loss that like a phantom limb spreads out the immemorial "void" of my own self-evacuation (cf. 3:605ff.).

The subject in this sense becomes the "empty apparatus" (3:1116) or "empty frame" (3:509) that in facing not simply loss but the reflexive loss of loss finds itself stripped of its own solidity as ground, *sub-jectum* or *hupokeimenon:* on falling out of love with Albertine's corpse the narrator finds himself "utterly devoid of the support of an individual, identical, and permanent self" (3:607). The forgetful self proliferates through the syncopal event of self-division or fragmentation that Proust compares, variously and incoherently, to a process of self-exfoliation (3:545), self-grafting or self-parasitism (3:607), or to the inevitable molting of the living body into the shredded accretions of "dead matter" (1:722).

Failing to maintain the lost object, the wounded subject touches only itself as its own simulacrum or prosthetic double—a "substitute" (3:657) or "spare self" (3:608)—which it encounters like a white-wigged specter in the mirror (3:657), already anticipating the uncanny phantasmagoria of the final *bal de têtes.* Initial grief yields to the far more "shattering" (*cela bouleverse*) realization of the subject's own alterity—"I no longer love her" . . . "I no longer exist" . . . "*je suis un autre*" (3:657; 4:221)—until the reflexive circle closes and the narrator eventually comes, Heidegger-style, to forget the very fact of his own forgetting ("The caddish self laughs at his caddishness because one is the cad, and the forgetful self does not grieve about his forgetfulness precisely because one has forgotten" [3:657]).

Caught in this abyssal circularity the narrator is left recycling autobiography as allothanatography—monotonously quotes to himself his own story as the cast-off story of an other, narrates to himself as to a stranger his faded melodrama of "love at second hand":

> It is not because other people are dead that our affection for them fades; it is because we ourselves are dying. Albertine had no cause to reproach her friend. The man who was usurping his name was merely his heir. We can only be faithful to what we remember, and we remember only what we have known. My new self, while it grew up in the shadow of the old, had often heard the other speak of Albertine; through that other self, through the stories it gathered from it, it thought that it knew her, it found her lovable, it loved her; but it was only a love at second hand. (3:608f.)

Cast into the role of its own Oedipus or self-usurper, the traumatized subject functions as a cipher floating in a sea of citational mass-media effects. Reduced to a ghost of himself in a rapidly decomposing Venice, the narrator hears his own self-alienation peddled back to him in the mocking banalities of tourist kitsch:

> I was no more than a throbbing heart and an attention strained to follow the development of *O sole mio*. . . . In this lonely, unreal, icy, unfriendly setting . . . the strains of *O sole mio,* rising like a dirge for the Venice I had known, seemed to bear witness to my misery. (3:668)

Trauma *is* this kitsch. Its essential delay or belatedness turns every mourning into a theatrical performance marked by the "unpunctuality" of the borrowed line:

> Like an actor who ought to have learned his part and to have been in his place long beforehand but, having arrived only at the last moment and having read over once only what he has to say, manages to improvise so skillfully when his cue comes that nobody notices his unpunctuality, my newfound grief enabled me, when my mother came, to talk to her as though it has existed always. (2:796)[15]

The inherent reduplication of trauma makes every inscription a palimpsest of itself, effaced by the very medium of transmission to which it owes its continued life.[16] Writing becomes the inevitable "self-plagiarism" (2:443) that blocks every possibility of self-recognition and self-return. The narrator's own handwriting seen traced on a postmarked envelope to Gilberte (1:437) is as opaque and unrecognizable to himself as is the newspaper article signed with the authority of his own proper name. Here is his early encounter with his own autograph text:

> I had difficulty in recognizing the futile, solitary lines of my own handwriting beneath the circles stamped [*imprimés*] on it at the post office, the inscriptions added in pencil by a postman, signs of effective realization, seals [*cachets*] of the external world, violet bands [*ceintures*] symbolic of life itself. (1:437, slightly modified)

(The beating and bondage scenario—*impressions, ceintures*—is already in place here.) And here, more or less repeated, is his late, long-deferred experience of publication:

> I opened the *Figaro*. What a bore! The main article had the same title as the article which I had sent to the newspaper and which had not appeared. But not merely the same title . . . why here were several words which were absolutely identical. This was really too bad. I must write and complain. But it wasn't merely a few words, it was the whole thing, and there was my signature. . . . It was my article which had appeared at last! (3:579)[17]

Thus the logic of the teletechnic regime: the postal superscription effaces what it relays, the newspaper alienates what it transmits, the inevitability of mechanical reproduction turns every act of self-reading into an event of misprision testifying to the radical illegibility of the original text. To read one's own work is to encounter the stigmatic alterity that marks the uncanniness of all self-return.[18]

The dream of specular transparency—the famous metaphors of the book as "cathedral" (3:1090), "optical instrument" (3:949), or "magnifying glass" (3:1089)—yields to the mortifying encounter with the opacity of the "clouded glass" (3:949). The homogeneous translucency of the vitreous surface shatters into a collage of fragments layered unstably in the opaque medium of the printed page. In an astonishing twist on the traditional trope of text and textile, Proust comes to associate writing with the weave of memory—a thickening "network of traversals" (3:1085f.)—forever entangled in its own revisions and straining at the seams:

> And—for at every moment the metaphor uppermost in my mind changed as I began to represent to myself more clearly and in a more material shape the task upon which I was about to embark—I thought that at my big deal table, under the eyes of Françoise . . . I should work beside her and in a way almost as she worked herself . . . and, pinning here and there an extra page, I should construct my book, I dare not say ambitiously like a cathedral but quite simply like a dress. Whenever I had my "paperies" near me, as Françoise called them, and just the one I needed was missing, Françoise would understand how this upset me, she who always said that she could not sew if she had not the right size thread and the proper button. (3:1090)[19]

In this endless bricolage the event of authorship becomes identified with an originary *Nachträglichkeit* that not only blurs the line between creation and supplementary re-creation—writing and revision—but thus blocks any access to the Book as redemptive

totality or consummation. Far from being an event of transfiguring redemption, the text rips under the weight of its own accretions and becomes stained by the inevitability of a self-correction that produces its essential blind spot as the very price and measure of its own success. The cathedral is degraded to a patchwork assemblage torn and blinded by its own paste-ins, which intrude like newsprint on a glassy surface and mark the irreducible opacity of a language shattered by its own repetition and citational effects:

> These "paperies," as Françoise called the pages of my writing, it was my habit to stick together with paste, and sometimes in this process they became torn. But Françoise then would be able to come to my help, by consolidating them just as she stitched patches onto the worn parts of her dresses or as, on the kitchen window, while waiting for the glazier as I was waiting for the printer, she used to paste a piece of newspaper where a pane of glass had been broken. And she would say to me, pointing to my notebooks as though they were worm-eaten wood or a piece of stuff which the moth had gotten into: "Look, it's all eaten away, isn't that dreadful! There's nothing left of this page, it's been torn to ribbons." (3:1091)

VI

"The real distress is the absence of distress" (Heidegger). The ultimate trauma is precisely the reflexive redoubling of trauma, which eventually comes to figure as the inevitable erasure of every figure and thus announces the final impossibility, which is the very possibility of writing. The "mortal blow" (3:475) not only destroys but simultaneously obliterates every residue of the lost object that now disappears without a trace within the infinite "blank" of the unrippled surface (3:519f.). The impossibility of picturing the lost object—the narrator systematically fails to form an image of the missing Albertine (3:439, 544, 548) just as his mother fails to form an image of her own dead mother (3:475)—congeals into a generalized *Bilderverbot* that threatens to block the work of symbolic substitution that is the very possibility of aesthetic recuperation.

Art seems to present itself precisely as a defense against such traumatic recursion and promises to negotiate the prohibition by charging it with productive force. The "empty space" left by a vanishing sensation is filled with the "general essence" released by the repetition of the same (3:957). In its projection of the "ideal void" (3:518) as a tabula rasa for the imagination, the artwork appears to present in Proust the one and only possibility of consolation. Such a defense may be mounted in a variety of fashions. On the one hand, the narrator will attempt to domesticate the trauma by

aestheticizing the machine: thus Elstir's preachings regarding "*la vie profonde des natures mortes*"—the redemption of the banal sterility of the quotidian through the idealizing lens of art—the perception of the "*infiniment petit*" as "*infiniment grand*" and thus the organic fulfillment of the inorganic. Technology can in this sense be incorporated anachronistically as a special topic of the artwork: as he nervously awaits a fateful phone connection the narrator invents imaginary genre paintings—"At the Telephone"—which will subsume the invention within the decorum of eighteenth-century pictorial conventions (3:94f.).

Technology can in turn be refunctioned aesthetically as a beautiful artwork: the narrator learns to hear in the blare of morning traffic the swelling strains of a symphony (3:111); learns to hear in the sirens of an air raid the music of the Valkyries (3:781); learns to hear in the "whirr" of the telephone bell the shepherd's pipe in *Tristan* (2:757); learns indeed to hear in an old woman's death rattle the harmonious organ chant of reconciliation (3:356).

By the end the narrator will attempt to contain the threat by erecting the imagination itself as an "admirable machine" feeding off the very suffering that provides its essential kick start (3:946). It is in this context that we can begin to understand the official celebration of the writing machine as an optical instrument through which the reader (and writer) can refind himself—and time—as lost object (cf. 3:949, 1089). If, finally, art is said to "work" like a machine in its conversion of dead matter into living spirit, this is precisely insofar as it bears the very promise of abreaction: the conversion of trauma into knowledge, chance into necessity, the "dull pain in our heart" into the "visible permanence of an image." Photography here supplies the essential model of sublimation:

> Since strength of one kind can change into strength of another kind, since heat which is stored up can become light and the electricity in a flash of lightning can cause a photograph to be taken, since the dull pain in our heart can hoist above itself like a banner the visible permanence of an image for every new grief, let us accept the physical injury which is done to us for the sake of the spiritual knowledge which grief brings; let us submit to the disintegration of our body, since each new fragment which breaks away from it returns in a luminous and significant form to add itself to our work, to complete it at the price of sufferings of which others more richly endowed have no need, to make our work at least more solid as our life crumbles away beneath the corrosive action of our emotions. Ideas come to us as the successors of griefs, and griefs, at the moment when they change into ideas, lose some part of their power to injure our heart; the transformation itself, even, for an instant, releases suddenly a little joy. (3:944)

If every technology in Proust is a traumatic teletechnology insofar as while establishing contact it simultaneously introduces the very specter of nonfulfillment—the telephone disconnects what it connects, the gramophone recording mortifies what it reproduces, the cinema fragments what it presents, the electric current interrupts what it conveys, the railway train distances what it joins, and so on (all this could be quickly enough established)—it is the photograph above all that exemplifies this paradoxical pressure of a proximity so excessive as to signify precisely the absolute irreparability of loss. And, of course, vice versa. In its traumatic character as imprint or index of a wound that can never itself appear as such, the photograph poses at the same time the aporia of an excessive presence against which even "loss" itself comes to function as the ultimate defense. In marking the perpetual relay between loss and proximity, absence and enjoyment, the photograph announces the very limit of aesthetic recuperation. Jouissance and melancholia define its two essential poles.

As such it is photography that constitutes the "gravest of all objections" (3:960) to the enterprise formulated in the Guermantes library—at once both the most profound obstacle and the essential condition of possibility. This would not be the first or final blow to "theory."

Notes

[1] Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past,* trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin, 1983); hereafter cited by volume and page number in the text.

[2] Letter of around 20 February 1913 to Rene Blum.

[3] For this almost Nietzschean conception of style, see the 1910 draft to *Le Temps retrouvé* (Cahier 28 fls 33–34d).

[4] Charlus will himself elsewhere engage in similar rituals of photographic surveillance.

[5] Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida,* trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1980), 53.

[6] The image resumes the fantasy of the "decanted springtime" in Venice: mineralized, virginal, "springlike without bud or blossom."

[7] The reduction of the nocturnal landscape to ruin is indeed already anticipated at Combray where the moonlight is perceived to work similarly devastating effects, most notably on the telecommunications industry:

> In each of their gardens the moonlight, copying the art of Hubert Robert, scattered its broken staircases of white marble, its fountains, its iron

> gates temptingly ajar. Its beams had swept away the telegraph office. All that was left of it was a column, half shattered but preserving the beauty of a ruin which endures for all time. (1:124)

[8] As will the narrator at 3:863f.

[9] Just as the original reading scene between mother and son at Combray was marked by a moment of radical erasure or nonreading—specifically, by the mother's elision of the incestuous passion between Francois and Madeleine. In this case, the traumatic coincidence of proximity and loss that announces the narrator's "puberty of sorrow"—the disastrous simultaneity of the mother's erotic presence (her "beautiful face shining with youth") and her incipient senescence (the "first wrinkle on her soul") (1:40) is crucially paralleled by a reading performance that interrupts itself and points to the very limits of symbolization. Trauma announces itself precisely by the syncopal blackout that is the unworking of the book:

> The plot began to unfold: to me it seemed all the more obscure because in those days, when I read, I used often to daydream about something quite different for page after page. And the gaps which this habit left in my knowledge of the story were widened by the fact that when it was Mama who was reading to me aloud she left all the love scenes out. And so all the odd changes which take place in the relations between the miller's wife and the boy, changes which only the gradual dawning of love can explain, seemed to me steeped in a mystery the key to which (I readily believed) lay in that strange and mellifluous name of *Champi,* which invested the boy who bore it, I had no idea why, with its own vivid, ruddy, charming color. If my mother was not a faithful reader, she was nonetheless an admirable one. (1:45)

[10] The vast disproportion between the intensity of each experience registered in the Guermantes' party—the jolt of the paving stones, the clink of the spoon, the swipe of the napkin, the shriek of the water pipe, the glare of the sun, and so on—and the negligible event that prefigured it suggests an unmistakable effect of *Nachträglichkeit*.

[11] In this overdetermined compound metaphor the line between birth and death, between food and toxin, is surely beginning already to unravel.

[12] Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1982).

[13] See note 2.

[14] Letter to Madame Straus, 6 November 1908.

[15] The nexus of incest and writing is elaborated in the narrator's initial perception of the statue of the Virgin of Balbec as already transformed into a "little old woman"—wrinkled, impure, defaced by the graffiti bearing the letters of his own name (1:710). Here as elsewhere the fantasy of the artist's proper signature is bound, paradoxically, to the object's mortifying fall into mechanical reproduction: the desecration of the tabula rasa into "corpse" or "stone semblance" of itself (1:709).

[16] Cf. Friedrich Nietzsche, first essay in *On the Genealogy of Morals,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967).

[17] "At last this consenting Prometheus had had himself nailed by Force to the rock of Pure Matter" (3:868).

[18] Cf. Jacques Derrida, *La carte postale* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980).

[19] The text continues:

> And in yet another way my work would resemble that of Françoise: in a book individual characters, whether human or of some other kind, are made up of numerous impressions derived from many girls, many churches, many sonatas and combined to form a single sonata, a single church, a single girl, so that I should be making my book in the same way that Françoise made that *boeuf à la mode* which M. de Norpois had found so delicious, just because she had enriched its jelly with so many carefully chosen pieces of meat. (3:1091; cf. I 480, 493f.)

Compare Proust's letter of 12 July 1909 to Celine Cottin comparing the various ingredients of the work to the lucidity of jelly, the succulence of carrots, the freshness of meat.

Half-Life

Laurence A. Rickels

I

Before it became the test case of what is human in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*[1] the android had a prehistory in the course of two earlier novels by Philip K. Dick: *We Can Build You*[2] and *The Simulacra*.[3] Dick's first androids, fresh off the same assembly line that the Disney imagineers had up and running already in the 1960s, were caught in the headlines of two consumer projections. Because their designers wagered that reenactment of historical events was the future in entertainment, the original androids or simulacra replicated figures from the American Civil War. But Barrows, the entrepreneur in *We Can Build You* to whom these designers must turn for backing, saw another future along the lines of his investment in outer space—and it would require mass production of androids to shield the colonists from psychoticizing loneliness by providing the illusion of life next door. Thus the first mass production line of androids in Dick's future worlds, in *The Simulacra,* turns out units of famnexdos, each one a family next door. It is in the first place this arrangement, and not the limited life span of artificial life, against which the androids rebel in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* Next door to us on Mars or in California, the androids are lonely, too.

In *We Can Build You* the Lincoln simulacrum debates Barrows on the incontrovertible differences separating machines, animals, and humans. Lincoln cranks up and through the age-old discourse on man-the-machine, which, at the tail end between its legacies,

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begins and ends with specism. Barrows states that man is a certain kind of animal (the kind, he says, with a handkerchief in his back pocket). What, then, is an animal? Not something manufactured like you, Barrows counters. But Lincoln argues that the "making" a machine manifests goes into man as well. That leaves soul, which Barrows, as self-made man, would forego together with—it's a package deal—the creator:

> "Then you, sir, are a machine. For you have a Creator, too. . . . He made you in His image. I believe Spinoza . . . held that opinion regarding animals; that they were clever machines. The critical thing, I think, is the soul. A machine can do anything a man can—you'll agree to that. But it doesn't have a soul."
>
> "There is no soul," Barrows said. "That's pap."
>
> "Then," the simulacrum said, "a machine is the same as an animal. . . . And an animal is the same as a man."[4]

In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the android test is legend to the mapping of the posthuman largely owing to its decontextualized installation within the film adaptation *Blade Runner* (1982), which seems more closely aligned with the earlier two novels' rehearsal address to the android. The equation between android and human that we are left with in *Blade Runner* (which is by and large, in the context of the novel, a propaganda film in support of the android cause) checks only one reality, namely, that of cinema itself. On screen, human actors might as well be androids or the miraculated-up men and women Schreber encountered as he entered the recovery phase of his psychosis.

Although in *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* the android is conceived as postmachinic, innocent bystanders still flash on machinic parts and partings when the android hurries past. The artificial animals that pick up the lack of living animals and that, unlike the androids, are machinic compel a sense of empathy against which the androids are proof.

In your dreams Freud[5] viewed machines, devices, gadgets—in a word, recognizable technology—as representing and repressing the dreamer's own genitalia or, as Victor Tausk[6] reformatted the lexical entry along the same lines, the dreamer's connection or disconnection with the mother's body as with his own. Put in yet other but still parallel terms, this time as supplied by Hanns Sachs,[7] technology in psychotic delusions turns on recovery, creating a respite from the crisis of uncanniness that must result when one overstays one's homecoming in primary or body-based narcissism. Flashes of technodifference pull apart nondifferentiation in life-form as in life's decay.

The postmachinic android, as new species, does not, not even possibly, exist. If we seem to recognize in the replicant just the same the poster teen of suicide, wipeout, fadeaway, before which we must swerve into the break we get for recovery, then it is still our own media rebound that we are picking up and personalizing or neotenizing. Abandonment of belief in miraculated-up figures passing as humans and their acceptance instead as fellow men was the one concession to reality required in Schreber's case for restoration of his legal rights but also if one's recovery in the new world order of mediatization is to be judged successful; that is, stabilized or encapsulated around maintenance of diplomatic relations with the outside human worlds that traverse one's own.

When in the novel, hunter-tester Deckard, rattled in the cage of his belief in a clear distinction between humans and androids, proposes adding to the test, which would still be aimed at identifying androids, supplemental questions measuring empathy with androids, he comes closer to Dick's own metaphorical or metaphysical reading of the terms of the distinction on which the author brooded in numerous interviews and essays. In *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* we begin to identify the projection of what the so-called android is through the seeing ego of Isidore, a radiation-spawned chicken head. This cretin or Christian follower of Mercerism, the local secular cult of empathy with animals (which has way more in common with a word from Nietzsche's Zarathustra than with the whole of the Judeo-Christian tradition), finds himself hosting runaways who turn out to be androids. Returning from an errand on their behalf, Isidore discovers in the hallway a spider, which as living animal amounts to the greatest prize and affirmation in his stricken world. The androids holed up in his apartment are attending to the broadcast of an investigative report on the swindle of Mercerism led by Buster Friendly, who, like most of the 24–7 celebrities of the culture industry, is yet another undercover android. When Isidore returns, his guests alternate between rapt attention to the Friendly news and raptor attention to the specimen. Does it really need eight legs? Snip! The mutilation of the spider conducted as their own investigative report might count as child's play if, in young adults, it didn't merit consideration as psychopathy. But more precisely, what the androids automatically improvise is a session of animal testing, which belongs to the reversed or disowned prehistory of the new world order's founding test of empathy. Androids see through our attachment to animals and the group bond it guarantees as ideological ruse whereby they are denied their equal rights. But this turn to politics covers in

the tracks of regression and resistance the more direct hit or fit between their rebellion and the totemic parental or ancestral guidance that animals transmit as mourning assignment.

In "Mourning and Melancholia,"[8] Freud gives in passing his estimate that the average time span of mourning is two years. That the two-year span is indeed the basic unit in every chronicle of unmourning can be found confirmed over and over again in occult fiction. In Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1818), for example, it is always after another period of two years has passed that Victor Frankenstein renews his vows with the pursuit of unmournable body building in lieu of letting go and putting to rest what is already at rest. To give a related example from the outer limits of the psy-fi complex, we find in one of the fictionalized projections of space travel that Wernher von Braun cowrote in the late 1950s that the two-year span also comes up in scheduling for the future: "There is no way of predicting the exact state of health of any individual for more than two years in advance."[9] The two-year period is thus doubly marked: it is a period on average immune from interruption by losses or further losses and at the same time the period the work of mourning can put to a death sentence, the period or point where mourning can also turn around into unmourning. It is both the time-altering span of the present going on recent past and the precog scan of the immediate future. This is the double point around which the android is constituted. The android is granted a life span of four years—a couple of two-year spans. When an android gives his or her age—a calculation that is difficult for the android, too, given the influence of false memories and apparent age—two years have passed and another two lie ahead. The androids, who, as instant imitation youths, skip, like our pets, childhood in the human sense, are like teenagers to the extent that, since on a metabolically amped schedule, like that of our companion species, they forever die young.

II

In Dick's oeuvre the schizo inside view of entropy or death drive as the purpose and momentum of life is punctuated, granted an intermission, or is in fact initiated over the first see-through view of the human across from you, taking it interpersonally, but as skeletally robotic Gestell. For the time being, then, the prosthetic frame of technorelations survives the decay that uncovers it. In addition to the resilience of the internal prosthesis, there is

another emergency break you get in the face of dissolution. What can reverse the collapse into the so-called tomb world is the reanimation of extinguished animals leading the falling world to rescue.

Tomb world is a citation from Ludwig Binswanger's "Case Study of Ellen West."[10] The complete dialectic that Binswanger developed to illuminate this case includes, at the other end, on high and untouchable, the ethereal world. Binswanger captures his patient's bind in the word *Schlinge,* a sling, snare, or even noose, which turns out to be an animal trap: the word that pulls itself over the sling, *Verschlingen,* means to sling something down, to eat ravenously, like an animal. As she demonstrates for Binswanger, this is precisely how Ellen eats when she eats like she wants or has to: she wolfs it down. In the span of her waiting around and her overweight the problem of food and death drops her like gravity into the grave world.

Dick contemplated the tomb world in a science fiction frame that left out the one-way opposition with the ethereal world. The fantasy genre, to which the ethereal world belongs, was not only Dick's first contact with and choice of fiction, but it also engaged him and his delegates throughout his work as fateful temptation. In an interview, Dick turned up the contrast between fantasy and science fiction within their respective spans of retention:

> In fantasy, you never go back to believing there are trolls, unicorns . . . and so on. But in science fiction, you read it, and it's not true now but there are things which are not true now which are going to be someday. . . . It's like all science fiction occurs in alternate . . . universes."[11]

The basis of fantasy's appeal, at least according to J. R. R. Tolkien (in "On Fairy Stories"),[12] is Christianity: the fantasy that is also true. The happy ending may be escapist in everyday life, but in the end (of life) it becomes the Great Escape, the overcoming of death that Christianity advertises. In this life, we pass in and out of fantasy. When we die, however, we enter fantasy, the other world, for keeps. Although a declared Christian, Dick was also paranoid and wary, therefore, of unambivalence. Even in *Ubik,*[13] where the interchangeable essence of consumer goods that promote perfectibility announces itself in the last commercial spot as the Christian God, nowhere does the novel admit truth in advertising, which would be the fantasy moment in this doubly *Mass* culture.

In an astounding about-face of denial, Binswanger identifies the one-sided world of ethereal fantasies or wishes as the province of both Christianity and psychoanalysis. But thus he secured a

discrete position for his own identification with his patient, who had already seen two classical analysts. Binswanger chose to side with Ellen's preference for the other world, even in effect to assist in her suicide, which, he agreed with her, represented her last chance at a freeing, if not free, act, since otherwise she faced only the prospect of chronic schizophrenia unstoppably creeping in. The aberrant act, which Binswanger privileged as the last try by *Dasein* to come to itself, become itself, could take the form, on the side of chance, of physical illness, the sudden death of a family member, an attack, a shock—and, on the sidelines of acting out, we encounter suicide, murder, other acts of violence, arson, or letting one's own hand burn slowly on the stove. In this latter case, it was Binswanger's patient Ilse[14] who thus marked the onset of her breakdown. By dedicating the hand burning to her father standing by, she handed it all to her father and led Binswanger by this hand to her stabilization. After one year at the institution, Ilse could return home completely cured of the acute psychosis.

Before her hospitalization, Ilse kept exceedingly busy following her "hand-up" routine. While thus taking too much upon herself, as Binswanger emphasizes, "she read Freud."[15] When next she treated herself to a recuperative stay at the local health resort, Ilse recognized that a reading (out loud) of a novella by Gottfried Keller she attended was the framing of multiple references to her. According to Freud, this last resort could be seen as the place where recovery in fact commenced with the onset of delusions of reference. She felt she was being "made the center of attention." Or again, "Well, they wanted to test me—how I would react."[16] Thus the hand she gave her father and extended through the father transference to her treating clinicians was not as decontextualized as the sacrifice of Binswanger's interpretation but already belonged to the relay of tests.

But testing in paranoid schizophrenia, Binswanger argued with regard to another patient, Suzanne Urban, inhabits reality testing only as forever condemned site:

> While experience advances from one step to the next, in other words discursively, guided by the reliability, constancy, and consequentiality of this natural mode of experience always and again subordinated to testing, the delusional experience turns around constantly in a circle.[17]

In her "Martyrology," as she herself referred to her condition, Suzanne could not be tried by new test questions that otherwise belonged outside this circling of the delusional experience.

Experience did not expand its stock of the new but rather confirmed original reservations. The delusional world was thus "reliable," "without question," in other words "untested."[18]

The vanishing point of reality in Suzanne's case is framed by torture-testing machinery reminiscent of Schreber's delusional system, which Binswanger however reduced in his interpretation to stage machinery in the service of unfree acting or acts determined by mere designs:

> The reduction of world in this delusion to a mere contact world is also connected with the predominance of technology and the technical apparatus. Technology becomes here thoroughly stage technique, that is, it serves with its machines mere realization of a certain intention or design, here, then, the design of endangerment, humiliation, martyrdom, annihilation.[19]

Suzanne Urban's delusion surpasses every tragedy—"even" (Binswanger adds for the sake of comparison) "the most gruesome Baroque drama."[20] Binswanger emphatically separates the psychotic stage of martyrology, on which Suzanne succumbs to the so-called bloody apparatus of destruction, from melancholia proper. And yet Walter Benjamin, following Freud, realigned, between the lines, the "melancholia" on the *Trauerspiel* stage with the endopsychic Sensurround of Schreber's own martyrology as so-called tested soul.

What falls up between these cracks is the too often missed connection between Benjamin's *Origin of the German Mourning Play*[21] and his later media essays, in which testing occupies the foreground. But the Baroque martyr pageant, as Benjamin emphasized, was already withdrawn from the only genre of Passion that Inquisitioning minds wanted to know. That the martyr began to fill out a Job application is a measure of the unsecuring of bonds of faith. According to Benjamin, the Baroque martyr drama "has nothing in common with religious concepts," and the martyr is thoroughly embedded in "immanence": "[H]e is a radical stoic and executes his test or trial in the context of a royal or religious dispute, at the end of which torture and death await him."[22] As parallel universal to tyranny's restoration of order, this stoic technique thus establishes a state of emergency of the soul or psyche.[23] The excavation or restoration of these test connections in Benjamin can be submitted as case in pointing out the metapsychological fact, as presented by Avital Ronell in *The Test Drive,* that "the very structure of testing tends to overtake the certainty that it establishes when obeying the call of open finitude."[24]

While on the road through recovery, Binswanger's patient Ilse underwent a series of delusional tests and torments:

> After the patient was placed in our institute, the delusions of reference spread further, along with delusions of love. These latter manifested themselves not only in Ilse's belief that she was loved and tested by the doctors but also in her compulsion to love the doctors.[25]

The doctors were increasing

> all the drives in her so as to make her purge herself of them—the drive toward love and the drive toward the truth. That, to her, represented her "treatment," one which she felt was very strenuous. Soon she considered it merely torture.[26]

During this relay of testing and torture Binswanger lets us hear the footnote drop: "What Ilse called the 'treatment' is, of course, her delusion. No psychoanalytical experiments whatsoever were conducted."[27] Suzanne never could get out of the rut of her martyrology, but Ilse helped herself to the restoration of reality testing. Reality testing and transference (and, unnamed but implicated in the line up, mourning, too) were the two or three things Freud knew about the separation or borderline between normal-to-neurotics and psychotics. Reality testing and mourning are even closer than device and application. Mourning *is* reality testing. (There is no reality quite like that of loss.) Hence it is a certain relationship to loss (as in melancholia) that "tows" the bottom line of psychosis. And, as the case of Ilse demonstrates against Binswanger's designs, to find missing what otherwise defines psychotic states by process of its elimination means to redraw borderlines of legibility between neurosis and psychosis inside psychosis.

III

In *The Open: Man and Animal*,[28] Giorgio Agamben's close reading of Heidegger on man and animal issues in the flat line that "bare life" is the last stand or understanding of man and animal—of man as animal—in the only context left for our consideration of the social relation, that of Foucault's biopolitics. But the nonmachinic android that Dick introduced at this juncture as figment of our teen age revalorizes bare life as electro-cute and thus issues with the group psychology, as Nietzsche did in his detours through Christianity, the extended warranty of legibility and possibility. Without

animal access or in circumvention of the totemic work of mourning, the rebel androids nevertheless forge their in-group bond experimentally out of live or life transmissions: drugs, disease, and media.

In the close quarters given "rescue" between "saving" and "redemption," Agamben sends Benjamin to head the Heidegger reading off at its impasse by conjuring up a "rescued night." Though this night or nothingness cannot be saved or redeemed, it does qualify for allegorical rescue. Agamben thus gives Benjamin the last word as outside chance of pulling up short before "the nothing," even though or especially because Benjamin is dead set up as outgunned by the momentum and weight of the Heidegger reading or, rather, by the dynamic of its Before and After, its history. But in giving Heidegger the floor, Agamben can't floor it anymore, but must spell out the in-appropriation of the animal that Heidegger saw himself up against.

In Agamben's *The Open,* it is thus up to Heidegger to admit the Freudian tradition of contemplation of man and animal (which incorporates Darwin and was inherited by the Frankfurt school, the station stop missing from Agamben's itinerary of Benjamin's thought). Agamben on Heidegger on Rilke:

> At work in both Nietzsche and Rilke is that oblivion of being "which lies at the foundation of the biologism of the nineteenth century and of psychoanalysis" and whose ultimate consequence is "a monstrous anthropomorphization of . . . the animal and a corresponding animalization of man."[29]

Rilke's poetic word thus "falls short of a 'decision capable of founding history,' and is constantly exposed to the risk of 'an unlimited and groundless anthropomorphization of the animal,' which even places the animal above man and in a certain way makes a 'superman' of it."[30]

As Binswanger comes close to working through a phenomenology of the psychotherapeutic setting toward a social ontology based on Heidegger's ontology, he turns to Jakob von Uexküll,[31] the figure Agamben followed into the corners in which Heidegger backed up animals. If humankind inhabits countless worlds while holding a world in common, then the psychotic, in foregoing the common world, fits the worlds within worlds von Uexküll claims for the animals. Binswanger:

> Just as we would say that it is not possible to describe the psychosis of a person if one has not first thoroughly traversed his worlds, just so von Uexküll says: "It is not possible to describe the biology of an animal if one has not completely circumscribed the circles of its function." And as

> we would say furthermore: therefore one is justified to assume as many worlds as there are psychotics, von Uexküll says: "Therefore one is fully justified to assume as many surrounding worlds as there are animals."[32]

For the complex of readings that have become the environment of von Uexküll's corpus, it is the notion of the moment in a world of marking or noting that commands these pages as the very translation scene of their words or worlds of difference. Here we restore what Agamben in *The Open* leaves out of his close paraphrase of the tick passage from the 1933 pamphlet *Excursions through the Environments of Animals and Humans,* through which von Uexküll popularized the work that had established his reputation twenty-five years earlier. At the close of his presentation of the tick's environment or perceptual field as impoverished but secure world, von Uexküll notes that from this one inside view one can derive the basic traits for the construction of environments that would apply to all animals. But there is an additional capacity characterizing the tick, which, von Uexküll promises, "opens up for us a yet wider insight into the environments."[33]

The tick is able to wait for indeterminate spans of time for the survival of its species. Then von Uexküll notes that for which Agamben was lying in wait: the Zoological Institute in Rostock, Germany, has kept a tick ticking eighteen years and counting simply by depriving it of nourishment. Agamben lets this reference, which concludes a section of *The Open,* resonate indefinitely, deprived of its environment in the text, von Uexküll's introduction of the moment as the smallest possible and most basic span of time during which the world stands still. Stylistically at least, as transition, the tick here is almost Freudian. The eighteen years of the Rostock tick calls up the same number in another setting; namely, one-eighteenth of a second, which is how long the moment of man lasts. At this moment a footnote delivers the proof:

> The proof of this is provided by cinema. During the screening of a strip of film the pictures must leap forward jerkily one after another and then stand still. To show them as sharply as possible the jerky leaping forward must be made invisible with the aid of a filter. The darkening which thus occurs is not perceived by our eyes if the standing still of the picture and its darkening transpire within one one-eighteenth of a second. If more time is taken intolerable flickering ensues.[34]

The duration of the moment differs from animal to animal. But however we compute the moment of the tick, it is beyond possible to endure an unchanging environment for eighteen years.

At this point, Agamben misreads or mistranslates von Uexküll's assumption that a sleeplike state suspends the tick's long time, a state to which we humans have recourse, according to von Uexküll, whenever we must wait for extended periods, but, according to Agamben, every night when we sleep. That we should sleep, like Ellen West, only to cut the loss of waiting in half indeed loses von Uexküll's attentiveness to the knowledge in the waiting of animals.

What Benjamin referred to as the optical unconscious was opened up through opportunities available in filmmaking and projection, for example, for speeding up and slowing down our perceptual field. Benjamin's examples might be found summarized in a Disney film like *The Desert Lives* (1953). Just add rainwater, and the hatching, crawling, blossoming, and pollination across the desert surface can be viewed on screen in no time. But von Uexküll underscores that the opening up of the range of our seeing ego probe, which no longer need stop short before invisibility, extends to the animal environments that whiz by us or just drag along, but which now can be made perceptible to us through their technically possible calibration.

That a perceptual environment can be, at least as far as timing goes, another world is what we learned first from animals and psychotics and that, according to von Uexküll, cinema proved. In Dick's *Martian Time-Slip,*[35] the autistic boy Manfred, who is growing up schizophrenic, is considered a case for testing new theories from Switzerland about the relative slowness of the psychotic perceptual environment, which registers the normal environment or common world only as unbearable fast forwarding. Manfred leaps so far ahead that it's the future—and you only know it's the future, unmediated by wish fulfillment or fantasy, if it's the tomb world. Jack Bohlen, a recovered schizophrenic, is hired to build a machine that translates the input of the common world as audio and video recordings slowed down to fit Manfred's perceptual environment. The boy's communications would then in turn be up to speed by the time they reached our ears.

This time machine modifies the environment or perceptual field to unblock communication the way training lays claim to trainability. In the closing chapter of her study *Adam's Task,*[36] Vicki Hearne introduced autism research into the interdisciplinary exploration of how training of dogs and horses meets their trainability more than halfway as ennobling test. Autism may indicate that something like training or, better yet, trainability is the more fundamental criterion of relationality and possibility than speaking or not speaking. Yet this human illness, like boredom, the

Heideggerian supplement that Agamben also tries to take against the animalization and technologization of humans as supplies, doesn't commit us to sharing one continuum with the trainable animal. Whereas animals are so generous in answering us, the constitutively human ability to speak can also always mean not to answer, not to be answered by, the other.[37]

Hearne wagers that the first time we find that the request we were taught to pronounce is insufficient to guarantee the response of the other, the paradoxes and muddles that thus begin to arise drive us to philosophy and poetry. The resulting focus on certain aspects of our intellect and imagination, to come full circle within what is human, ends up manifesting, though in less extreme form, autistic self-stimulation behavior. The autistic child would thus appear to be the by-product of our unique evolutionary development, according to Ivar Lovaas according to Hearne. The trainable animal matters, Hearne adds, to "a tribe as lonesome and threatened most of the time as ours is,"[38] Because the animal answers, training is what we offer in exchange to enact our gratitude.

In his study of animals and humans, psychoanalyst Gustav Bally[39] enters a field overcrowded with precursors, mainly von Uexküll and his students, which as too much information or overstimulation in the animal's perceptual field would guarantee for the animal, by veiling the single-minded goal, a freer play of mental faculties. Expanding on this anxiety in influence, Bally summarizes findings that prove that in animal testing the best results are obtained through a noncatastrophic but unexpected stimulus. Animal testing and the study of animal behavior and learning are sometimes on the same field. Stimuli that are punitive make the animal more careful, expand the view of the surrounding environment, and lead to new solutions. A measured electrical shock turns out to be most effective in producing a beneficial startle response as alarm signal. The alarm effect of unknown factors opens up the animal's immediate environment and differentiates it. The animal given a good enough start stops short and begins to suffer thought. According to Bally, "the animal has not become, as one might assume at first sight, entirely the function of the sensory apparatus, like someone submerged in meditation. It is entirely—possible movement. . . . Often whole sequences of movement are executed as in an experiment. . . . Animals think through movement. Thinking, says Freud, is a testing activity."[40]

In the second half of the study reserved for humans at play Bally singles out the dog as singularly ready for the good impressions that even chimps can't make.[41] Already a puppy can observe and

follow human sleight of hand and remember which hand holds the food. The canine ready positioning for receiving the impressions of training or testing exceeds a one-way field of behavior study and modification to include a mode of communication modeled on interspecial exchange.

IV

While Vicki Hearne tacked onto her philosophical study a brief afterword calling for extension of the rights of seeing-eye dogs to all trained companion dogs, Donna Harraway[42] has been seeking to rewire relations with our "companion species" along the functional lines to which we owe our working relationship. I'm in support of putting the shepherding dogs back to work in a clearing provided ultimately by website politics. But while I want to bark back in support, I cannot get around the primal time that inevitably mediates our first interspecial relations and renders them profoundly allegorical on or in a stage of mourning play. Let this be my intervention.

In *Origin of the German Mourning Play,* Benjamin underscores that we encounter the dog as allegorical figure of melancholia. This *Hund* casts its breath and shadow upon the *Und.* The dog is emblematic of the dark side of melancholia via the rabid or manic issue of the fragile spleen's degeneration in melancholic humans and in afflicted dogs. But on the lighter side, as Benjamin concludes this emblem label, it is also the dog's perseverance and sagacity that inspired the image of the inexhaustible brooder, the other melancholic. This double significance of the dog as melancholia mascot finds another outlet at the same time in Franz Kafka's "Investigations of a Dog" (1922). The canine protagonist is bipolar, if you take his history, but remains throughout the story the melancholic brooder whose endlessly erring path of investigation is accordingly ascribed at one fragmented juncture to an aberration that the "primal fathers" set in motion.

In a letter dated 17 December 1934, Theodor Adorno responded to Benjamin's "Kafka" by twice intervening from within the lexicon of Benjamin's own Origin book. Because Odradek dwells in the house of the father as his "care" (*Sorge*) and "danger," we are given here, according to Adorno, the prefiguration of the overcoming of the creaturely relationship to guilt. This *Sorge*—"truly a Heidegger placed on his feet"[43]—is the promissory cipher of hope. Benjamin replies with gratitude on 7 January 1935: now

for the first time he finds he can address Kafka's "Investigations of a Dog" (which he misremembers in its title as "Notes of a Dog" and thus places in the position of communication).[44] Prior to Adorno's interventions, Benjamin found that this particular story, like a foreign body, withheld from him its "genuine word" ("*eigentliches Wort*").

In the recent past investigation into the origin of the *Hund/Und* was in the news. Given in evolutionary or sci-fi terms, the hypothesis (even if only as phantasm) challenged received notions of evolution as an ascending line that put a chimp on our shoulders. Something like an alternate reality shot up the sidelines when, as the new theory presented it, sudden mutation (and not domestication) turned a small number of wolves into a new species driven or programmed to read and follow our nonverbal communications. Presumably the relationship had to undergo a few trials or tests. The dogs approached our encampment to engage us, only to be severely tried by our incomprehension and hunger. Freud's primal father myth thus goes to the dogs. In East Asia, according to DNA testing, is located the single place of origin of all the dogs in the world today. It is also the place where the ambivalent relationship to dogs still gets acted out. At some point we must have realized that the dog approached us as reader and teacher and not as voluntary quarry. Just like (or precisely as) the primal father once devoured by his sons, the hot dog introduced mourning as problem, condition, and legacy (for which his canine heirs then, as emblems of melancholia, serve as mascots).

In Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (1857–59), Isolde curses the *Und* that binds her to Tristan and separates them—but also lets them live. She seeks to eradicate the *Und* in their *Liebestod:* "Yet this little word and—/ were it destroyed, / how else than / with Isolde's own life / would Tristan be given death?" Nothing circumvents mourning (or unmourning) quite so immediately as mass self-destruction. Dick's nonmachinic android adds to these subtractions while already in name or nickname—as andy—subtracting from, personalizing, and plugging into its own possible additions. Only with the survival, the passing, of adolescence does the unique evolution of man transmit.

The superman, Freud corrects Nietzsche, belongs in the past, not to the future. What stands above us remains the primal father of prehistory. But there is also another prehistory, as Adorno advised Benjamin in his letter dated 4 August 1935, again with reference to the Origin book: the recent past is the most repressed period of time that therefore always appears as prehistory and comes toward

us only as catastrophe and return. This repressed recent past is excavated in the time of mourning. Darwin's theory of evolution tends to be received as progressive development of species, which climbs up over corpses that are not counted individually but count only as part of a milieu for the selection of survivor traits. In the span between the recent past and mourning over those closest to us, however, the theory of evolution can be seen at the same time as leaving open the possibility of rapid fundamental changes, as can follow, for example, from the invention and introduction of new technical prostheses. Applied to technological changes, the theory of evolution inspired countless fantasies and fictions of close encounters with animal, plant, and machine species that advanced beyond us via the rewind and playback functions of evolutionary time.

The fantasy of time travel also reckons with the new units of time brought to us by technical evolution. For the most part, however, time-travel fictions show us the past in the future from which we are given the chance to swerve, thanks to the warning.

Dick further differentiated and internalized time travel in his fictions. Here one travels mainly through the recent past in order to pull the dead into media-technological real time or extended lifetime where they can still be visited. As with his administration of time travel, Dick hitched his use of alternate history or alternate reality to the present going on the recent past. Dick dismissed fascination with past lives as generic fantasy. He promoted instead his conception of alternate present realities (which, through time travel, interconnect in the recent past, which can be staggered through alternation but never altered). Within an expanding archive of finitude, then, Dick dismantles the present as vanishing point of the recent past, the big repressed where the dead are.

In Dick's *Ubik,* "half-life" is a variation on the itinerary through alternate times whereby the dead and the survivors keep in touch. In the condition of half-life, the deceased is suspended as ghostly interlocutor between first and second deaths. In half-life one still dies, but not so fast, or rather the finality is displaced for the time being through contextlessness, as in the creaturely state of Kafka's Hunter Gracchus. As technological fulfillment of modern Spiritualism, half-life control-releases the tomb world around the leak it keeps springing on the survivors and the undead alike. The teenager at heart of undeath drives apart the best-laid plans for reunion and remembrance. Jory, who died a teenager, acts out among the half-lifers by devouring the ones he's with and thus denying finitude even in the secular afterlife of half-life or haunting. Thus for all others he reverses the deferral of the second death and turns the

liminal realm of half-life back into the tomb world, which reaches in turn inside the world of full life. But whenever the full-life world is proclaimed as outside chance or alternative in *Ubik,* Dick halves it through inclusion of a detail that could only belong inside the delusions comprising half-life. And for those who believe themselves to be immersed in half-life, their relation to those in the full-life world seeking to make contact appears only as ghostly connection:

> We are served by organic ghosts, he thought, who, speaking and writing, pass through this our new environment. Watching, wise, physical ghosts from the full-life world, elements of which have become for us invading but agreeable splinters of a substance that pulsates like a former heart.[45]

Dick's alternate reality of mourning or unmourning as half-life views the deceased and the survivor as always having in common that they both lost each other. Therefore it proves possible to travel through a time in which one cannot decide who died on whom. For the near future, then, the living and the and-dead, *die Und-Toten*—just like the present and the recent past—remain in interchangeable but incalculable contact.

Notes

[1] Philip K. Dick, *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?* (1968; repr., New York: Ballantine, 1996).

[2] Philip K. Dick, *We Can Build You* (1972; repr., New York: Vintage, 1994).

[3] Philip K. Dick, *The Simulacra* (1964; repr., New York: Vintage, 2002).

[4] Dick, *We Can Build You,* 107–8.

[5] Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works,* trans. and ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: Hogarth, 1958).

[6] Victor Tausk, "Über die Entsehung des 'Beeinflussungsappartes' in der Schizophrenie," in *Gesammelte psychoanalytische und literarische Schriften,* ed. Hans-Joachim Metzger (1919; repr., Vienna: Medusa, 1983), 245–86. Translated by Dorian Feigenbaum as "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia," in *Sexuality, War and Schizophrenia: Collected Psychoanalytic Papers,* ed. with an introduction by Paul Roazen (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1991), 185–220.

[7] Hanns Sachs, "The Delay of the Machine Age," trans. *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 11, nos. 3–4 (1933): 402–24.

[8] Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia," in *Standard Edition* (see note 5), 14:243–58.

[9] Wernher von Braun and Willy Ley, *The Exploration of Mars* (New York: Viking, 1956), 132.

[10] Ludwig Binswanger, "The Case of Ellen West," trans. Werner M. Mendel and Joseph Lyons, in *Existence: A New Dimension in Psychiatry and Psychology,* ed. Rollo May, Ernest Angel, and Henri F. Ellenberger (New York: Basic, 1958), 237–364.

[11] Arthur Bryan Cover, "*Vertex* Interviews Philip K. Dick," *Vertex* 1, no. 6 (1974): 34–37.

[12] J. R. R. Tolkien, "On Fairy-Stories," in *The Monsters and the Critics and Other Essays,* ed. Christopher Tolkien (1947; repr., London: George Allen & Unwin, 1983), 109–61.

[13] Philip K. Dick, *Ubik* (1969; repr., New York: Vintage, 1991).

[14] Ludwig Binswanger, "Insanity as Life-Historical Phenomenon and as Mental Disease: The Case of Ilse," trans. Ernest Angel, in *Existence* (see note 10), 214–36.

[15] Ibid., 215.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ludwig Binswanger, "Der Fall Suzanne Urban" [The case of Suzanne Urban], in *Ausgewählte Werke* (Heidelberg: Roland Asanger Verlag, 1994), 4:210–322, quotation on 281.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 260.

[20] Ibid., 270.

[21] Walter Benjamin, *Ursprung des deutschen Trauerspiels,* in *Gesammelte Schriften,* ed. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (1928; repr., Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972–89), 1:1. Translated by John Osborne as *The Origin of German Tragic Drama,* introd. George Steiner (New York: Verso, 1998).

[22] Ibid., 191.

[23] Ibid., 253.

[24] Avital Ronell, *The Test Drive* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2005), 5.

[25] Binswanger, "Insanity as Life-Historical Phenomenon," 216.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal,* trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2004).

[29] Ibid., 58.

[30] Ibid., 59.

[31] Jakob von Uexküll, *Streifzüge durch die Umwelten von Tieren und Menschen: Ein Bilderbuch unsichtbarer Welten* (Berlin: J. Springer, 1933). Translated by Claire H. Schiller as "A Stroll through the Worlds of Animals and Men: A Picture Book of Invisible Worlds," in *Instinctive Behavior: The Development of a Modern Concept,* ed. and trans. Claire H. Schiller (New York: International Universities Press, 1957), 5–80.

[32] Binswanger, "Über die daseinsanalytische Forschungsrichtung in der Psychiatrie," in *Ausgewählte Werke* (see note 17), 3:237.

[33] von Uexküll, *Streifzüge,* 29.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Philip K. Dick, *Martian Time-Slip* (1964; repr., New York: Vintage, 1995).

[36] Vicki Hearne, *Adam's Task: Calling Animals by Name* (London: William Heinemann, 1987).

[37] In my book *I Think I Am: Philip K. Dick* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, forthcoming 2010), Jacques Derrida's crucial interventions in animal "autobiography" are fully in place (see Jacques Derrida, *The Animal That Therefore I Am,* ed. Marie-Louise Mallet, trans. David Wills [New York: Fordham University Press, 2008]). There I advance Hearne's notion of the always-answering animal inside a context Derrida demarcated as the undecidable distinction, often drawn, between the reaction of the animal and the essentially human response (which resounds only in language). Derrida can show, however, that the logic of the distinction Jacques Lacan, too, pursues nominates the animal, in theory, as the one most likely to succeed the symbolic father. Another prong of reflection that inspired my nomination of the dog, the trainable or answering animal par excellence, for the primal father position should be noted here, as well. Akira Lippit's approach to the animal relation follows the logic of the evil eye: before going gone the struck-down animal can inflict a last and lasting blow on the hunter (see *Electric Animal: Toward a Rhetoric of Wildlife* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000]). In other words, animal spectrality is the fallback position for an encounter animal language calls out in us. The animal in exchange may not be understood (until slain by us) but will not be ignored, especially in the prolonged span of parting. Also see my contribution ("Pet Grief") to the catalog accompanying an exhibition of Diana Thater's work at Kunsthaus Graz (Laurence A. Rickels, "Pet Grief," in *Diana Thater: gorillagorillagorilla* [Cologne: Walther König, 2009], 64–73).

[38] Hearne, *Adam's Task,* 265.

[39] Gustav Bally, *Vom Spielraum der Freiheit: Die Bedeutung des Spiels bei Tier und Mensch* (Basel: Schwabe, 1966).

[40] Ibid., 36–37.

[41] Ibid., 65.

[42] Donna Harraway, *The Companion Species Manifesto: Dogs, People, and Significant Otherness* (Chicago: Prickly Paradigm, 2003).

[43] For English translations, see Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *The Complete Correspondences, 1928–1940,* ed. Henri Lonitz, trans. Nicholas Walker (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 66–73, quotation on 69 (translation modified).

[44] Ibid., 73–77; and Benjamin, *Complete Correspondences, 1910–1940,* ed. and annotated by Gershom Scholem and Theodor Adorno, trans. Manfred R. Jacobson and Evelyn M. Jacobson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 470–73, quotation on 471.

[45] Dick, *Ubik,* 211.

On the Future of Our Incorporations: Nietzsche, Media, Events

Barbara Stiegler
Translated by Helen Elam

> *Premises of the age of machines.* The press, the machine, the railroad, the telegraph are the premises from which nobody has dared draw the conclusion for a thousand years.
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche,
> *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880)[1]

The Hammering of the Telegraph

The new technologies of communication that aim to connect—at least materially—everybody on the planet, faster and faster and further and further on the earth, have not heard, as is often heard, the beginning of the third millennium about to explode. The explosion took place more than a century ago, in the last third of the nineteenth century and its industrial revolution, at the very time of Nietzsche, the first to try to think about an unprecedented phenomenon: the era of *nihilism,* conceived as the time in which the

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highest values are devalued. A few dates to remember: Nietzsche is born (1844) at the same time as the telegraph (1837, 1844, 1850), and he comes to philosophy (1872) at the point at which the telegraphic network literally explodes (1865), deploying exponentially its spectacular effects, "[offering] in effect to nineteenth-century man a communication system without precedent, which allows the linking in a few hours . . . of the main economic or politically interesting points on the planet. Impressed, people of the time dream of a dense web of means of communication that will permit contact at every moment with every point on the globe"[2]—a dream that, as we know and *as Nietzsche already* knew, the next two centuries will fulfill: "What I tell is the history of the next two centuries. I describe what is coming, what cannot come in any other way: the advent of nihilism" (posthumous fragment 1887–88 11 [411]; 189).[3] For at the same time as the telegraph the railroad also grows, and alongside these two innovations, the explosion of *mass print,* or what the English language will call at the beginning of the twentieth century *mass media.* Nietzsche will strive throughout his work to think the intimate connection between this new dominance of the press, the creation of a leveled *mass,* and the coming of *nihilism.* From *The Wanderer and His Shadow* on, he notes with compelling lucidity that "we hear very well the hammering of the telegraph, but we do not understand it" (posthumous fragment 1877 22 [76]; 392) and that "the printing press, the machine, the railroad, the telegraph are the premises from which nobody has dared draw conclusions for a thousand years" (*The Wanderer and His Shadow,* sec. 278, 674). The conclusion has to be drawn for *a thousand years,* that is to say, for the duration of a reign into which Nietzsche and his contemporaries begin to enter and in which we are today lastingly installed. In that regard, Nietzsche is certainly the first philosopher who strives to *think the media,* in the sense that he is the first who confronts in the first person the unspoken questions that they the media pose for us, at the risk of falling ill from them and hastening his own explosion.

So one has to begin by putting aside the superficial idea of Nietzsche's contempt for media. Of course, the judgments directed against the press, newspapers, and journalists paraded under his pen: thus he judges the press "a permanent false alert" (*Mixed Opinions and Maxims,* sec. 321, 511), the reading of newspapers a "profound debasement" (posthumous fragment 1880 4 [61]; 114), and the journalist the type one has to despise on principle: "Principle 1) *Profound contempt for those who work in the press*" (posthumous fragment 1884 25 [134]; 49). A superficial Nietzscheanism invoking these texts might be tempted to see here an opposition, in the

sense of an absolute and unbridgeable separation, between on the one hand the leveled masses that constitute the support of mass media, and the solitary aristocracy on the other, fortified within the icy solitude of the heights. But whoever has read *Zarathustra* knows very well that this position is untenable *for Zarathustra himself,* who says already in the prologue that he *must* decline, descend toward the lowliest of men and try to gulp down the worst pathologies of the time, to the point of achieving the greatest disgust. That is precisely the test and proof of the eternal return. How to get to will the eternal return of everything that happens, when what happens is the creation of a debased and failed mass of men experimenting with all the possible modalities of decadence? How to get to want everything and love everything, even the creation of this mass that generates disgust?—a question that replays quite consciously the ordeal of Christ. Briefly, how does one get to want mass media, when they contribute to the failure and debasement of the human animal? The thinking of the eternal return destroys the one-way view of an elevated solitary thought, aristocratically isolated from the conditions of the mass and impervious to the effects of the media.

A major text, to which not enough attention has been given, allows us to go further. It suggests that the thought of the eternal return could be constituted as a new response to the new situation created by the media:

> The erstwhile means to produce, through long generations, durable and *identical* essences: . . . the cult of the Ancients (origin of the belief in gods and heroes as in ancestors). Today . . . the opposite tendency: a *newspaper* in the place of daily *prayer,* the railroad, the telegraph. Centralization of a huge sum of different interests in a single soul: which *for this reason* must be very strong and capable of transforming itself. (posthumous fragment 1884 25 [210]; 68–69)

At the point where "the eternal world" (*aïôn*) of Plato and the new *aïôn* of Saint Paul—where the souls of the dead were supposed to be preserved eternally as identical to themselves—are in the process of liquidation, the thinking of the eternal return tries to think eternity no longer *against time*—as no doubt did metaphysics, and toward which Christianity paradoxically tended—but *in relation to time itself:* eternity can no longer be spoken of from outside of time, but from within the temporal itself, that is to say, from events that occur in the flux, and about which it is necessary to think, will, and experience the eternal recurrence, exactly identical—an experience that finds its best paradigm in musical listening, which

demands and finds within itself its own *da capo*. Now this double selling off of an atemporal world above the becoming (the platonic world of Ideas) and of an eternal life beyond passing and death (that which Jesus, St. John, and St. Paul announce in diverse ways) is accelerated by the development of new media, which function as *catalysts of nihilism* by destroying the "eternal world" where up to that point stable essences, the highest values, and immortal souls were preserved.[4] The era that is inaugurated with an explosion of media corresponds at once to an acceleration of history and to a *fluid becoming of all being*, which loses all form of stability and which increases the consciousness of an *absolute flux:*

> Prehistoric eras are defined by tradition across immense stretches of time. In the historic era, the determining factor is each time a freeing from tradition, a difference of opinion, the *free thinking* which makes history. The more the reversing of opinions accelerates, the more the world hastens its course, chronicle is transformed into journal, and in the end the telegraph ascertains what the opinions of men have become in just a few hours. (posthumous fragment 1876 19 [89]; 352)

If the thinking of the Return has to raise in a completely new way the question of the *always,* it's because the old ways of constituting eternity are in the process of being destroyed by the acceleration of events, which for the first time make manifest the reality of *absolute flux*. The era of nihilism is the era when Dionysus (the divine name of absolute flux according to Nietzsche) comes onto the scene of history, appearing in person before men: "I *foresee* something terrible. Chaos is very close. All is flux" (posthumous fragment 1882–83 4 [80]; 137).[5] All souls help at the same time the acceleration of flux, beginning with that of their own internal flux, and the intensification of their contradictions. A soul at the end of the nineteenth century is exposed in an unpredictable way, not only to the chaotic contradictions of history—it's at this time that, as we know, history is constituted as a discipline—but also to the chaotic contradictions that rend the world *at the same time,* pure form of logical contradiction according to Aristotle's definition. The telegraph and the printing press force the world of the "machinal age" to concentrate on itself an enormous number of different and contradictory interests: "centralization of an enormous number of different interests in a single soul." The growth of this internal chaos forces the soul to be *far stronger* than the souls of the historical era, because it forces the soul to remain itself ("centralization in a single soul") while at the same time transforming itself a great deal more and a great deal faster: by incorporating into itself a larger and larger mass of flux

and its contradictions. We will show further on how the thinking of the eternal return attempts to respond to this test, or how the hammer of the Return attempts to respond to the hammering of the telegraph. But we can see from this point on that this putting to the test is the unpredictable work of the media, which forces the era of nihilism to invent a new relationship to constancy and eternity.

Media: Organs of Remote Love?

The pure and simple condemnation of the media is not tenable in Nietzsche's name, not only because the media themselves introduce a considerable renewal of our modes of temporalization, but also because, it turns out, Nietzsche is the first philosopher to affirm *the necessity of media.* From beginning to end, he insists persistently on the necessity of what he calls "love of remoteness,"[6] that is: the ability to be compatible with what is far from oneself, such compassion allowing at the same time the creation of a *We* and an incorporation of the other into oneself. These concepts (love of remoteness and incorporation) appear in the 1880s, but Nietzsche's first book, *The Birth of Tragedy,* already speaks of the necessity of an ecstatic compassion with all living beings, a necessity that he baptizes with the name of the Greek god "Dionysus," god of drunkenness and compassion (suffering and joy).[7] So, from 1872 onward, Nietzsche understands (against Schopenhauer but also against Wagner) that Dionysian *ecstasy* cannot be immediate and requires on the contrary *mediations* that belong to Apollo: figure, image and delimitation. Dionysian compassion assumes the mediations of the tragic scene, that is, the apparition of clear delimited figures in front of the entire Greek public (Apollo), whereby the spectators are together able to bear up under the excess of possibilities that overflow them (Dionysus). These mediations are of course not yet media, if one understands by media the material support of mass communication. But if one holds to a less restrictive definition and if the media designate "any socially instituted structure of communication, then, by extension, the support of the latter,"[8] the tragic theater seems the medium permitting the Greek community not only to "communicate," but to feel its arch-unity (at once compassionately and affectively).

This originary need of Apollonian mediations for Dionysian *ekstasis* readies Nietzsche to think the necessity of media for the love of the remote. Contrary to what is often said, Nietzsche does not contest the need for compassion. As in *The Birth of Tragedy,*

he affirms on the contrary that the loftiest of men are the most compassionate.[9] But once again against Schopenhauer, Nietzsche recalls in the 1880s that no compassion is immediate, and that it always engages intermediary conditions or mediations. And among these mediations figure what is called the media, in the most restrictive sense of the term. The telegraph enables traces (*graphein*) to be written at a distance, the telephone transports voices across space, and later tele-vision (in German: *Fern-sehen*) literally permits to *see far*. Equipped with these contrivances, which allow us to access remote human flesh, we are required to "enlarge the concept of nourishment" (posthumous fragment 1881 11 [2]; 441).[10] This enlargement begins already with the appearance of conscience, which, far from allowing a solitary relation to oneself (as in the Cartesian cogito), was first destined to network individuals by assuring their "communication."[11] Unlike other animals,

> [w]e are not any longer capable of feeling the unicity of the ego, *we are always at the heart of a plurality* . . . we have transposed and reduced the "society" within us. . . . We welcome within us not only God but all the beings that we recognize, even without naming them: we are the cosmos. . . . Olives and storms have become part of us: the stock exchange and newspapers too. (posthumous fragment 1880 6 [80]; 215–16)

Nietzsche seems to put on the same plane all of man's incorporations: society, God, the environment, the stock exchange and newspapers. But this "too" ("the stock exchange and newspapers too") has rather to be heard as an intensification. While earlier man incorporated social relations and the characteristics of his country ("olives and storms," the vegetation and climate of his land), the man of today incorporates news from the whole world ("the stock exchange and the newspapers"). From whence there arises an unpredictable situation. In extending our field of perception, the media extend our organs of incorporation in forcing us to ingest a huge mass of foreign flux:

> "Modernity" under the symbol of nourishment and digestion, / Sensibility inexpressibly more excitable . . . the abundance of disparate impressions greater than ever—the *cosmopolitanism* of dishes, literatures, newspapers, shapes, tastes, even landscapes, etc. / the tempo of this influx a *prestissimo*. (posthumous fragment 1887 10 [18]; 464)

It does not escape Nietzsche what the theoretician of media Marshall McLuhan will explain a century later: "During the mechanical ages we had extended our bodies in space. Today . . . we have extended our central nervous system itself in a global embrace."[12]

What Nietzsche contests in return is that the media extension of the central nervous system has automatically increased our sense of responsibility and our capacity to sympathize. McLuhan thinks naively that it is enough to extend the central nervous system electrically for it to become more compassionate and responsible: "In the electric age, when our central nervous system is technologically extended to involve us in the whole of mankind and to incorporate the whole of mankind in us, we necessarily participate, in depth, in the consequences of our every action. . . . Electric speed in bringing all social and political functions together in a sudden implosion has heightened human awareness of responsibility to an intense degree."[13] Nietzsche describes to the contrary a fatal turn. At the point where the technical conditions of compassion toward the other and incorporation of the remote accumulate, one has to recognize on the contrary that man's digestive capacities are weakened:

> [T]he tempo of this influx a prestissimo: impressions erase each other; one defends oneself instinctively against absorbing anything in depth, "digesting" it" / The result is a weakening of digestive capacities. A kind of adaptation to this accumulation of impressions intervenes: man unlearns how to act. He does nothing more than react to external excitations. . . . Profound weakening of spontaneity. (posthumous fragment 1887 10 [18]; 464)

True digestion—or the making-enter-in-one's-own-flesh of which "incorporation" (*Ein-ver-leibung*) consists—supposes at once that the organism assimilated the foreign body and that the foreign body obliged it to reorganize itself, constraining its spontaneity by new inventions. Here, on the contrary, one witnesses an *adaptation* without tension of flesh to flux, destructive adaptation of ancient organizations and of organizations to come. While *incorporation* allows the organization of strong and individual bodies, *adaptation* leads to the disorganization of all the bodies into one homogeneous mass, ready to bend docilely to all situations. As for the mediating compassion, it has nothing to do with the one invoked by Nietzsche; on the contrary, it inscribes itself in the moral misinterpretation of the *Mit-leid*. It is sympathy with the neighbor or with the one closest (rather than most distant), which means that it is never other than sympathy toward oneself, or complacency toward one's own flesh and its affects:

> Sensibility inexpressibly more excitable (under moral tawdry dresses, like the increase of compassion [Mitleid]).—Artificial *arrangement* of its own nature to the state of a "mirror": interested, but so to speak in epidermic fashion: a coldness of principle, an equilibrium, a *low* temperature

> maintained just below the surface held where warmth, movement, "storm," the play of waves are produced. (posthumous fragment 1887 10 [18])

The paradox is that it is the very organs of incorporation and compassion that destroy the one and the other. This paradox is not new: already in the Socratic age of Greece, the Apollonian media were also detoured from their first aim—to make Dionysian *ekstasis* possible—to the point of making it impossible, this detour working itself out by a transformation of Apollonian figures into fixed concepts, and this in light of an excess of carnal possibilities.[14] Here, too, the organs of incorporation become paradoxically those which make any incorporation impossible. How to interpret this paradox and how must one respond to it? And, especially, how to give once again to the media that which gives them their sense and their function: making possible incorporation of and affection for the remote?

The Criterion of Incorporation: The Recurrence of Flux

If the media have a crucial role, it's because they are at the crossroads of flesh and flux. Absolute flux (Dionysus) demands to be received and incorporated by an ear embodied (Ariadne). Hence the erotic description, through the love between the god Dionysus and the mortal Ariadne, of the relations between flux and human flesh. If the flesh needs to incorporate flux to become itself (perception, nutrition, digestion), and if human flesh is marked by an extraordinary capacity for incorporation (perception of the distant, compassion for all other flesh, thought and passion for knowledge), the flux is for its part like the score of a piece of music: for the music to start playing, it has to be received, welcomed, and loved by an ear in the flesh. If the flesh needs flux, flux also needs flesh. The one and the other are linked, and must remain linked, by desire or by love (*eros*). Now, just as any great piece of music demands to be heard in the mode of its own repetition (according to the *da capo* that structures all musical listening), so overstrained and oversaturated flux, too, demands to be heard in the mode of recurrence. It wants to be *learned by heart.* Dionysus is the "genius of the heart . . . whose voice knows how to descend to the caverns of the soul," and which "*teaches him to hear*" (*Beyond Good and Evil,* sec. 295, 237, my emphasis). At one with this *education of the ear,* recurrence also insures the only connection to *always* that is possible at

the time of the death of God, that of the remembrance of flesh, or of the capacity to incorporate flux "by heart," that is to say, in its very depths.

Now, the practices of mass media destroy all the conditions required for such incorporation to take place. The destruction is accomplished on the side of producers, as well as receivers.

On the side of producers, who seek an *immediate* connection to the event—a phantasmatic immediacy, we know, since the very term *media* contradicts it. This phantasm of immediacy carries with it a series of destructive consequences: "hot" reactions (which generate a false heat), an economy in the shape of a setting it denies, systematic privileging of the "direct" over the staged (direct access to an event that is itself phantasmatic, since always rendered indirectly by its mediatization). On the side of the receivers, the first consequences go all the way: inflation of "shocks" that do not really touch them since they have not been incorporated by the emitters themselves, incoherent rhapsodies of events that the memory of the receivers never has time to incorporate and that never reach their *heart*—this heart that a music and a poetry learned by heart can reach—the prerogative of an easing of and a diversion from the hard work of incorporation. To the *astringent* action of incorporation, which always implies at once an opening to flux and a recentering on oneself, to this incorporation that settles itself in the unresolved tension between the chaos of flux and its reorganization by the organism, Nietzsche opposes the *dissolving* and *disorganizing* action of mass media in which what he calls "the letting go" (*sich-gehen-lassen*) prevails:

> European democracy *is not* an unleashing of *forces,* but is above all an unleashing of relinquishment, of a search for comfort, of intimate *lazinesses.* The same for the press. (posthumous fragment 1885 34 [163]; 475–76)[15]

Nietzsche announces here the confusion, explicit today, between information programs and programs of ease and diversion.[16] Media information seeks the easy and easygoingness of conscience. Instead of tensing up and forming itself through incorporation, the bodies that pretend to "inform themselves" *let themselves go* in a superficially compassionate chaos, allowing themselves to be excited by the titillation of a few "shocks"—which never achieve the fixed base of their selfishness and their calculations:

> increase of compassion . . . but so to speak in epidermic fashion: a coldness of principle, an equilibrium, a *low* temperature maintained just

> below the surface where warmth, movement, "storms," the play of waves are produced. (posthumous fragment 1887 10 [18]; 464)

Thus begins a false account of the excess of flux and the happening of events. The "events" that the press tells—and that later the great audiovisual media will relay—are only shocks, which are not incorporated into memory and which, for that very reason, will never become archives of the flesh. *Thus one must refuse them the status of event.*[17] Events that will remain in memory are those temporalized in the mode of recurrence: those that historians, writers, and artists will have taken the time to shape, undertaking a long labor of digestion, of incorporation and staging, such labor implying what Nietzsche terms "philology," that is, love of the text and of reality.[18]

At the same time that the affective disorganization of the flesh grows, what Nietzsche has termed *the mass* also grows and will impose its reign dramatically in the following century. The mass is the rigorous result of the disorganization of flesh. Disorganized and linked among themselves by a common network of affective shocks, bodies resemble one another and end up losing what assures their singularity, as well as their individuation. The key to individuation being incorporation, that is, the tension between the ecstatic exposure to flux and the reorganization of the self that this exposure requires, the destruction of *media of incorporation* by *media of letting go* leads necessarily to the liquidation of individuation. It is this destruction of the media themselves that Nietzsche managed to foresee when he understood, very early, that mass media had taken hold of *Bildung* by imposing their laws on "our educational institutions," that is, on those media that were to insure the formation (*Bildung*) of human bodies. The mediatic destruction of the media that assured incorporation requires in effect that the question of *the future of our educational institutions* be posed in a new way.[19]

To abstain from raising this question would be tantamount to welcoming the reign of what Nietzsche calls "the last man," that is, a human flesh for whom and through whom nothing happens. The temporalization that prevails in the era of nihilism destroys at once the past, systematically forgotten, and the future, systematically prevented from arriving, to the advantage only of the now. The last man is he who has ensconced himself in the comfort of an instant closed within itself, without relation to what precedes it and what will follow, and which, for that very reason, ignores all responsibility with regard to the flux. The ecstatic instant of Recurrence implies on the contrary a maximum effort of incorporation, and it alone can guarantee the relation of human flesh to the *always,* that

is to say, to the recurrence of flux. This is why the question of the possibility of an Ariadne—and of her ear—of an exact and rigorous counterpoint to the closure of the last man who does not hear at all what is coming, appears before everything else as the problem of *the future of our educational institutions.*

On the Future of Our Incorporations

To hold the question of media in contempt would be to abandon the task of thinking the conditions, necessarily new, of the incorporation of flux. We have just seen that the mediatic *prestissimo* was incompatible with the slow digestion that the incorporation of events requires. But is that not a constraint imposed by the synchronous character of media information? How do we ask media, which want to tell of events that happen at the same time, to take the time to organize them? Are they not constrained, by the absolute flux itself, to observe only speed and its *prestissimo*?

It is enough to recall that all flesh is also, in its own existence, exposed to the speed of absolute flux and its avalanches of events in order to realize that the objection does not hold. To me, too, in one instant, a ton of things occur, important or insignificant, always new and menacing, which it is my obligation to face. This obligation never relinquishes me—on the contrary—from the task of organizing them in organizing myself. As organized flesh, I know, or I feel intimately, that this is the second condition for events to happen to me still. An organization without accounting and accountability would lead my own flesh to sclerosis, a slow form of my own death, but an accounting without organization would lead it just as surely to its dissolution in an indistinct and homogeneous mass of identical flesh, another form of slow death in the nihilist era.

This double task of accounting and organization imposes itself with great rigor on the media and on the great collective bodies they are supposed to inform. Everything that Nietzsche says about the flesh, that its cohesion, for example, is assured by telegraphic communications conveying a huge mass of messages and information, shows that flesh—no matter which one—already experiences the task of organizing its own flux, and this in real time:

> The hand of the pianist, the link that guides it and a sector of the brain together form an organ (which must *isolate* itself so as to contract itself strongly). *The separate parts of the body linked telegraphically.* (posthumous fragment 1883 7 [211]; 308)[20]

Thus nothing authorizes them to be relieved of the task of organizing the flux, not even the synchronic dimension in which the media tend to hold themselves. For the effort to catch the speed of absolute flux will never manage to surmount the noncoincidence between flesh and flux. Instead of a synchronous coincidence with absolute flux, the organization of flesh implies always, on the contrary, a slowing down of the flux.[21] Flesh is like the dam or weir in which the flux accumulates and organizes itself. Only this slowing down or this *temporization* of the flesh in face of the flux makes possible the surging of events and, beyond, the retaining of distinct epochs. Thus, the media ought to assume a necessary slowness, necessary to the incorporation of flux in flesh, that is to say, in the mode of its eternal recurrence.

For what Nietzsche says about musical listening and its *da capo* is worthy of the reception of any event. The one, like the other, is never immediate, but supposes on the contrary the active work of the ear, itself bound up with *procedures of apprenticeship:*

> *One has to learn how to love.*—this is what comes to us in music: one has first of all to *learn to hear* a figure or a melody in general, to distinguish it, to differentiate it, to isolate and delimit it as if it had a life in itself; then one has to put to use effort and good will to *support* it despite its strangeness, one needs patience [*Geduld*] toward its look and its expression, tenderness for whatever it has of the bizarre,—and finally the moment arrives when we are *used to* it, when we await it, when we feel that we would miss it if it did not come; and now, it does not cease to exert upon us its power and its charm, to the point of making us her humble and enchanted lovers, wanting nothing other in the world than her and again her [*und wieder sie*].[22]

To get to love that which arrives in the mode of its eternal return ("her and once again her")—*be* it, according to the criterion of incorporation—is never an immediate given. This always presupposes an education of the ear ("the genius of the heart . . . *learns how to hear*"): a long labor of delimiting contours (distinction and differentiation), accompanied by an ability to expose oneself to the remote and the strange (patience and hospitality in regard to the new). This slow work of the ear on flux is the activity proper to Ariadne, who attunes her ear until she makes of it a labyrinth comparable in complexity to the labyrinth of the flux.[23] It is clear that what happens in music is a paradigm for no matter what incorporation of flux:

> But this does not happen to us only in music: it is precisely thus that we have *learned to love* all the things we love. We end up always by being

> recompensed for our good will, our patience, our equanimity, our gentleness toward the stranger, while the stranger slowly lifts her veil and presents herself as a new and unspeakable beauty—that is her way of saying *thank you* for your hospitality. He who loves himself has only learned to love himself in this way: there is no other. Love too has to be learned.[24]

Like Ariadne's ear, art is the human activity that aims to realize the highest incorporation of flux in the flesh and which, for that reason, invents new organs of incorporation, whose workings it has to learn. It is because it has equipped itself with the tools of art that human flesh has managed to surpass ordinary animal flesh by a higher capacity of incorporation and compassion toward everything that comes its way. But it is that, too, which gives function and measure to art and its craft. Great music, for instance, is not that which excites the flesh with an avalanche of more or less intense "shocks" (Wagner): it is that which manages to equip the flesh for a higher incorporation of that which befalls it (Bach, Mozart, Bizet), that is, for what Nietzsche calls *the affirmation of becoming,* which one must never confuse with the Romantic abandonment to chaos.[25]

Risking themselves in the front lines to the invention of new organs of incorporation, it is the experimental procedures of art that ought to impose themselves on the media networks of the incorporation of flux. But exactly the opposite happens. While the media ought to be held under the authority of art and its slow procedures of incorporation, nineteenth-century art allowed itself progressively to be governed by the mediatic *prestissimo* and its aesthetic of shock, the destroyer of all incorporation.[26] Beyond art and artists, whole institutions of incorporation (cultural and educational institutions) have allowed themselves to be governed by this aesthetics of shock, which held that it was better to affirm the absolute flux by destroying all the tools of incorporation created by the flesh. This process is what Nietzsche calls the loosening of the arc,[27] of the arc of incorporation, which was once tensed to the maximum, owing to the efforts and methods of philology. Thus we are left with the "directness," which pretends to substitute itself for the staging, or the event *in first heat,* which pretends to be able to do without choices and *cool* selections that all shaping into form implies. In the face of the dangerous destruction of events, Nietzsche formulated steadfastly the same reply: to the Romantic illusion of immediate compassion of all flesh toward itself (Schopenhauer, Wagner), he opposed first of all the necessity of Apollonian mediations (1872); to the illusion of an adherence without conditions to the flux of becoming, he opposed (contra Wagner

and all nineteenth-century Romantic art) the necessity of inventing new organs of incorporation capable of resisting the flux by imposing upon it new *forms* and new *rhythms*. It is these forms and these rhythms, these complex and refined means of a slow digestion of flux, that today find themselves attacked from all sides in the name of speed—of the direct and immediate access to events.

Opposed to this tendency, which destroys flesh as well as access to flux, only the understanding that our procedures of incorporation occupy a critical place could make possible the refastening of human flesh to the recurrence of events. At a time when the phantasm of the mediatic *prestissimo,* that is to say, of the illusion of an immediate and unconditional access to the new, imposes itself in formative institutions, it would be necessary on the contrary that art, culture, and education reappropriate for themselves the technical possibilities opened by the new media in order to make of them new organs of incorporation. But this requires that philosophical thought consider these modes of organization as constitutive of events, not in the sense of a creation of objects by a sovereign subject (*ego* or transcendental subject), but in the sense of the conditions of possibility constrained and affected by the flux that they have to take in. In the face of the manifestation, in person, of absolute flux and the concomitant liquidation of ancient spheres that guaranteed the always (Platonic and Paulinian *aiôn*), it is thus no longer possible to hold to a *first philosophy* anterior to questions of formation, education, and culture—an impossibility that one must recognize in the very name of the advent of events. Nietzsche's profound conviction, as the first witness to the "age of machines," was that it had become possible *that no event ever reach us,* and that that possibility (the *nihil* of nihilism), far from granting us full powers, gave us a responsibility: that of *organizing* ourselves in organizing *mediatically* our own modes of reception of the flux. Whence comes the necessity of raising once again the question of *the future of our educational institutions* in relation to the new media. On the answer to this question depends the advent or event of the future—*the future of our incorporations.*

Notes

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880), sec. 278.

[2] Frédéric Barbier and Catherine Bertho Lavenir, *Histoire des Medias* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1996), 127.

[3] Hereafter, Nietzsche's texts are cited with the title of the work followed by the paragraph, the subtitle and, in the case of posthumous fragments, the year, and the numbering of the Colli-Montinari edition. Finally, we indicate the page of the German edition (*Sämtliche Werke: Kritische Studienausgabe,* ed. Georgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, 15 vols. [Munich: Walther de Gruyter, 1980]).

[4] In *The Antichrist,* Nietzsche interprets in effect the Paulinian opposition between time and eternity as a betrayal of the Christianity of Jesus, for whom eternal life was on the contrary lived here and now.

[5] Also see posthumous fragment 1882–83 4 [83]; 138: "The decomposition of morality leads, in its practical consequence, to the atomized individual, and, besides, to the fragmenting of the individual into pluralities—absolute flux."

[6] Posthumous fragment 1882 3 [1]; 93: "Above love of what is close is love of what is far away."

[7] See the first section of *The Birth of Tragedy.*

[8] Barbier and Lavenir, *Histoire des Medias,* 5.

[9] For instance, see posthumous fragment 1881 12 [182]; 607: "A man without any love or any participation with others is . . . a poor man." Also see posthumous fragment 1882–83 5 [1] 30; 191: "To experience a lot of living: thus experience together a lot of the past; experience a lot of living proper and strange as one unity: that's what makes men the loftiest; I call them 'sums.'"

[10] "Enlarge the concept of nourishment. . . . We will aspire to the other, to all that is outside of us as to our nourishment." See also posthumous fragment 1880 6 [450]; 314–15: "If we do not know how to read a book for the love of the other, how poor we will be! . . . If we remain folded in on ourselves, how could we grow and enrich ourselves! For nourishment we need the pleasure taken in that which is foreign to us, *that which is precisely nourishment.* The pleasure taken in the human is necessary to our *nourishment.*"

[11] See *The Gay Science,* sec. 354.

[12] Marshall McCluhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (1964; repr., Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2002), 3.

[13] Ibid., 4–5.

[14] See *The Birth of Tragedy* sec. 12 and following.

[15] On the press as "letting go," see also posthumous fragments 1885 34[65], 34[76], and 36[17], texts preparatory to the preface of *Beyond Good and Evil.*

[16] See *Twilight of the Idols,* sec. 30, 130: "*The right to stupidity.* The tired worker . . . who lets things go as they come; this typical character, whom one finds now, in the era of labor . . . in all classes of society, pretends today to reclaim *art* for his use, including the book, and above all the newspaper. . . . In similar eras, art has the right to *pure idiocy,* to vacancies of intelligence, of spirit and of heart." Also see Bernard Stiegler: "[A] society which annuls the existence of those who make it up, in subjecting it to the imperatives of subsistence . . . is lived by all, consciously or not, as a *global process of debasement,* where conscience (the time of conscience) has become merchandise the price of which is calculable in a marketplace where it is exchanged each day according to supply and demand" (*Mécréance et discredit,* vol. 1: *La decadence des démocraties industrielles* [Paris: Galilée, 2004], 54).

[17] On this point see Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" in *Selected Writings, Volume 4: 1938–1940,* ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 313–55. Claude Romano distinguishes in this tradition between event and information: "[W]hile the event shakes our foundation and *shakes us up,* information limits itself to *hit* us, but touches us less deeply to the precise extent that it takes on the appearance of a 'shock'" (*L'événement et le monde* [Paris: Puf, 1998], 279).

[18] On the Nietzschean concept of philology, see *The Antichrist,* sec. 52, 23: "By philology, one has to understand here, in a general sense, the art of reading well—of being able to read events *without* falsifying them by interpretation, *without* renouncing, in the exigency for understanding, prudence, patience (*Geduld*), and delicacy. Philology as *ephexis* in interpretation, whether it is a matter of books, news, facts concerning the weather or destiny." Philology thus presents itself as the paradigm of *slow digestion* permitting the incorporation *by heart* or *to the letter* of the flux of flesh.

[19] See Bernard Stiegler's reflections on the trouble with our educational institutions (*La technique et le temps,* vol. 3: *Le temps du cinema* [Paris: Galilée, 2001]).

[20] See also posthumous fragment 1885 34 [54]; 437: "The 'external world' acts upon us: the effect is telegraphed to the brain, there it is placed, shaped and geared to a case: then the cause *is projected and only then the event enters our consciousness.*"

[21] On life as a necessary slowing of the flux, see posthumous fragment 1885 36 [22]; 560: "Life . . . as a durable form of a *process of fixation of forces.*" Also see posthumous fragment 1885–86 1 [92]; 33: "*All struggle*—everything that happens is a struggle—has need of *duration.*"

[22] *The Gay Science,* sec. 334, 559–60.

[23] On the labyrinthine complexities of Ariadne's ear, see posthumous fragments 1887 9 [115] and 10 [95].

[24] *The Gay Science,* sec. 334, 559–60.

[25] On this point, for instance, see Nietzsche, *Nietzsche contra Wagner* (1888; "Wagner as a Danger," 422), which opposes to a Wagnerian continuous melody "the necessary measure which [obliges] that we follow certain accents of tempo and intensity of equal value, [demanding] of the soul of the listener a constant *pondering.* [It is] the contrast between this current of fresh air, born of thinking, and the lukewarm breath of enthusiasm, which [makes for] the powerful enchantment of all *good* music. . . . The 'continuous melody' *wants* precisely to break this harmonious regularity of tempos and intensities . . . the complete degeneration of the rhythmic sense, *chaos* in the place of rhythm."

[26] This aesthetics of shock, Nietzsche also calls the aesthetics of "effect" (see *Nietzsche contra Wagner*).

[27] See the preface to *Beyond Good and Evil* and preparatory texts already cited.

Zarathustran Bird Wars: Hitchcock's "Nietzsche" and the Teletechnic Loop

Tom Cohen

> I love those who do not know how to live, except by going under, for they are those who cross over.
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra*[1]

> Every kind of media of recording gets its moment in Hitchcock's films, but is always subordinated to the designs of cinema. There is the auction house and the monumental sculpture in *North By Northwest*. There are acrobats, an LP record and concerts in *The Man Who Knew Too Much*. There's fireworks and fancy dress in *To Catch a Thief*.
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> —McKenzie Wark, "Vectoral Cinema"[2]

As Nietzsche put it, man is "a rope over an abyss," stretched between animal and "Übermensch." Brandon in Patrick Hamilton's theatrical version of *Rope* cites Nietzsche as the sponsor of adventure and danger. His name is not mentioned

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> in Hitchcock's film. . . . Taut, tensed, that rope can be extended into a trapeze. The character played by Grant in *To Catch a Thief* is a veteran of the high wire.
>
> —Peter Conrad,
> *The Hitchcock Murders*[3]

Reading "Nietzsche" by way of media and the tele-archival era today raises issues about the political spell of the present, the mediacratic trance of a coming post–democratic era for which, perhaps, the "'global' war on terror"—without temporal or geographic horizon, a double chase of a specter that accelerates the self-canceling of an archival program (economic, ecological, and profoundly biopolitical). It might choose to pass by way of Walter Benjamin's remarks on the advent of cinema. By implying that the *phenomenal* world would be generated from mnemonic programs, Benjamin identifies in the cinematic event something like a model for historical intervention that he will finally name, by his practiced inversion of terms, "materialistic historiography." This early entanglement between Benjamin's revision of *The Birth of Tragedy*[4] in his *Trauerspiel* and "cinema" recalls that the "birth" of theater and discourse out of what is called the "spirit or ghost [*Geist*] of music" in Nietzsche's tract mimes something like a genealogy of media, the emergence of semiosis programming sense and the sensorium. While I will return to this later, *The Birth* performs an inversion of classical *aesthetics* that has long been avoided yet that cinema covertly exemplifies. Rather than "represent" or index in the mimetological sense, as though in a neutered site of "play" or entertainment, the cinematic effect generates the visible, installs mnemonic programs that define perception, phemonenalizes mass political consciousness, and shapes *aesthetic ideology* tout court.

It is to break this trance at its inception that Benjamin insisted that cinema arrives with a destruction of aura. Aura is often mistaken for a figure of lost presence, the remote original, yet the Baudelaire essay[5] is much more explicit, and voids any myth of lost presence. It is, he says, personification, which is also to say, mimesis, identification, *anthropomorphism* more generally. Film Studies, which frequently cites this Benjaminian *mot* as inspiration, has unwittingly labored relentlessly to restore "aura" before this event. The French "Hitchcock" was so decisive to marking and beginning a process of theorizing Hitchcock. French aestheticians saw

something first—another gift of a certain sort of translation effect. But they did so, the *Cahiers du Cinema* critics, very much from within the tradition, still, that Hitchcock was assaulting; that is, under the figure of the auteur. The "Hitchcock" we are examining today, an effect of signature systems, empties the auteur model with its theo-anthropomorphic premises (Hitchcock as master, as "god," and so on). The *Hitchcock* I propose is a still operative event within the histories of teletechnic and the unclosed horizon of "global" media, with all its affiliations to technogenocides of the twentieth century and eviscerations of the earth beyond. This points elsewhere today: to the spell of ocularcentrism in today's historical culture.

Nietzsche's mock-dialectical narrative moving from dithyramb into representation, from lyric into dialogue and later eristics, and so on, presents history as the morphing effect of linguistic forms or mediatrics. But why is this referenced to the spirit or, better still, *ghost* of "music"—what, according to *The Birth,* seems prefigural, originary, which is to say, at first glance, "Dionysian"? Or again, why in Benjamin does "cinema" inherit an allo-historiographical praxis elsewhere in his work called allegory, or translation, or materialistic historiography, that not only generates the perceptual fields out of inscriptions but claims the power to negate, accelerate, or anaesthetize archival programs out of which virtual futures (and pasts) would be reselected, disinscribed, *transvalued*?

Cinema seems heir to the *Gesamtkunstwerk* whose operatic version was Nietzsche's "MacGuffin" or pretext for writing *The Birth,* particularly if we replace *Kunst* with *Technik*. It is able to incorporate and absorb all teletechnics—what in Hitchcock is endlessly marked through machines of telegraphy, typography, telephony, mnemonic recording of all sorts, vehicles of transport. Uncle Charlie, in *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), is explicitly linked to telegraphy and telephones (and, finally, telepathy). The "birds" rest before their attacks on telegraph wires and geometric jungle gyms. And Hitchcock's first cameo in *The Lodger* (1927) occurs as news editor before giant printing press wheels and teletype machines—figures of imprinting and media that extend to wireless broadcasting into the heads of morphing faces and print carrying trucks with eyes. In *Secret Agent* (1936), what is called a "spies' post office" appears in which the relay of transcripted espionage code is hidden in and disseminated as "chocolate" (entertainment bonbons, excrement)—behind the gigantist geared and surreal *factory*. From the spies' post office, signature effects and subversive networks fan out across the oeuvre and archival histories that "Hitchcock"—as the signature, then, for the advent of "cinema"—recapitulates and interacts with.

Cinema already marks with its advent the "global" or postglobal orders that it, from the first, cannot stop itself from assuming and proliferating—as through its linkage to the advance of technoweaponry and genocide, hypercapital, contemporary mediacracy, accelerations of terrestrial evisceration, and so on. Hitchcock likened his practice in the early espionage thrillers to time bombs and, later, nuclear blasts—sabotagings that dematerialize the "world" into atomized marks and spectral orders. Peter Conrad observes in *The Hitchcock Murders,* "Hitchcock likened his films to buzz bombs—clever engines of mass destruction, invented by the century in which men made war against humanity."[6] In *The Trouble with Harry* (1955), Hitchcock will even indicate this as a futuristic toy ray gun in the hands of a child. In doing so, he associates this epistemopolitical recasting with figures of a sort of Nietzschean "transvaluation" or crossing that include *aporetic* borders, ports, and bridges over which transport is often arrested or does not arrive.

I

To Catch a Thief (1955) ends with a mock-apocalyptic gala scene in the hills near Nice. It is peopled with *formal* costumes and many of the citational props that roam Hitchcock's other sets. Yet it seems to fall through and precede modernity itself, going back to an eighteenth-century affair—a courtly, Enlightenment charade. It mimes a prerevolutionary and precinematic moment sliding toward a great beheading—as though historical trappings of identity, and any refuge in past sartorial icons, were a period piece of a film set harassed by prehistorial agencies. One such agent is the asolar animeme, the black cat prowling at night, simulacrum of a thieving trace or mobilized eclipse: redoubled as the "copycat" jewel thief, the latter's pursuit by the original "cat" (Cary Grant) provides the film's voiding temporal backloop, a double chase or MacGuffin that instantly precedes itself—like a sudden slide into a premodern epoch costume gala whose floodlights mime a production set. It is not accidental that at this Riviera event the *Medi*terranean—at once ground or *middle* earth and trope of media—is referenced, by Grace Kelly, as without locus or gravity ("It used to be" this way, she quips when asked). The faux transparent glass or diamond, the *bijou* that is both stolen and referenced to a movie house from which saboteurs operate (in *Sabotage* [1936]) is at once explosive and capable of voiding semiotic and mnemonic orders, referential histories, gravity, or "earth" itself. Cinema arrives as avenging, in

advance, on behalf of prehistorial logics—like the teletechnic *birds* that would drive out humans from any pretended interior of the house or family.

The fact that *To Catch a Thief* is set in Nice, or Nizza, where Nietzsche composed a part of *Zarathustra,* has a certain resonance—since the fourth part of that work also features something of an antiapocalyptic gathering for Zarathustra's stragglers and creatures.[7] Hitchcock would know this and be aware of the Nietzschean parallel of eternal recurrence to his own MacGuffins associated with rings and returns, with cinematic spools and zero or ocular figures of time's backlooped ingestion of itself. Could Hitchcock be read as a sort of cinematic "going under"—or over? Would it be possible to call Hitchcock "Nietzschean"—that is, a Hitchcock identified through his marking system with the cinematic as a teletechnic logic—or would there be any point to a "Hitchcockian" Nietzsche in turn? Does such a question relate to that of a biopolitics of the tele-image today, which must seek its examples in the cinematic archive—which has, virtually and in fact, reprogrammed global memory in imperial fashion? Is such a convergence coincidental or does it indicate where Hitchcock may function within—and against—the ineluctable advance of a teletechnic empire's sensorial programming, a cinematic counterstroke to the latter's production of the "last man" of touristic teleconsumption?[8]

The interest of this question, today, would not be in the more pop-iconic senses, such as those that link the name "Nietzsche" to the rhetoric of the *Übermensch* in the one place in Hitchcock it occurs, in *Rope* (1948)—unless that would be as the citational dismissal of that rhetoric, which Brandon unauthoritatively performs in the Manhattan penthouse. Peter Conrad, in the earlier epigraph, incorrectly notes that Nietzsche's "name is not mentioned in Hitchcock's film," when it is, explicitly, if in obverse association with Hitler: it is the only overt mention of the name in Hitchcock, and it is bracketed in the most dubious of ways, as uttered by Mr. Kentley, the dead boy's father. It enters the rarefied space of the screenplay only through the most suppressed and mediatized of relays, in short, and though disturbing the entire surface (and marking *Rope* in entirely saturated and *cycloramic* ways as Nietzschean), it is allowed to hang, in suspense, only to be caught in a further occlusion.

Everything, in *Rope,* is caught first of all in citational (or cinematic) loops: words—such as Rupert's flaccid and self-protective routine on the superman's right to dispose of lessers—circulate with borrowed authorship, literalize, precipitate into events, and are disowned by their supposed authors. Thus Brandon contests

the citation of Nietzsche as a cheap purveyor of superman theories even as he enacts precisely that—again, dismissing Hitler as a vulgar literalization while, in fact, reabsorbing from a Manhattan penthouse the fascist *rhetoric* of the recently conquered (and incorporated) fascist *other*. Thus the rope itself encircles a stack of books said to be *first editions*—that is, original *copies*. This last occurs in the work by way of the academy, the self-disowning discourse and *playful* aestheticism of Brandon's humanist professor, Rupert, or more literally the screen icon James Stewart, who would, one supposes, be the very antithesis of this—as though Hitchcock espies in the screen construction of the all-American hero, whatever his plaintive moralism, a variant on the hero worship and mimetic identification that suffused Nazi propaganda.

Hitchcock leaves negative traces of this contact with Nietzsche—as in the name Alicia *Huberman* in *Notorious* (1946), drawing again on pop associations—but the performative consequences of this interface would be sought elsewhere. The backloop of telemnemonic media, which resides in the Francis Poulenc score ("Perpetual Movement") that Phillip pecks at intermittently on the piano, evacuates citational repetition as literalization of clichés. Yet it presents the tool or means of a test: the so-called *Übermensch* emerges from its circularity, altered or otherwise, disinscribed of all "natural" tropes or interiority. In a way, "he" will stumble out of Hitchcock's reels as a hyperperformative, an enigma, postgendered, a citational expletive, like Bruno Anthony emerging from the click of strange feet or shoes on a cinematic train.

In question is where or whether the totalization of the cinematic in Hitchcock's hands—the atomization of de-auratic traces that links Benjamin's work on allegory in the *Trauerspiel* to *The Birth of Tragedy,* say, whose title its own mimes—options a rupture and inversion of a received model of aesthetics as such. This, while the imperial order of image programming issued from Hollywood wields a mimetic spell for the state that drifts toward a production of the "last man"—the teletechnic tourist of the postglobal era to come, long arrived. This elaboration Hitchcock would both oversee as perhaps the earth's first master of global media and revoke. In the earliest British thrillers the usurping cinematic anarchists variously assaulting the home state called "England" are without known political agendas (except for a totalizing intervention). They represent a war already under way, that over a totalization of the teletechnic empire in which they (like Hitchcock) also participate as specters of cinematic logic. Later, as in *To Catch a Thief* or in *Torn Curtain* (1966), this order of the cinematic, tied to Hitchcock's irreducible marking systems, may

be aligned with what is called the "Underground" or "Resistance." It resists, or avenges, in the name of a wholly other—which can appear as wraith, serial murderer, attacking birds, the teletechnic, as nonanthropomorphic and nonauratic language.

A certain accord lies, again, between the eternal recurrence and the banal facticity of the cinematic spool. Certainly, it is not just one or another MacGuffin that is, in Hitchcock's system, a "nothing," as if such could be opposed to a something or someone. The MacGuffin as a performative marker is precisely like the zero in its modern functions—a placeholder over a nonsite from which numeration can seem to begin, from which the $N + 1 \ldots$ can appear to start a narrative or serial chain. The "eternal recurrence" would have been Zarathustra's MacGuffin. It is purely cinematic, and Hitchcock inherited in the machines of the cinematic process—for which memory is prosthetic and exterior—the banal literalization of the eternal recurrence as a questioning of the structure of mnemonic repetition, the priority of inscriptive programs (celluloid) over phenomenality (projection). The back-spinning wheel that opens the first frames of *Blackmail* (1929) then materializes beneath a detective van on a seemingly perpetual chase that resembles a mobile camera studio, replete with telegraphic machinery bearing facelike knobs. The "flying van" tells us this is a teletechnic as well as policial problematic. This new van represents not so much a modernist chapter within an archival history as an acceleration and absorption of all archival variants within a relatively short official "history" of human script and its monumental history, the several thousand years represented in the British Museum's assemblage of forms—assembled by and for the soon-extinct empire. When the chased blackmailer Trac(e)y runs through the museum's archive and precedes this history, indicating hieroglyphs themselves as cinematic effects, it is to fall through the headlike dome into the universal reading room—circles within circles of readers.

Hitchcock's underlying "war" is never that of the historical occasion that the film wraps itself about or allegorically uses as a set. Germans are not named as such (*Foreign Correspondent* [1940]) nor later are the Russians (*North by Northwest* [1959]), whereas American industrialists can appear as fascist (*Saboteur* [1942]), or the French as racist colonialists (*Aventure Malgache* [1944]). One might say, rather, that the broader war against Enlightenment epistemotemplates that is under way involves, from the center of the cinematic or its canons, the family plot of an always already postglobal horizon. It involves, as do Nietzsche's hammerlike epigrams, coming wars of reinscription. And this war connected with the

cinematic at its advent is never that of the colonial "world" wars of the twentieth century (hot or cold, as Hitchcock also marks them in mediatized fashion): these appear fratricidal conflicts between extreme variants of Enlightenment templates or epistemologies, already ghosted. The liberal democracies and "America" will absorb the fascist other and proceed, in ways, to its hypercapitalized refinement in a multitiered postdemocratic mediacracy of disengaged consumers in which selective eugenics is the option of an endowed hyperclass. Rather, the underlying war surfaces as what *The Birds* (1963) terms the "bird war" of prehistorial technemes and animemes against the anthropomorphized or auratic community of earth-eviscerating humans blind to their own mnemonic programming, to their interiorizing metaphors of home and nature, to their status as teletechnic ghosts: the bird war strikes out against humanity on the side of black suns and wing beats, mediatized and associated with the hum of engines. And they go straight for the eyes—as though to blind the ocularcentric model.

II

This Nietzschean connection releases a series of questions pertaining to the circle, the zero, and the spectrality of what can be called the *one*. It is not just that Hitchcock's persistent treatment of numeration accords with the fiction of a zero for which the "one," too, is a secondary trope of sorts. That is clear, say, in the proliferating appearance of triangles and pyramids (or the number thirteen) from *The Lodger* onward—as if that itself initiated an open series incapable of stabilization. In these works, the number *three* appears as a so-called first number, much as for any technician of the visual triads represent the first visual plane (the triangle), or for discourse theorists the first "social" ensemble. One is what any speaker or so-called subject pretends to be. Yet it is a spectral retroprojection of and from the third, apparently, a complex initialed in the *thirteen* that pervades Hitchcock's work and marks his, in this sense self-canceling, birth date (13 August). But the labyrinth of numeration represents an interesting dossier for cinema, which departs from spinning wheels and null points. The circularity of the spool is but one tangible enigma, since the unspooling (forward) of a stored mnemonic band, again and again, presents itself as a Phoenix-like beginning in the ashes of its own recurrence—and raises the question of where, or how, the affirmation of the "eternal recurrence," of the MacGuffin, paradoxically ruptures a

representational program by returning to a site anterior to itself: the nonsite, technically and in fact, of inscriptions.

It is not incidental, then, that Hitchcock's work is littered with what might be called *O-men,* who inherit this transition, who are emptied as ciphers and couriers of something to come—something they know nothing of and that does not, in any case, arrive intact. It is amusing to reflect that these can be James Stewart or Cary Grant, and that the individual actors' entire Hollywood iconography is cited and dragged into the semiotic maelstrom of inversions with them, but that is certainly the case: when Scottie goes under, so to speak, in *Vertigo,* an entire template of mimetic and gender or identity assurances linked to Stewart and America undergoes irreversible disarticulation. Uncle Charlie's smoke rings—or the names Otis and Oakley; Hannay called a "nobody"; Barry Kane to whom Tobin, in a library, points out a book titled *Death of a Nobody* (imbricating him, cinematically, with the end of the biblio-era); Johnny-O Fergusson, Dick-O Blaney, Roger O. Thornhill—and so on, inclusive, otherwise, of specters, revenants, cinamnesiacs inheriting the memories of others. All are hostage to voided marking systems, in which the circuit as MacGuffin is installed. This is so rigorously marked by a seeming chorus of graphics, letters, and nominal tags that the trope of circuitry itself is critiqued as a mnemonic construct. If anything, the supposed nothing or nobody named "George Kaplan" in *North by Northwest* signifies too much by comparison—anticipating, in his nonexistence, not only the replicant subject but the giant faces of Mount Rushmore whose personification appears to fall away before a de-anthropomorphized rockscape—heads (capos) of the earth (geo[rge]).

The recurrent series of proper names that dislocate nominal identity across Hitchcock characters, for whom lists of names or extra nicknames pop up, seems a general condition of the cipher—much as, in *The Lodger,* the morphing of faces on those listening, supposedly, to the wireless inscribe the singular viewer or consumer of the screen work in the event of the showing as interchangeably individuated beings over time who are both mnemonically preinhabited and produced as effects. The recurrence to a certain zero effect has nothing to do with a "character" or psychology. The facticity of the screen wraith as shadow play and mnemonic specter is assigned the structural space of the human in whose "eye" or head the entire band will be run or rerun. The facticity of the cinematic is marked as coextensive with the citational program of cognition or consciousness or identity, to use available terms. What is called life or the living is not structurally other than

a form of animation—like that produced from artfully cut effects of light and sound play, zoötropes. Inserted into the memory disks of mass culture, the cinematic is totalized as the aesthetic organization of spectral experience, perception in the teletechnic empire of global logics to come.

The explosion or "shock" that would be cinema's advent is not only registered with the annulment of tropes of origin—whether called "nature," the "eye," "light," or "mother." It accords with an inversion of whatever had been rendered as the aesthetic within broader traditions of philosophic hegemony. The place where this tradition is performatively inverted is *The Birth of Tragedy*.

III

Raymond Durgnat observed of *Psycho* (1960) that "it has a Dionysiac force and ruthlessness; one might call it a Greek tragicomedy."[9] Hitchcock already had called it a comedy, which renders the second part of this note regressive, but the adjective "Dionysiac" is arresting.

Friedrich Kittler deems Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) an *ur*cinematic work: "Nietzsche . . . produced a film theory before its time under the pretext of describing both *The Birth of Tragedy* in ancient Greece and its German rebirth in the mass spectacles of Wagner."[10] One must recall the ocularist powers accorded to Apollo in the work, or the manner in which what is narrated is nothing less than a prioritization of media to the mapping and generation of historical programs, events, "experience," form. The seeming birth of theatrical space out of the specter or *Geist* of what is called music returns to an alternation, an arrhythmic differencing that preinhabits the star power of Dionysian exorbitance, as the latter gets to portray itself. What is the ghost of music in advance of itself—reminiscent in graphic display of the Hitchcockian parallel bar sequence? The succession of linguistic forms passes through dithyramb, dialectic, eristics, descriptive language, and Euripidean ratiocination. Presented as the unfolding of an allomorphic or teletechnic archive, it yields successive modes of language power delivering up, finally, Socrates and ratiocinative prose. The MacGuffinesque agon of the two gods gives cover to this narrative. Yet the definition of "music," or its spirit, appears in question. On the one hand, it is the domain of the mock-originary Dionysus who has the upper hand to Apollo's countermastery of the plastic arts—and of the eye. Apollo gives it his best shot, but he is all along affiliated

with belatedness, the cooling down of volcanic and preoriginary excess, the domain of reflective form. There is no contesting Dionysius's charisma. His association with predescriptive and seemingly primordial *Musik* is the clincher.

In question are the cinematic analogy and the definition of aesthesis. The term *aesthetics* recurs to the Greek *aisthanumai,* "perception." The narration which Nietzsche proposes that moves us from dithyramb to Socrates implies a linguistic model for what Benjamin dubs a sensorium's programming. It is not accidental that the place it ends, with the Platonic invention, is that in which the *eidein* installs or affirms a metaphoric coincidence of knowing and seeing: this prehistory concludes implicitly with the program of ocularcentrism, the production of the eye. Does a certain Apollo, the derivative god, bide time and triumph discretely while letting Dionysus seize the thespian spotlight?

If it is possible to call *The Birth of Tragedy* a cinematic theory, as Kittler does, then it begins with the projection of the visible out of Dionysian primordiality: like Wagnerian opera, a sequestered stage materializes the newly concealed powers of the orchestra below. Here the aesthetic model is inverted, since instead of representing life it names where "life" would be phenomenalized, virtually, out of mnemonic effects. It begins a theory of teletechnics that leads to the most famous line of the monograph: "[I]t is only as an aesthetic phenomenon that existence and the world are eternally justified." The linkage is startling if it means something like beauty is the only justification for existence. It is more startling, still, if something like justice is bound to the production of perceptual phenomena (*aesthesis*). The world is determined, for humans, out of its archivization, for which there is no simple or pure "perception." The rule of mnemonic programming and inscription is cinematic, but—since the detour through signifying agents can imply their spectral division and subdivision as citational and material marks—cinema's atomizing power can contest, interrupt, disinscribe. It is here that proliferating telenetworks and temporal redecisions are accessed, as at the faux séance that Hitchcock uses, in *Family Plot* (1976), as a figure of the cinematic spell: it is a family plot within the recurrent "house" of Hitchcock's works that, like Derrida's reading of "the autoimmunity process" apropos America's reaction to "9/11," accelerates its own self-cancellation in trying to restore the homeland, the family, the line of heirs through a spectral double chase (today, the "global" war on something called terror). What is called the visual, as on a screen or as Apollo, is a forgetful product of inscriptive forces before any pretext of light or the eye is

introduced. *Aura,* as the term occurs in Benjamin, is banished with the advent of cinema.

Kittler appropriates Nietzsche's lines of thought in *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter* to argue for a "transvaluation" implied by the cinematic machinery: "If 'the world' can be 'justified to all eternity . . . only as an aesthetic product,' it is simply because 'luminous images' obliterate a remorseless blackness."[11] While this characterization privileges the luminous over the "remorseless" black—as though retaining the auratic premise—it is modified. The Dionysian is for Kittler "the flow of data," the "elementary fact of Nietzsche's aesthetic." It makes Dionysus the "master of media."[12] Dionysus as the master of media controls the projector booth, like Hitchcock's first cameo in the editor's booth before the giant printing presses, while Apollo is permitted association with form and sight—the product of archival manipulation. Appearing to puppet the formalist Apollo, Dionysus wields prefigural powers and the primal pain of dismemberment. Music remains safely prefigural, virtually divine, the orchestra concealed from site.

But it goes downhill from here, particularly once the two godlings start to mingle, as the mock-dialectic software erodes with its own duplications.

Locating this moment requires a certain slow-motion replay. Dionysus at first accords with the cinematic cut and hence the Hitchcockian signature effect or "mother." In Hitchcock, precisely such an (a)maternal and (a)material site seems formalized in the haunting weaves of what has been called "Hitchcock's signature," the visual and aurally syncopated bar series, the slashes generating and suspending the effects of narrative, or mimesis, or the visible. Irreducible as markings precedent to any possible perception, this is visualized by William Rothman as "/ / / /."[13] It can morph into virtual faces, letters, graphics. All visibility, all networking, begins and ends with this cutting. Yet how does Hitchcock's "formalism," his obsession with the techne, translate into the "Dionysian" power that the maverick Durgnat found himself compelled to note? Was not Dionysus supposed to manifest the most originary of violences, before representation? Where is the "aesthetic phenomenon" associated with music—or with rhythm, alternation, the keeping or production of time? *The Birth of Tragedy* stammers on this point in a hiccuplike reversal that is invariably covered over. In an anomalous passage, Apollo changes places with Dionysus, or seems to, and then is put back as if nothing happened. But this occurs at the most loaded instant—at the origin of "music" itself. Apollo is briefly recalled as the official originator of music:

> If music, as it would seem, had been known previously as an Apollonian art, it was so, strictly speaking, only as the wave beat of rhythm, whose formative power was developed for the representation of Apollonian states. The music of Apollo was Doric architectonics in tones, but in tones that were merely suggestive, such as those of the cithara. The very element which forms the essence of Dionysian music (and hence music in general) is carefully excluded as un-Apollonian—namely, the emotional power of the tone, the uniform flow of the melody, and the utterly incomparable world of harmony.[14]

This is covered up, but it is too late, and one suspects a certain "Nietzsche" was altogether in on the flashing expedition. Instead of the exorbitant Dionysus, seducer and mystifier, the formalist and bizarrely minimalist Apollo, only pretending to have been mimetologically inclined, is irrevocably placed as if at the *ur*-site or *Ursprung* of all semiosis—like the waltzing legs that descend as though from another memory or time into *Shadow of a Doubt* at unlikely junctures. A simulacrum of music occurs as if before or at its origin still, a copy without original. Apollonian music here excludes the Dionysian, is called merely rhythmic, so that it must be excluded itself even as music. A ghost or *Geist* of *Musik,* it gives nonbiological "birth" out of its own afterlife and in advance of *Musik*'s true emergence. Music seemed a premimetic order to which "language" was added ("language, in its attempt to imitate it, can only be in superficial contact with music"[15]), yet here whatever is called *Musik* is born out of the alternacy of sheer form or semiosis, coming as if out of dithyramb as linguistic differencing in its barest or most minimal form: rhythm. Rather than present a plenitude, Dionysus represents a preoriginary repetition ("himself pure primordial pain and its primordial re-echoing"[16]). Apollo momentarily precedes Dionysus, determining the latter as already an aftereffect, as his front. By letting Dionysus win and become a poster god for the misreading of the work, Apollo is canny. He, Apollo, becomes invisible thereafter, an increasingly unharassed formalist, like an unserious filmmaker. He preserves opportunity and power. He of the long shot watches over the elegant villains in Hitchcock's tele-archival thrillers.

Hitchcock's bar-series scissors: it cuts up the eye in advance.[17] It invents the generation of spatial and temporal difference, hence the possibility of a series, serial murder, allegorical remarkings, perceptibility, or reading. Apollo precedes the pretense of Schopenhauerian will or music. Apollonian dismemberment connects the bar series and its affiliates (aural concatenation, knocking) to a Dionysian pretext: yet it is not only counterrhythmic but arrhythmic, a MacGuffin at the origin. The bars represent and perform the

permanent suspension of mimetic claims and surfaces, the Apollonian dreamscape.[18] The trance of the cinematic, artificing a site of disinscription and reinscription, is like that of the dithyramb: a jubilating public identifying with that which ruptures primordial difference, Dionysus, quiescently reassembled before the hypnopoetics of a dark and seated enclave. It is anestheticized, spellbound.

One could propose a Hitchcockian reading of the final manner in which Nietzsche marks his own project, at the end of his career, as though Apollo has been subsumed totally and is no longer the other: Dionysus versus the Crucified. Not the pagan versus the Christian, but one god premised on absolute self-difference and another instituting chiasmus as a hermeneutic regime. Chiasmus, like the giant "X" that turns up across Hitchcock at key, if surprising, moments, strives machinally to invert signifying poles and referents in advance.[19] By the Crucified we can hear an installed chiasmics of truths and hermeneutic polarities, a camera obscura image inverted before they are codified as reference or symbolic law (hot and cold, male and female, black and white). To oppose Dionysus to the Crucified, to a hermeneutic regime of semantic inversions, is to oppose the Dionysian or cinematic bar series of irreducible and de-auratic media to a gigantic Greek chi—or X, a giant "X" that appears across Hitchcock's oeuvre: Carole Lombard's skis in *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* (1941), the back of the servant Germaine's apron in *To Catch a Thief,* the "crisscross" or monogram on the lighter in *Strangers on a Train* (1951), the flag before the targeted prime minister in the second *The Man Who Knew Too Much* (1956).

IV

Hitchcock implants a blackout at the retrodawn of the video age, "globalization," telemarketing, hypertechnics.[20] Moment is at issue, the photographic *Augenblick* about which Zarathustra mock-cinematically disports:

> Must not whatever can walk have walked on this lane before? Must not whatever can happen have happened, have been done, have passed before? . . . For whatever can walk—in this long lane out there too, it must walk once more. . . . And this slow spider, which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway . . . must not all of us have been there before? And return and walk in that other lane, out there, before us, in this long dreadful lane—must we not eternally return?[21]

The spool runs again erasing, but for a trace, where it has been—like the two hands clasping at the close of *The 39 Steps* (1935), one of which next appears, in the opening frame, buying a ticket at the music hall. In *Zarathustra* that spectral other on behalf of which the overman (or what Werner Hamacher has called, stressing his sheer or media-induced exteriority, the "out-man") would go under in a general disarticulation of the received template of man is called earth, site precedent to face or voice yet scored by the bar-series effects. The cinematic spectralizes earth. Hitchcock's O-men—on occasion or throughout postgendered—appear one cipher for a voiding of epistemopolitical bands.

Cinema's implicit atomization of the world—the dissolution into inscribed points, generated photons, virtual number, and Phoenix-like reconstitution as marked specter, troped in Hitchcock as a nuclear bomb (*Notorious*)—is clearly double: its mimetic pretexts can serve or service a statist program by spellbinding a populace or training them in mnemonic habits of identification or ocularcentric mystifications, or it can sabotage from within the archive, accelerating the latter's death drive against it. This war makes space for others. The two alternating faces of the cinematic appear like proverbial time travelers from an imperiled future "present" retroprojecting their combat for dominance perpetually back into an unsuspecting past set—from which, depending on the outcome, different future "presents" would be cast. The struggles that often inhabit Hitchcock's narratives, inversely to appearance, seem like Bruno and Guy (*Strangers on a Train*) on the zoötropic carousel yet to reference, not so discretely, the de-auratic import of media: it is the double logics of nihilism, the stripping away of metaphor and the ocularcentric blinders by the avenging birds at a limit of a transformation if not affirmation—before which the earth appears as it does on Mount Rushmore, as aterra, purely prosthetic and self-preceded, barely anthropomorphized. Its fetishized and broken "figure," pre-Columbian or seemingly preoriginary (to "America"), reveals to view a celluloid snippet of microfilm. Hitchcock is not modernist, nor surrealist, nor postmodernist; not auteurial, nor ocularist, nor mimetic in any way.

V

The Nietzschean import coincides with "pure cinema's" absolute reflection on teletechnics and the logics of the backloop. When, in *Spellbound* (1945), Hitchcock takes up a fratricidal war with

psychoanalysis, opposing cinema to the latter as modernity's dominant science of ghosts and memory, he makes cinema stand in for the repressed of psychoanalysis, the one thing it cannot address, psychosis, and illustrates its own access to a mnemonics before memory inaccessible to the Enlightenment caricature of that great competitor with cinema for access to the heads and memory bands of the public. Hitchcock's cinema seems in *Spellbound* to obsess over the signature effect that returns in every work, the pattern of parallel bars—the originary (cinematic) trauma of the film's O-man amnesiac, Gregory Peck, into recollecting a preoriginary fratricide. And this pattern of bars sends him into psychotic, teeth-grinding trances, visually emanating from tablecloths, in suits and bedspreads, as tracks on the snow. What triggers the psychotic spells or cinematic trances of Peck is the de-auratic signature of cinematic semiosis void of discrete memory or even locus—it is what the audience's eyes are tracking stripped of all mimetic sets.

This autoscopy or inverse psychoanalysis of cinema explains the work's overt assault on ocularcentrism—in the Dali dream sequence's giant eye on a curtain cut with scissors, or in Murchison's suicide with a giant hand and revolver's shot into the camera or eye itself. Ocularcentrism is still identified with the spells of Green Manors, the great house of psychoanalytic hermeneutics and of Hollywood imperiality (Selznick's studio). Discretely, *Spellbound* casts itself as a war over empire—there is the citation from Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* and mention of a wandering Rome three times (in Italy, in Georgia, and in New York—the Empire State), as well as a central scene in an Empire State Hotel in New York City: at the close of the Second World War, the work deals already with the next (and global) war, which will be over control of media, the spectral levers that control perceptual programs. It will be an invisible war over what *Sabotage* calls "the center of the world," in that case Piccadilly Circus, implying a place where inscriptions are set that will be produced as perceptions. Thus, when Ingrid Bergman's mentor Dr. Brulov quips about Peck's psychotic reaction to the white of the snow, he calls it "photophobia." The mock illness names something other than fear of light.

Psychoanalysis is set up as an Enlightenment project in the opening scrolled text that Selznick contrived to insert and that secretly served Hitchcock. It conceives the "cure" as a coming to light of the suppressed that restores memory and health—at least, the simulacrum psychoanalysis of the film. But the phobia is that the effect called light is itself artificed, the product of waves and alternating frequencies, since what Peck responds to is not the glare but the

"tracks" in the snow, the cuts that precede and situate the reflected light. One is afraid, in *Spellbound,* of knowing what constitutes "light," the eye perhaps, which is why the fratricidal trauma—in which the bar series appears as a spiked fence on which the child-brother's body is by "accident" kicked—will accelerate to a suicidal gesture. Cinema, as mediatric ghost regime, will commit suicide knowing it can survive that ending since it was never fully embodied anyway: thus a giant hand prop shooting a revolver into the eye or lens. The spell of *Spellbound* that seems to require this gesture is multiple. It names the cinematic trance but also the spell of an overriding imperial hermeneutic: Green Manors or the psychoanalytic bulwark. And implicitly the spell names, on a more political level, that of ocularcentrism, as well as that of a more general media trance that the postglobal era would assume as a product of cinematic logics—a spectral "empire" complicitous with Hollywood.

One can cut into this Nietzschean Hitchcock anywhere.[22] But it is a "lighter" example of Nietzsche's imbrication in Hitchcock that I would return to, as mentioned at first, and this in a film that deploys pyrotechnics, literally, to liken cinema to a cold atomic explosion. *Light* in this work marks in advance the superficiality the work is mistaken to have, as a guise, in losing all gravity—all orientation to origins or even earth as ground. It echoes in phrases like "light as air" or "lighter side," yet drifts toward the film's pyrotechnic display, which will burn out the screen and eye. In *To Catch a Thief,* it is "Cary Grant" who, as star, will be drawn into the circular acceleration in which "originals" and "origins" appear perpetually circled back on or before themselves—burned away as more simulacra. Since this undermines the entire metaphysics of cinema and photography as mimetic or indexical media, the consequences for mnemonic and signifying orders (not to mention *time,* the word most used in the film) extends beyond any modernist trick. Hitchcock thinks with a network of markers that exceeds the double chase, always, in a certain impossible direction—a one-way street or rather nondirection ("north by northwest") that, ultimately, passes through what he calls the "bird war."

Keeping in mind the associations of Nice, or Nizza, with the composition of *Zarathustra* and Nietzsche's name, the film's imploded circular chase—the (original) cat pursuing his "copycat" by anticipating (copying) his copy—replicates a historical dilemma. During this double chase that loops behind one and seems to consume temporalities in the postwar Riviera, Cary Grant's "John Robie" assumes yet another alias in presenting himself to the Stevens women as a tourist. The name is "Conrad Burns,"

and he introduces himself to the Stevens women as a lumberman from Oregon—who, in turn, annotates the zeroid figure of "Grant" himself (reference is made to Robie's origin as a jewel thief that accords with Grant's as a screen star, leaving a "traveling circus" that "folded").

Yet Hitchcock slips into this name, according to his cryptonymic calculus, a Nietzschean calculus—likening the effect that Cary Grant as film star produces to a Zarathustran logic. The sun is direct in southern France, and there is one line about its being "too much" and in "the middle of the day." The name "Burns" cites the blinding flash that will come and simulate a nocturnal sun (the pyrotechnic scene) and the fact that the earthscape, shown at length and advertised to the tourist viewer as "beautiful," seems burned away of trees or vegetation. While the audience is seduced by the Riviera panorama shot from a plane, they do not see that the land is barren, scorched by a sun positioned behind, or in line with, the eye of the camera—whose technologies and representational appropriations work, inversely, in that deforestation. Trees, genealogical emblems of natural images, what the camera seems to shoot, are sweepingly burned away or cut—as by "Conrad Burns," from a state, Oregon, that cancels and echoes "origin" itself. (The name "Portland" continues this counterinscription, a word-name citing at once passing and carrying, framing and movement, as well as a stationary site: the word suggests a translational task of cinema, an aporia, as it is used in the murder site of *The 39 Steps:* "Portland Place.") But Hitchcock also marks the cognitive implications of this circuit. The *Con* of Conrad is marked repeatedly to signal a trope of consciousness or cognition, as well as conning—Constantinople, Constance Porter, Jo Conway, Victor Constantine—while the German *Rad* for wheel marks this mass cutting of natural origins as partaking of a backspinning auto-preinhabitation allied to the reel, making "Conrad" or "Cary" an effect of an effect, the cinematic and historical noon of being caught in a backloop of recurrences. The "star" scythes away all origins as simulacra, himself absorbing (or thieving) identification from the public's investing gaze. In the lightest of dismissed works ("light as air"), Hitchcock signals a shadowless noon in his, and cinema's, midcentury trajectory. With the alias "Conrad Burns," Hitchcock inscribes "Grant" as a minor Zarathustran courier and cineastic trope, "the cat." The black cat, however, is like a mobile black sun or trace. *To Catch a Thief* hides behind its excessive lightness, "light as air," in which Grant seems to fall upward again and again, the film dismissed. This may be why, toward its conclusion, it shifts times into the (an)apocalyptic gala,

a citational dress-up in "historical" formal wear miming cinema's pretense to install historical phantasies and pasts—drifting toward a great beheading (already accomplished).

* * *

For Hitchcock, cinema implies an inversion of the received sense and practice of *aesthetics*—which shifts from being a domain of play and simulacrum to the site from which the *phainesthai* is engendered, senses programmed, hermeneutic regimes installed. Cinema emerges as a political practice of spellbinding implants and instantly arrives, by reflecting on its sheer technicity, at blocked sites of transvaluation or crossing, ports and bridges. The "bird war" perhaps defines this de-auratic invasion of the purely external, the animeme as techne, prehistorial and avenging in the name of no nominally inscribed other. It arrives from another literacy. In this, Hitchcock's cinema impersonates Zarathustra's asolar trance before coming wars of reinscription that this cinema had assumed from *The Lodger* on.

Notes

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Prologue," in *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* in *The Portable Nietzsche,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Penguin, 1982), quotation on 127.

[2] McKenzie Wark, "Vectoral Cinema," *Senses of Cinema,* no. 6 (2000), http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/00/6/vectoral.html.

[3] Peter Conrad, *The Hitchcock Murders* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2000), 112.

[4] Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1967).

[5] Walter Benjamin, "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire," in *Selected Writings,* vol. 4: *1938–40,* ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings, trans. Edmund Jephcott (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 313–55.

[6] Conrad, *The Hitchcock Murders,* 118.

[7] The evocation is in the source text, David Dodge's novel *To Catch a Thief* (1952), about which Peter Conrad notes in *The Hitchcock Murders,* "[Francie] regards Robie, who shins up drainpipes as Nietzsche's Zarathustra vaulted over canyons, as 'a kind of superman'" (112). Conrad, waxing autobiographical about his experience of Hitchcock as a kind of rape ("a Blooding"), describes inadvertently a type of shock or translation, even transvaluation: "*Psycho* had come to resemble a rite of passage, a visceral, constricted tunnel you had to pass through to get from one age to the next" (5).

[8] George Collins, "Incidence of Instant and Flux on Temporal and Pictorial Objects, Listeners and Spectators," *Tekhnema* 4, no. 3 (1998): 26–61. In George Collins's "Incidence of Instant and Flux," Nietzsche is linked to Hitchcock by addressing "Nietzsche's three throws at 'maintaining a sense' for 'God' in light of the will to power" (28). Or its dismantling? This association of Hitchcock with the thinking of technicity before a (Nietzschean) passage anticipates new readings of his work that would move beyond those programmed by a certain mimetic "relapse" basic to culturalist hermeneutics, identity politics, and neo-Lacanian codes.

The three, strictly speaking, is hyperbolic—marked as such in phrases like "revolutionary uplift" or "pick up" or "catch up on my reading." The three lies behind the performative "zero" as a signature, too, for the atopos of the camera, marked too in the third letter "C," the machinal other witnessing and interrupting the mise-en-scène of human speech, dialogue, presentation. The zero passes into circuitry, circles, rings, and ringing—the "traveling circus" that Hitchcock will, in passing, name his cinematic operation, as if that too were a futuristic ray gun (*The Trouble with Harry*) or an atomic weapon (*Notorious*).

[9] Raymond Durgnat, *The Strange Case of Alfred Hitchcock: Or, the Plain Man's Hitchcock* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1974), 137.

[10] Friedrich A. Kittler, *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter,* trans. Geoffrey Winthrop-Young and Michael Wutz (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1999), 120.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] William Rothman states,

> The view is through the bars of the banister, and the frame is dominated by the bars in the foreground. I call this pattern of parallel vertical lines Hitchcock's / / / / sign. It recurs at significant junctures in every one of his films. At one level, the / / / / serves as Hitchcock's signature: it is his mark on the frame, akin to his ritual cameo appearances. At another level, it signifies the confinement of the camera's subject; we might say that it stands for the barrier of the screen itself. It is also associated with sexual fear and the specific threat of loss of control or breakdown. (*Hitchcock: The Murderous Gaze* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982], 33)

[14] Nietzsche, *Birth of Tragedy,* 40.

[15] Ibid., 55–56.

[16] Ibid., 50.

[17] The accord between the bar series and rhythm is marked by its corollary in knocking, intervalled sound, but also by the blinking Drummer Man at the close of *Young and Innocent* (1937)—the eye as effect of blinking, of drumlike rhythm, associated with the agent of originary murder.

[18] What Apollonian music opens with is the supplantation of a formalization, measure, or rhythm, before the screen or metaphor of the originary—sheer alternation, or spacing, like the Cymbalist's score in the Royal Albert Hall scene of the second *The Man Who Knew Too Much,* where one pretends to read in close-up serial, spaced, mute bars.

[19] As when in *Young and Innocent,* the Drummer Man's arrhythmic heartbeat betrays and overwhelms the eye-twitching, black-faced murderer at the heart of the band, overturning his percussion altogether. And as "The Storm-Cloud Cantata" mounts in the second *The Man Who Knew Too Much* and a crash of cymbals (or symbols) mimes a lightning *Blitz* or strike, the music score appears before us to read as a series of large and increasingly minimal bars.

[20] In *The 39 Steps* the many-named "Annabella Smith" leads Hannay, with her death, into the narrative web, voiding identity in a quest that departs from the Mr. Memory show—where consciousness emerges in asking the vaudevillian questions to which it already knows the answers. A baby is heard crying, consciousness being coddled. While Memory is Hitchcock's modern Mnemosyne (thus absorbing and preceding classic epic), the name Annabella also cites the anagogic dialectic of Plato's *Symposium*—where "beauty" (bella) leads anagogically upward (ana) to the idea of the Good. But Annabella does not, as the veiled woman, lead up—she is murdered, and the trail leads to feet (or "feat," [f]acts of Memory), to steps, a secret band of agents we do not meet, upkicking chorines closing out Memory's death scene. The itinerary includes a routine catabasis in the Hades of the darkened movie house, yet also by a semaphoric blackout inscribed in the bar slash itself. This summons a sublime—the formula for a silent warplane—of agrammatical signifiers, letters, and words, dis(re)membered markers that nonetheless break Memory's mimetic pretext as mere recorder, mere reproduction, mobilizing the most banal of figures (hands, numbers, feet) as corporeal agents in a failed crossing or intervention that also "is" the text. The aesthetic emerges not as the discourse of the beautiful but that of the mnemonic trace, out of which "perception" is projected or emerges. But a second example is yet more definitive: the scene in *Psycho* where Norman Bates in the fruit cellar emerges dressed as mother, knife raised, restrained from behind by Sam Loomis while struggling, his wig shaken, grimacing in the suspended glory of a performance. The image cites an icon of Western aesthetics, the Laocoön, here restrained not by snakes but by Loomis and a sheer anteriority that has Norman in its double grip—a material and aesthetic figure whose arrest occurs at the point of an "act."

[21] Nietzsche, *Thus Spake Zarathustra,* 270.

[22] One could depart from numerous points in this repertoire that read "Nietzsche" by way of more or less covert markers: in *The Lodger* that takes the form of a mediatized assault on cognitive ressentiment, an Avenger striking out at—and by—the repetitive structure of revenge, this by media apprehended as "London fog" (the chiaroscura of suspended reflective particles and the atomization of the visible and mnemonic in cinema); in *The Man Who Knew Too Much,* solar hyperbologics and the false temple of sun worshippers (as movie house) dismantle cognitive excess as a simulacra effect; *Vertigo* (1958) can be read as a deconstruction of "eternal recurrence" as such. The explosiveness of cinema, its resemblance to a saboteur's time-bomb or a nuclear blast, is related to its dissolution of the visual orders into graphics and micrological markers—chemical processes which are atomized and reconjured. All of the aporetic bridges in Hitchcock stopped over or just pictured, left uncrossed, all of the borders to be traversed in escape—each gestures toward a transvaluation that is, by the structure of mnemonics or its backloop, already implied. It is a destroying transition that is quested for and already anterior—like the secret weapon of mass de(con)struction of Mr. Memory that, though stopped, would already be at work in the film that is relaying the allegorical suppression of Memory's secret formula.

Nietzsche Loves You: A Media-Technological Start-up

Avital Ronell

In the absence of a transcendental seal, philosophy and science turn to other qualities to clear their paths and warrant their integrity. Friedrich Nietzsche has to steer between God and ego to keep thinking clean—too much God or too much ego is destructive of the scientific aim, and liable only to produce catastrophic imaginary or narcissistically warped aberrations. In any case, God rarely dispenses permits for scientific adventure, though philosophy has been known to suck up to any power of historical moment. To keep thinking on track, Nietzsche mobilizes love and personality. Perhaps somewhat surprisingly for us moderns today, who associate experiment with some degree of desubjectivation, the experimental imagination, as Nietzsche calls it at one point, implies a strong personality. It was Schelling who once remarked that the question of personality was egregiously left out of the philosophical field. Nietzsche, who involves biographemes in the index of philosophical demands, skims off a notion of personality to make his argument, such as it is, stick. The lack of personality always takes its revenge, Nietzsche writes in "Morality as a Problem":

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> A weakened, thin, extinguished personality that denies itself is no longer fit for anything good—least of all for philosophy. All great problems demand great love, and of that only strong, round, secure spirits who have a firm grip on themselves are capable. It makes the most telling difference whether a thinker has a personal relationship to his problems and finds in them his destiny, his distress, and his greatest happiness, or an "impersonal" one, meaning that he can do no better than to touch them and grasp them with the antennae of cold, curious thought.[1]

Part of a lover's discourse and a destinal commitment, the Nietzschean motif of the strong personality determines the sturdiness of thought. One enters into a relationship with those problems that solicit urgent attention. One's distress and happiness abide in the enrapturing movement of their idioms and silences. The sustained engagement with problems cannot be put into the hands of those who have excused themselves from the space of a vital encounter by means of ascetic subtractions or anemic inquiry. Nietzschean science scorns cold objectivist observation, limp grapples, requiring instead something on the order of an affective self-deposit and intense commitment. Prompting the encounter of great problems with great love, scientific curiosity and experimental imagination trace their novel routes. Nietzsche appears to envision a mapping of scientific study that is auratically pulled together by the love borne by a strong personality; buoyed by love, such a science could not degenerate in principle to a hate crime against humanity.

Yet the borders separating love from hatred are left untouched by Nietzsche: he does not consider the cold prompters of love or the ambivalent underworld of acts of love in world or science. He leaves aside the possibility that the most hateful turn is often fueled by love of a nameable cause or country. When Nietzsche installs love as a motor force behind the technoscientific urge, he does so to open the scene for an unprecedented generosity of being capable of melting the moral ice age and a history of intellectual arrests; until now, knowledge has been deterred from supporting the limber stretch exercises of human beings. To this end, love supplants the deep freeze of moral valuations, rendering the scientific pursuit on a par with what is felt to be irresistible. Why is it, Nietzsche asks in this section of *The Gay Science,* that "I see nobody who ventured a *critique* of moral valuations; I miss even the slightest attempts of scientific curiosity, of the refined, experimental imagination of psychologists and historians that readily anticipates a problem and catches it in flight without quite knowing what it has caught" (*GS,* 284). Disposed by great love to devoted study, the

experimental imagination does not settle on one object or line of inquiry but, as part of Nietzsche's vocabulary of *force,* it tends to shift ground and change objects with a sometimes alarming degree of regularity. In fact, love, to be true to itself, has to carry the fissuring break within its travels. It cannot be otherwise if it is to follow the itinerary set by the laws of becoming.

The experimental imagination is exceptional in several ways. Taking risks but also exercising prudence—practicing, in Nietzsche's famous sense, the art of living dangerously—the experimental cast of being does not so much preview the advent of a technobody (equipped with the antennae of cold, curious thought) but, in the first place, reflects a vitality that disrupts sedimented concepts and social values. Such a force of disruption goes against the grain of what has been understood as praiseworthy. Promoting meanings that have been left in cold storage for centuries, society values unchangeability and dependability. It rewards the instrumental nature (the character of dependable, computable qualities, i.e., someone you can count on) with a good reputation. On the other hand, efforts involving self-transformation and relearning, acts that make oneself somewhat unpredictable in this regard, are consistently devalued:

> However great the advantages of this thinking may be elsewhere, for the search after knowledge no general judgment could be more harmful, for precisely the good will of those who seek knowledge to declare themselves at any time dauntlessly *against* their previous opinions and to mistrust everything that wishes to become *firm* in us is thus condemned and brought into ill repute. Being at odds with a "firm reputation," the attitude of those who seek knowledge is considered *dishonorable* while the petrification of opinions is accorded a monopoly on honor! Under the spell of such notions we have to live to this day. (*GS,* 238)

While science itself was seen to count on the strength of prediction, the scientific personality needs to evade the temptation of predictability. Prediction should not be ruled by an internal dictator or dictionary of obligations. If one stayed in one's assigned grooves, everything would harden into place, with no suppleness to assure necessary shifts and turnarounds. In addition to petrification, one also always risks softening, effeminating, so to speak. Yet if Nietzsche had to choose or lose, he would promote something that comes close to the texture of the softening that opens and glides, allowing for sudden shocks and slippages. The scientific personality, spurred on by love, needs to be able to flow in order to move past anything that establishes itself firmly. The surge vitality

provided by love drives the experimental disposition beyond its assumed goals.

Submitted to constant critique and revision, the experimental disposition is capable of leaving any conclusion in the dust when it obsolesces, turns against itself, or proves decadent; when a result is "arrived" at, the experimental imagination suspends it in its provisional pose of hypothesis. The hypothetical statement submitted to critique does not belong to a class of positivistic certainties or objective observations, since it is never loosened from the affect that brought it into view. A truth or probability was, Nietzsche stresses, formerly loved. The scientific imagination is cathected on the hypothesis and itself becomes different as the "object" changes. While it seems as though reason prompts a process of decathexis, it is in fact life and its production of needs that is responsible for criticism and revision. Thus "In Favor of Criticism" states the following:

> Now something that you formerly loved as truth or probability strikes you as an error; you shed it and fancy that this represents a victory for your reason. But perhaps this error was as necessary for you then, when you were still a different person—you are always a different person—as are all your present "truths," being a skin, as it were, that concealed and covered a great deal that you were not yet permitted to see. What killed that opinion for you was your new life and not your reason: you no longer need it. . . . When we criticize something, this is no arbitrary and impersonal event; it is, at very least very often, evidence of vital energies in us that are growing and shedding skin. We negate and must negate because something in us wants to live and affirm—something in us that we do not know or see as yet.—This is said in favor of criticism. (*GS,* 245–46)

Not reason but life requires the serial proliferation of amendments and retractions, burying dead opinions and promoting the growth of new critical needs. To the extent that the personality triggers truth and guns for error, there will be no standstill or momentous revelation that can claim eternity as its backdrop. Every collaboration of truth and error is determined by the wide-ranging difference over time of the personality to itself. And even where a former truth must now be discarded, Nietzsche, ever mindful of resentful potentialities, reminds us that it was once loved and urgently needed by a personality that consistently outgrows itself. The experimental disposition is thus somewhat on the run, whether passing through nonknowledge, and catching the unknowable in the outfield of inquiry, or because something within us compels negation and further negation as a condition for living and affirming. Unknowable, and as yet unseen, something within us could come from the future or return from a subterranean layer

of past inscriptions. Still or no longer human, we—or rather "you," Nietzsche says "you"—are molting, shedding skin like so many truths cast off by *The Gay Science*. Your body transforms, engineering a new era of sacrifice. In an anthropological sweep, Foucault once saw things moving in the direction of epistemic sacrifice: "Where religion once demanded the sacrifice of bodies," he writes, "knowledge now calls for experimentation on ourselves, calls us to the sacrifice of the subject of knowledge."[2]

Testing 1 . . . 2 . . . 3 . . .

Much has been said about Nietzsche's statement that we need only to invent new names in order to create new "things." In that famous aphorism, however, he adds to the list of power switches the notion of probabilities: "We can destroy only as creators—But let us not forget *this* either: it is enough to create new names and estimations and probabilities in order to create in the long run new 'things'" (*GS,* 245). In the long run, probabilities and estimations weigh in as importantly as names when it comes to invention's power over new things. Nietzsche places things within quotation marks, which in this case expands rather than contracts the cited domain: in place of limiting himself to substantial objects, he leaves open the definition of what can be expected to come from the creation of new probabilities, names, or estimations. In the passage discussed above, Nietzsche put probability on the same level as truth. Both truth and probability are linked to love, which furtively documents the affective holdings of the gay scientist. The point to be held onto at this juncture, beyond the tempting psychologization of both terms, is the way Nietzsche smuggles probability into the neighborhood of truth in order to assert its rights of equal residency: "You shed formerly loved truth or probability" (*GS,* 245–46).

Before continuing to explore the itinerary of the experimental disposition in the Gay Sci, I would like to connect the questions that have been raised with a number of pressing contemporary claims. It is not that I want to trace some loveless relations to truth and probability but, in order to see the innovation of Nietzsche's scientific incursion, I find it necessary to change channels and skip a century, to fast forward to where Nietzsche is used and betrayed. This commercial break will allow us to reenergize the reading of Gay Sci with a graft from its own future passageways. If the Gay Sci has sought us out and is meant to speak to us today, then it will have had to stand the test of time, which does not limit the text to

a vulgar little quiz involving applicability and whether or not one "buys it," but is disclosive of the way in which it relates to itself as its own future, its own labor and announced commitments. I will let it recharge itself as we borrow from the future of Gay Sci in order to read its past.

Proofs . . . Proofs . . . Proofs . . .

a) In a work linking philosophy with the conceptions and technologies of artificial intelligence (AI), a concerned editor outlines the way in which AI researchers "have recently found themselves writing, without any conscious intent, what philosophers recognize as philosophy."[3] The true source of apprehension, expressed in the introductory phase of the volume, may involve another dilemma, effected "without any conscious intent," reflected namely in the section title, "How Philosophers Drift into Artificial Intelligence" (*AI,* 1). Despite considerable emphasis on drifting, randomization, fuzziness, and interference, the work signals its anxiety over philosophy's nearly random drift into the new territory. The unwarranted interference risks subverting coherent programming and blunting the concerted demand for rigor upon which AI discussions appear to be based. The origin of the demand for rigor, which has conditioned twentieth-century Anglo philosophy, "is the positivist's requirement that theories be testable. At the very least, a respectable philosophical theory should be stated with sufficient precision that one can tell what it says about *something* and whether its predictions about that subject matter are borne out" (*AI,* 1). The minimal requirement of rigor meant that "respectable philosophy" (respectable is repeated a number of times) had to be capable of being articulated in the formalism of logic: "As time passed, however, the awareness grew that formal rigor was not sufficient to guarantee unambiguous content or to ensure sufficient philosophical clarity to meet even this minimal criterion of testability. . . . There must be more to philosophical analysis than logical formalism" (*AI,* 2–3).

The incursion of philosophy into areas that are technologically fitted risks deflating the rigor on which so much is staked. It is as if rigor maintains the phallus that assures the rule and proper place of "respectable philosophy." Yet there is danger ahead in the form of disrespect for completion and clarity, the handmaidens of rigor. In some cases contemporary philosophers have been led "to eschew rigor altogether. Even in investigations shrouded in a façade of formalism, there is often a lamentable tendency toward

handwaving when the going gets difficult. The trend is toward painting pictures rather than constructing detailed theories. Perhaps most contemporary philosophy is too vague and unfinished to satisfy even a minimal requirement of testability" (*AI,* 4). Testability furnishes the uninterrogated core of rigor. It puts out the call for a new mode of thinking that could be aligned with the demand for rigor, which remains equally uninterrogated but seems to be linked to a notion of computational realizability: "To some of us, the concepts and technology of artificial intelligence provide at least a partial resolution of the problem of ensuring at least some degree of testability. As Paul Thagard (1988) has pointed out, artificial intelligence liberates us from the narrow constraints of standard logic by enforcing rigor in a different way, namely via the constraint of computational realizability." This example is especially useful to us because it shows how "rigor" enables the displacement of truth by testability:

> Computational realizability is no guarantee of truth or of explanatory interest, of course, but it does guarantee a certain kind of rigor. Those philosophers who have begun to test their theories by trying actually to implement them in computer programs have found that the discipline required almost invariably reveals ambiguity, vagueness, incompleteness and downright error in places where traditional philosophical reflection was downright blind. . . . Furthermore, a running implementation of a theory makes it possible to apply the theory to more complicated test cases than would be possible by armchair reflection, and experience indicates that this usually reveals counterexamples that would not otherwise have been apparent. (*AI,* 4)

Endorsed by "experience," acts of reflection are devalued and overthrown for the asserted virtues of implementation. The lynchpin of this operation, "rigor," enters the picture unrigorously, however, as only "a certain kind of rigor." What kind of rigor is a certain kind of rigor? What does it mean to "guarantee" a certain kind of rigor? In short, what is being *guaranteed* if not the ability itself to guarantee where truth has been weakened or explanatory interest diffused? Everything rests on the promise of a certain kind of rigor. But at what price is this flimsy ground constructed? All this great white Anglo hope for philosophy can be maintained as long as foreign invasions by ambiguity, aleatory eruptions, incompleteness, and other forms of parasitism are revalued. This sort of revaluation or indeed repression belongs to a "respectable philosophy" even as it loses ground with respect to the aforementioned rigor. Importantly, the test is posited on the side of a cleaner, more rigorous, unassailable cognitive value. Testing in itself is never questioned

but posed, necessarily, if the argument is to work, as the infallible ground for yielding determinations and often indulging the metaphysical fantasy of completion.

But what if testing were from the start itself built upon notions of constitutive incompletion, ambiguity, blind runs, and radically provisional cognitive values? In order to carry on the respectable colonization of discourse of which philosophy, that certain kind of something which drifts into *AI,* would be the unconscious, it is essential at once to rely on the test and to leave its premises untested—as if the test could provide an unquestionably solid ground for overtaking reflection and other philosophically triggered interferences. When promoting AI as the advanced frontier for philosophy, the introduction slips in a "partial" guarantee: "A (partial) guarantee of philosophical rigor and clarity is not the only attraction artificial intelligence holds for philosophers" (*AI,* 4). What would a "(partial) guarantee" be? Is it respectable? Sound? Are rigor and clarity partially guaranteed or does the guarantee cover partial rigor? Are respectable philosophers "attracted" to fields? How rigorous is it to rely upon attraction? "The discipline of programming also leads to a shift in perspective on traditional issues. It invites—or rather requires—one to adopt what [Daniel] Dennett (1968) calls the design stance toward the mind" (*AI,* 4).

Dennett's stance supplants inquiry into the nature of rationality with inquiry into how a rational agent might be designed: "Rather than ask under what conditions someone can be said to know something, we are led to ask how an agent might be designed that acquires information and applies it in the service of some goal, and what such an agent's environment must be like for the design to work" (*AI,* 7). This cognitive cue, tied to teleology, raises questions that, while not addressed in the introductory essay, concern the function of model and prototype, of that which is being tested, designed, and "invented" in view of a particular goal. In terms of its most expansive implications, the theme of information design opens a region wherein the distinction between discovery and the more instrumental epistemology of how something works is suspended. An invention no longer is figurable as a spontaneous eruption of substantial thingness but now gets serialized or parallel processed by various trials and tryouts. Although not foregrounded in terms of computational dependability, this more marginalized aspect of testability supports a structure given over to improvement and improvisation—indeed, an incomplete structure that, if not respectable, is rigorous but open-ended. The more subtle folds of testability, their tendency to collapse or open unexpected areas for

thought and experiment, are however left untouched in order, it would seem, to keep intact the phantasm of testing's groundedness and unquestioned solidity. In bringing forward such objections, I am not picking on a minor deflection or bizarre moment in a generally more reliable field: these disturbances are characteristic of the self-assured procedures of present-day inquiry and continue to call for further reflection.

b) In a noteworthy, if somewhat typical, discussion that includes theories of algorithms applicable to real-time behavior, a snag emerges under the aegis of the "planning problem." In this instance, AI is mustered to probe research methods and searches out the space of possible actions to compute some sequence of actions and decision theory. The problem deals with the fact that agents, "whether human or robots, are *resource* bounded: they are unable to form arbitrarily large computations in constant time" (*AI,* 7). In sum, the dilemma concerns the time-zone paradox of freezing the future in order to plan, in another register, the time for working through computations. The more complicated computations become, the more time it takes and the less we are in sync with the possibility of a grounded answer: "This is a problem because the more time spent on deliberations, the more chance there is that the world will change in important ways—ways that will undermine the very assumptions on which the deliberation is proceeding" (*AI,* 7). If anything, this dilemma indicates an acute time-bound paradox that undermines the conditions for thinking through a problem, or even for questioning its appropriateness for inquiry. The somewhat hidden opposition that begins to come clean in this line of argument entails the speed up of the present that runs up against the more lugubrious pace of "deliberation." The assumption, pitting the timing of the test *versus* the time of thinking, dominates a number of the problems that are focalized in AI considerations. The thriller dimension of current research, which, setting its timer, gives scientific inquiry the rush it apparently needs to set up for its goal, is very possibly based on the misguided notion that "the world will change in important ways." To offset the competitive quality of the research that is being clocked, more philosophy must be allowed to drift in, if only to demystify those ideologies of acceleration that relentlessly run down the slower-paced thinking and an ethics of hesitation.

Whether as origin or effect of temporal hysteria, newer technologies strain to beat the ontic clock. A problem besetting recent AI planning systems is that they have been designed "to construct plans prior to, and distinct from, their execution. It is recognized

that the construction of plans takes time. However, these plans have been constructed for a set of future conditions that are known in advance and frozen" (*AI,* 8). The conditions for which a plan has been constructed, the so-called start state, must be known not to change prior to execution. There exists, then, at once a fear that future conditions will overtake the calculations made for them and that they consist of altogether knowable factors to be frozen in advance. A major tensional drama occurs in the noncoincidence of planning and its execution. Planning phases include such acts as modeling, testing, constructing prototypes, development. Regardless of whether the future is foreseeable or not, something has to be maintained as a stable factor: in these considerations stability is bestowed by the test. If the test cannot originate knowledge, it at least confirms that there is knowledge. However, even if a test, to fulfill its bald constative claims, assumes the function of providing definitive results or at least of confirming that cognition occurs, testing, for its part and imparting, is always temporally determined. Thus, the criterion of testability also inscribes the erasure of what is to be tested. Given the timed stretch between prototype and execution—one of many possible models—testing, in principle, can never catch up with itself in order to locate or stabilize itself in the cognitive domain for which it nonetheless serves as proof: another reason why tests have to be taken over and over again, if only to fill the fictional time of the absolute present, or of the experience of such a present.

In light of what has been said thus far, a related dimension of testing comes into the picture at this point. This development concerns the level of *responsiveness* that the test presupposes and for which it aims. Despite the radical provisionality defining its extended field, in some cases the test itself assumes the function of knowing the answer. While the test is a questioning act, and while it may prompt the necessity of counterexamples, it already contains and urges a sense of the correct way to answer its demand. It does not pose what we might call an innocent question, but has arranged things in such a way as to run ahead of itself to catch the answer for which it calls. To be sure, the test itself may be "surprised" by the way in which it is answered. Surprised by its own answer, of which it is henceforth dispossessed, the test attacks epistemological meaning with a kind of ontological fervor. The surprise passes for a shiver in ontology; something trembles in being.

To the extent that the test, according to its more constative pretexts, delivers results, corroborating or disconfirming what is thought to be known or even to exist, it can undermine anything

that does not respond to its probative structure. The status of the thing tends to topple under the pressure of the test. Somewhat paradoxically, it is not clear even that something is known until there is a test for it. Consider the relevant passages in Douglas Hofstadter's well-known discussion of computer language, automatic chunking, and BlooP tests. BlooP defines predictably terminating calculations: "The standard name for *functions* which are BlooP-computable is *primitive recursive functions;* and the standard name for properties which can be detected by BlooP-tests is *primitive recursive predicates.*"[4] It appears that, according to Hofstadter's view, extreme particularities do not correspond to testing but must be tapped for universal formulae. The test follows upon a sort of screening procedure that detects the universalizable trace:

> Now the kinds of properties which can be detected by BlooP tests are widely varied. . . . The fact that, as of the present moment, we have no way of testing whether a number is wondrous or not need not disturb us too much, for it might merely mean that we are ignorant about wondrousness, and that with more digging around, we could discover a universal formula for the upper bound to the loop involved. Then a BlooP test for wondrousness could be written on the spot."[5]

In this context, it turns out that that test is not viewed so much as that which can prove more or less established hypotheses or provide new knowledge; it acts as an effect of knowledge that precomprehends itself—a certain type of metaphysically secured knowledge that needs only to *find* itself. In this rendering, the test eludes a broader definition in favor of probing and confirming its own foundation as presence, even if this should be inscribed in the form of latent concealment ("need not disturb us too much, for it might merely mean that we are ignorant"). The BlooP as metonymy of testing does not test anything outside the delimited field about which it already knows. This is not much different from saying that proofs are demonstrations within fixed systems of propositions. The type of logic deployed by Hofstadter appears to call for a test that ensures its own perpetuation without compromise or contamination from a designated outside. But what if the proofs were to explode the propositions? In other words, what if the test itself were to fail and significantly falter?

The normatively secured test does not originate knowledge but confirms what already exists as "knowable." Yet, as it sets its limits strictly, in accordance with specific codes or conventions, testing inevitably checks for the unknown loop that takes it beyond mere passing or failing, beyond determinacy or the result. The

unpretended aim of a test, one could say here, is to meet its hidden blind spot, to fail. This is when it produces an effect of discovery, which occurs as accident, chance, confusion, or luck—something on the order of broad offtrack betting. We are given to understand that true failure is not merely of an instrumental nature, such as technical defect or mechanical failure. Generous failure, productive of disclosure, concerns a type of testing that probes more than the workability or conformity of its object to an already regulated norm—more than, say, a smog test (though, in keeping with essential failure, the politics of the test would no doubt be far more interesting if all cars were to be failed in service of another modeling of exhaust systems).

In a limited technological sense, the putative difference between passing or failing may be a trivial issue, as the recursive nature of the test determines its generation regardless of discrete results. It is in the nature of testing to be ongoing indefinitely, even when the simulation may pass into the referential world. As simulated and operational orders collapse into a single zone (where, for instance, an absolute distinction between real war and field test would be difficult to maintain over time), the more interesting questions of cadence, interruption, or reinterpretation emerge. Is it possible, in our era, to stop or even significantly to disrupt and reroute the significance of testing? In terms of political-pragmatic programs, we have seen the difficulties involved, for example, in banning nuclear tests. It is as if they have become naturalized, an unstoppable force. The successive attempts at banning tests require the intervention of signed treaties. We know from classical philosophy, which has not been contradicted on this point, from Kant ("A Sketch for Perpetual Peace") through Walter Benjamin ("Critique of Violence") and more contemporary observations, that treaties suspend violence only momentarily, artificially. The irony of Kant's unfinished sketch gratifies the allegory of an impossible peace. Because testing henceforth belongs to the question of violence—involving treaties, conventions, regulations, policing, ethical debate, considerations of eco-ontology, and the like—only with the help of a discussion of rhetorical codes strong enough to scan the paradoxical logic of testing can we begin to analyze the problem of its unstoppability, if indeed this is to be understood, today, as a problem.[6]

Does the test occupy a juridical or strictly legal space or does it produce a space that supplements these determinations—perhaps even supporting and altering them according to another logic? The task of reading the links between violence and testing, the

legality and topology of the test site—its possible *anomy,* that is, the extralegal privilege of testing—requires us however to pass the test through the modalities of its undecidable bearings: it is necessary and possible to understand testing as good and evil, as situated beyond good and evil, if not as that which decisively directs the very determination of good and evil. A radical formulation of the questions at hand leads us to ask, Can there be any ascertainable good prior to the test? (Short of Platonic shredders, what allows us to know whether something is "good" if it has not been put to the test?) Or worse, still: Can there be a human being without a test? (For an analogy in fiction, one thinks of the endless battery of tests devised for determining the replicant/human difference in *Blade Runner* [1982]). If we were able to get through to the other side of these questions, beyond the ambivalence that the test appears at every juncture to restore, and supposing we decided that it would be best to end with the secret syndications of testing: Under what conditions would banning or disruption be at all possible?

We have noted how AI posits testability as ground. In addition, it appears to share with Kurt Gödel the optimism that testing will catch up with truth. In other words, AI does not reflect upon the value of the truth it posits, or upon the largely performative forces that fuel its assumption of truth. Gödel has argued that there are true statements of number theory that its methods of proof are too weak to demonstrate. His proof pertained to *any* axiomatic system purporting to achieve the aims that Alfred North Whitehead and Bertrand Russell, in their *Principia Mathematica,* had set for themselves. Gödel shows how statements of number theory, being also statements about statements of number theory, could each misdirect a proof. In sum, Gödel demonstrates that provability "is a weaker notion than truth."[7] This is not the place to interrogate precisely how truth works in the coding scheme; nonetheless, it seems safe to say that Gödel rescues truth from limitative results of provability, keeping it intact and pinned to an idealized horizon of expectation.

Proofs . . . Proofs . . . Proofs . . .

Prototype America

To the extent that the experimental disposition emerges from constant self-differentiation, can simulate itself and wears, as Nietzsche suggests, many masks, it unquestionably belongs to an

experimental site that Nietzsche calls in a crucial moment of development "America." If I say "development," it is because Nietzsche for once offers thanks to Hegel for having introduced into science the decisive concept of development. The gratitude is short-lived: we learn quickly that Hegel "delayed atheism dangerously by persuading us of the divinity of existence where Schopenhauer's unconditional and honest atheism at least made the ungodliness of existence palpable and indisputable" (*GS,* 307). America becomes an experimental site because it is the place of acting and *role playing*—a concept developed by Nietzsche for America or by America for Nietzsche.

At this point or place Nietzsche links experimentation with the development of improv techniques. The principal axioms of the gay science are related to dimensions of exploration and discovery; discovery is not seen simply in terms of "invention" but, under certain conditions, as a way of discovering what was already there, inhabited, which is why Nietzsche sometimes takes recourse to the discovery of America—an event, an experiment, a unique stage for representing discovery without invention in conjunction with serious historical risk. If Mary Shelley had seen the discovery of America as an event that occurred too suddenly, without the stops and protections of gradual inquiry—in sum, as a world-historical shock of intrusive violence that disrupted all sorts of ecologies, material and immaterial, conscious and unconscious—Nietzsche studies the profound disruption to thought that the experimental theater of America directed.[8]

Taking off for America, he redefines the place of the experimenter, letting go of familiar mappings and manageable idioms. The experimenter must give up any secure anchoring in a homeland, allow herself to be directed by an accidental current rather than aiming for a preestablished goal. The accidental current becomes the groove for a voyage taken without helmsman, without any commanding officer or function, Nietzsche insists. As exemplary contingency plan, America allows for outstanding reinscriptions of fortuity. Its alliance with unprecedented applications of the inessential—the historical complicity with risk—gives everyone the hope at least of having an even chance. The fate of America, or this aspect of it, was written into its Constitution as a land of discovery. And now, to the accidental discovery of America, where Nietzsche goes on a job hunt.

There have been ages when men believed with rigid confidence, even with piety, in their predestination for precisely one particular occupation, "precisely this way of earning a living, and

simply refused to acknowledge the element of accident, role, and caprice. With the help of this faith, classes, guilds and hereditary trade privileges managed to erect those monsters of social pyramids that distinguish the Middle Ages and to whose credit one can adduce at least one thing: durability (and duration is a first-rate value on earth)" (*GS,* 302). Uninterrogated durability and rigid social hierarchy will be thrown over by what Nietzsche calls "America":

> But there are opposite ages, really democratic, where people give up this faith, and a certain cocky faith and opposite point of view advance more and more into the foreground—the Athenian faith that first becomes noticeable in the Periclean age, the faith of the Americans today that is more and more becoming the European faith as well: the individual becomes convinced that he can do just about everything and can manage any role, and everybody experiments with himself, improvises, makes new experiments, enjoys his experiments; and all nature ceases and becomes art. (*GS,* 302–3)

A disfiguring translation of the Renaissance man, the jack-of-all-trades *is* an American symptom rebounding to Europe, changing the configuration of the want ads that erase natural constraints. One is up for anything, open to the identity *du jour,* capable of ceaseless remakes and integral adjustment. The American athleticism of identity switching has marked politics everywhere, brushing against ideologies of authentic rootedness or natural entitlement. It also means that anyone can in principle try anything out, the bright flip side of which we count the art of improv and experimentation, including performance art and jazz. (Music was always with science on this point, from at least Bach's *Inventions* to synthesizers and the communities of their computerized beyond.) Nietzsche's focus rests on the individual's incredible conviction that he can manage any role. The refined profile for role management, by the way, Nietzsche locates in the Jewish people, who have had to play it as it comes, go with the flow, adjust and associate. The experimenter is at once the experimentee: there is little room here for securing the range of scientific or artistic distance, or, more precisely, he supplies just enough slack to let one try oneself out. Everyone turns himself into a test site, produces ever new experiments and, significantly, *enjoys* these experiments. This plasticity does not match the solemn lab for which Dr. Frankenstein becomes the paradigmatic director, weighted as he is with Germanic gravity and remorse over the meaning of his relentless experiments. Nonetheless, oppositions should not be held too rigidly, for Europe and America are

sharing needles on this one, contaminating one another according to the possibilities of new experimental *jouissance*. In the end Victor Frankenstein, too, was carried over the top by his brand of *jouissance,* by a level of desire punctuated by grim determination.

Clearly, there is a price to be paid by the experimental player. One cannot remain detached from the activity of intense experimentation but finds oneself subject to morphing: One grows into one's experimental role and becomes one's mask. America's increasing obsession with actors—now actors have political views—has roots in Greece and can be connected in Nietzsche to his observations on nonsubstantial role playing:

> After accepting this role faith—an artist's faith, if you will—the Greeks, as is well known, went step for step through a rather odd metamorphosis that does not merit imitation in all respects: *They really became actors*. . . . and whenever a human being begins to discover how he is playing a role and how he can be an actor, he *becomes* an actor. . . . It is thus that the maddest and most interesting ages of history always emerge, when the "actors," *all* kinds of actors, become the real masters. As this happens, another human type is disadvantaged more and more and finally made impossible; above all, the great "architects": The strength to build becomes paralyzed; the courage to make plans that encompass the distant future is discouraged; those with a genius for organization become scarce: who would still dare to undertake projects that would require thousands of years for their completion? For what is dying out is the fundamental faith that would enable us to calculate, to promise, to anticipate the future in plans of such scope, and to sacrifice the future to them—namely, the faith that man has value and meaning only insofar as he is *a stone in a great edifice;* and to that end he must be *solid* first of all, a "stone"—and above all not an actor! (*GS,* 303)

Nietzsche enters the zone where actors become the ruling part—"the real masters"—but unleashes the irony of mimetic dissuasion. This theater of politics and value-positing stunts should not necessarily be imitated, he warns. In this passage of paradoxical reversal, experimenting gradually becomes associated with America and the impending rule of actors. Philosophy comes to see experimenting in the negative light of project paralysis, inhibiting acts of promising, calculating, or anticipation—acts by which the future can be nailed down, as it were, and "sacrificed" to the performatives that bind it. The futural stone age has been compromised, however, by new human flora and fauna, which, Nietzsche asserts, could never have grown in more solid and limited ages. So the experimental disposition, cast in soft metaphors, waters down the solid reputation of the ages, showing the experimenter to be not quite solid as a rock but rather absorbed into a soft present that

recedes into itself from distance or future. Nonetheless Nietzsche considers this age as one without limit—of unlimited finity; the age of "actors" encompasses the maddest and most interesting of possible ages. It is not clear how the loss of this hard-rock faith ought to be evaluated in the end, because Nietzsche elsewhere tends to emphasize the need for shedding such faith and, when taking on new forms spontaneously, he gets the green card and becomes somewhat of an American himself.

Nietzsche is well within his comfort zone when the personal technologies of shedding and softening take hold of existence, when brevity becomes the correct tact to measure out a given stage of life. He is attached only to brief habits, he writes, describing a fluidity that allows him to get to know many things and states:

> I love brief habits and consider them an inestimable means for getting to know *many* things and states, down to the bottom of their sweetness and bitternesses. My nature is designed entirely for brief habits, even in the needs of my physical health and altogether as far as I can see at all—from the lowest to the highest. I always believe that here is something that will give me lasting satisfaction—brief habits, too, have this faith of passion, this faith in eternity—and that I am to be envied for having found and recognized it; and now it nourishes me at noon and in the evening and spreads a deep contentment all around itself and deep into me so that I desire nothing else, without having any need for comparisons, contempt or hatred. But one day its time is up; the good thing parts from me, not as something that has come to nauseate me but peacefully and sated with me as I am with it—as if we had reason to be grateful to each other as we shook hands to say farewell. Even then something new is waiting at the door, along with my faith—this indestructible fool and sage!—that this new discovery will be just right, and that this will be the last time. That is what happens to me with dishes, ideas, human beings, cities, poems, music, doctrines, ways of arranging the day, and life styles. (*GS,* 236–37)

Beyond stating the motif of farewell and Nietzschean gratitude, the passage inventories the things that offer themselves to experimentation, testing, and structural rearrangement, covering the span from dishes, cities, schedules, and music to Nietzsche's unquestionably Californian invention of lifestyle. The existential range of motion allows for time to press upon pleasure, to mark the end with a mastered violence. Nietzsche says and sees the day when, with a feeling of satiety and peacefulness, the time comes for good things to bid him farewell. This reciprocal scene of departure invites the relation to things to evade the punishing rhythm of violent and constant improvisation. Something stays with him—the brief habit does not overthrow a certain habitual groundedness that supports brevity and experimental essays. In fact the excess of

habitlessness would destroy the thinker and send him out of America into Siberia. He admits, "[m]ost intolerable, to be sure, and the terrible par excellence would be for me a life entirely devoid of habits, a life that would demand perpetual improvisation. That would be my exile and my Siberia" (*GS,* 237). Carried to extremes, the homelessness of experimentation turns into unsettling exile—into the horror of being—when it demands nonstop improv. Still, the opposite of horror is odious to Nietzsche, a kind of political noose around his delicate neck:

> Enduring habits I hate. I feel as if a tyrant had come near me and as if the air I breathe had thickened when events take such a turn that it appears that they will inevitably give rise to enduring habits; for example, owing to an official position, constant association with the same people, a permanent domicile, or unique good health. Yes, at the very bottom of my soul I feel grateful to all my misery and bouts of sickness and everything about me that is imperfect, because this sort of thing leaves me with a hundred backdoors through which I can escape from enduring habits. (*GS,* 237)

The experimental disposition, then, has to dismantle its internal and material lab frequently to keep the punctual rhythm of the brief habit going—a philosophical policy susceptible of significant consequences. Nietzsche never places the experiment on the side of monumentality or reliable duration; it cannot be viewed as a project. Nor is he attached to a particular form of experiment—this is not the scientist obsessed with an *idée fixe*—but one capable of uprooting and going, for better or worse, with the diversifying flow of ever new flora and fauna. This degree of openness, though it does have its limits and points of closure, necessarily invites ambivalence—those moments, for instance, when Nietzsche stalls, dreaming of immense edifices and the permanence promised by contracts written in stone.

Although he at every point invites precisely such a register of understanding, the Nietzschean ambivalence toward experimentation cannot be reduced to the personal whim or contingent caprice of Fred Nietzsche, even when he experiments on himself or writes in a letter to Peter Gast that the Gay Sci was the most *personal* among his books. What he means by "personal" has everything to do with the nature of scientificity that he expounds. In Nietzsche as in Goethe, scientists are at no point placed strictly or simply outside the field of experimentation; part of the thinking of personality, they cannot extricate themselves from the space of inquiry in the name of some mystified or transcendental project from which the personhood of the scientist can be dropped out or

beamed up at will.[9] The test site can always blow up in their faces or make ethical demands on them—for Nietzsche, this would remain a personal dilemma.

Notes

[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, "Morality as a Problem," in *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs,* trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974), 283–84, quotation on 283. *The Gay Science* is hereafter cited as *GS* in the text.

[2] Michel Foucault, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," in *Language, Counter-Memory and Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews,* ed. Donald F. Bouchard (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1977), 139–64, quotations on 163.

[3] Robert Cummins and John Pollock, eds., *Philosophy and AI: Essays at the Interface* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991), 1; hereafter cited as *AI* in the text.

[4] Douglas Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach: An Eternal Golden Braid* (New York: Vintage, 1980), 414.

[5] Ibid., 408.

[6] I offer a reading of these works in conjunction with Derrida's discussion of "Force of Law" in "Activist Supplement: Papers on the Gulf War" (in *Finitude's Score: Essays for the End of the Millennium* [Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998], 293–304).

[7] See the fairly straightforward discussion in Hofstadter, *Gödel, Escher, Bach* (18–19).

[8] In *Frankenstein; or, the Modern Prometheus* (London, 1818), Mary Shelley figures the discovery of America that, when compared with the invention of the fiend figures, as the more grievous monstrosity. For other charges of monstrosity, see the close-range focus of Laurence Rickels on unstoppable growth spurts in *The Case of California* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) and more recent texts on body building and politics (cf. Laurence A. Rickels, "Metropolis, California," *artUS,* no. 3 [2004]: 33–41).

[9] The meaning of the personal trace in the logic of scientific discovery is a problem that has been tried by Derrida in his analysis, for instance, of Freud's place in the discovery of *fort/da,* as well as in the trajectories of Lacan's return to Freud, or Foucault's massive reading of desire and power. Derrida's relation to improvisation and invention is something that still needs to be understood scientifically, if one can still say so.

Contributors

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Diana Thater is an artist who lives and works in Los Angeles. Her work can currently be seen in a solo show at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art; the Towner, in Eastbourne, UK; and as part of the Darwin 200 exhibition at the London Natural History Museum.

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Klaus Theweleit revolutionized sociology and psychoanalytic criticism with his two-volume study *Male Fantasies* (University of Minnesota Press, volume 1: *Women, Floods, Bodies, History* [1987]; and volume 2: *Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror* [1989]). His contribution is excerpted from a section of his 1988–94 multivolume study establishing the Orpheus complex as that which organizes each introduction of new media via couples, whether the Perón couple, for instance, or the coupling of a change in reception with catastrophe.

Gregory L. Ulmer teaches at the University of Florida and the European Graduate School. He is the author of *Applied Grammatology: Post(e)-Pedagogy from Jacques Derrida to Joseph Beuys* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), *Teletheory* (Routledge, 1989), *Heuretics: The Logic of Invention* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994), *Internet Invention: From Literacy to Electracy* (Longman, 2002), and *Electronic Monuments (Electronic Mediations)* (University of Minnesota Press, 2005). His contribution to this collection runs through the implications of his theory of choragraphy—as a rereading of Thoreau—for our computerate era.