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Art Criticism

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Alfred Stieglitz, *Camera Work*, and Cultural Radicalism

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> Alfred Stieglitz, we know, pays for the [Little] galleries out of the hope of leading us to what he believes to be the art of the future, but he acknowledges he does not know where that art will reach.
>
> "We are in somewhat of the same condition as they were in the early days of the Renaissance,["] he will tell you, ["]seeking for the unknown. I don't know when it will be reached, but I do see that these men are alive and vital."
>
> — B. P. Stephenson, 1910

> I can say that nothing but the best, the essential, is contained in any of the Numbers of *Camera Work*. ... There is a relationship between all the Numbers, running through the whole set of *Camera Work* there is a very positive idea expressed and evolved.
>
> — Alfred Stieglitz, 1915[1]

The Little Galleries of the Photo-Secession (informally known as "291") and the galleries' journal *Camera Work*, Alfred Stieglitz's New York "laboratories" of modernist photography, painting, drawing, sculpture, and criticism which flourished during the period 1905-15, have long been considered incunabula of avant-gardism in America. This is due not only to the galleries' "four-star" exhibition record (premier American showings of Auguste Rodin, Henri Matisse, Paul Cézanne, and Pablo Picasso), but also — and most importantly — to the prescience of the joint venture's director/editor. Stieglitz had both an eye and an ear for the vital and the unconventional, as well as an uncanny sense of timing and direction. In fact, his greatest strength was his ability to shock, provoke, creatively stimulate, and occasionally win over his audience and readers. As journalist J. Edgar Chamberlin wrote in a 1911 review of one of Stieglitz's exhibitions:

> Mr. Stieglitz's catholicity and inclusiveness, at the Photo-Secession Gallery, have been commended in this column. Radicalism and originality should have their forum, because genius is always dropping in upon us like a thief in the night, and we never know what strange guise it may take. And many beautiful and significant things have been shown at the Photo-Secession.[2]

Chamberlin's initial comment, echoed by B. P. Stephenson's, cited above, reveals that Stieglitz's "shock agenda" was predicated on the power of novel ideas to upset degraded or established ones. As early as 1906, before he had even contemplated exhibitions for Matisse or Picasso,[3] Stieglitz was becoming painfully aware that the Photo-Secession, his supposedly stalwart band of art photographers, was expending more energy on internal squabbling than on the meanings and potential revaluations of pictorialist aesthetics. Sensing that "the Spirit of the [Photo-Secessionist] Lamp" was vanishing into thin air, he decided to "throw a bomb."[4] It was evidently his intent to target his associates' petulant attitudes, as well as their determinedly late-nineteenth century oriented, overly atmospheric work (which he was beginning to question), by contrasting them to feisty watercolorist Pamela Colman Smith, a woman with brains, brawn, and a style marked by pungent, deep flourishes of line.[5] After the January 1907 Colman Smith "bombshell" exhibition, critic and longstanding Photo-Secession supporter Charles Caffin wrote a thinly veiled diatribe against his photographer friends' self-consciousness ("an attitude fatal to sincerity"). In the same piece, Caffin penned a paean to what he, following Stieglitz's example, believed the Secessionists could recapture, namely creative initiative ("a product of ... faith and logic jumping with instinct, of back-knowledge, present grip, and foresight").[6] Looking at Colman Smith's drawings several years later and from a more mature aesthetic perspective, Stieglitz undoubtedly would have thought that the European modernists whose work he showed after hers (from 1908 to 1911) were even more spirited because of their radical notions of form. (Colman Smith's drawings effectively, but eclectically synthesized fin-de-siècle continental styles.) Indeed and as excerpted above, his comments of the 'teens lend credence to the view that Stieglitz's radicalism not only had a shock value, but adhered to a definite program which he unveiled step by step, with logical and evolutionary clarity.[7] As I have demonstrated elsewhere, this view is supported by Stieglitz's exhibition and editorial schedules for the 1910-11 season, both of which show his desire to educate his audience in modernist progression, that is, the development from sensuous to graphically coded expressions.[8]

However forward-looking his formalist notions appear, Stieglitz's definition of modernism was actually dependent on, and ultimately subservient to, uncoded and undirected "newborn" expression.[9] As his close friend and

assistant Edward Steichen explained: The essential progress of 291 has not so much been due to a gradual process of evolution as to sudden and brusque changes caused largely by an eager receptivity to the unforeseen. Each of these mutative movements found reactionary spirits in 291 and in transforming these or in eliminating them Stieglitz has ever shown his greatest 291 potentiality.[10]

Alfred Stieglitz relished Matisse's drawings because, like Colman Smith, the French painter impressed him as a "new" individual, "with new ideas — a very anarchist, it seemed, in art." In a similar manner, he believed Picasso's work should be seen because the Spaniard "was breaking virgin ground." When he scheduled an exhibition, it was to illustrate a "psychological moment."[11] This is what B. P. Stephenson meant when he stated that Stieglitz believed in progressive expression. In actuality, each exhibit at Stieglitz's gallery was carefully chosen to be, as well as introduce, a reagent. For Stieglitz, radical art could not exist without a demonstrated radical personal agenda, and form was lifeless without emotion. (Evidence for these personal agendas Stieglitz tended to obtain indirectly, from friends, gallery contacts, sympathetic critics, and knowledgeable collectors.) This attitude helped make 291 and *Camera Work* forums for a constant interchange of ideas, as Stieglitz later described:

> 291 was not interested in commissions. It was interested primarily in an idea, in the idea of life, in the idea of the significance of art, the significance of people in relationship to each other and to art. ... I also remember how Cézanne had been treated the year before [in his 1911 exhibition at 291], not to speak of Picasso — marvellous expositions of work, of standards and ideals.[12]

However, this seemingly untrammeled, expression-oriented framework of Stieglitz's ultimately proved to be detrimental to the gallery's advance, as amorphous, emotive issues (sacredness of art and "Americanness" of feeling) came to supersede abstract ones (degrees of formal ruggedness or coherence).[13] While maintaining an outward show of modernist progression and economy, in continuing to admit the validity of fin-de-siècle stasis and floridity, Stieglitz ultimately showed himself to be indecisive, self-contradictory, and uncommitted to radicalism.

The present study examines Stieglitzian experiential aesthetics within two contexts: turn-of-the-century American cultural radicalism, a current focus of Stieglitz scholarship, and the pages of *Camera Work*. Early modern cultural and aesthetic theory was premised on an irreversible progression: the exultation of experience yielded to radical reformulations of it. It will be seen that although Stieglitz published articles premised on radical formal ideas (economy of presentation, abstraction of thought, and new conceptions of language), he made no attempt to indicate that these should supplant purely

experiential or emotive ones. Furthermore, throughout the tenure of *Camera Work* retardataire ideas were retained on a seemingly equal standing with new ones. Although he published writings by humorist and debunker Benjamin de Casseres and by the proto-formalist critic Sadakichi Hartmann, like both of these men Stieglitz proved himself exuberant to the core, too wide-eyed, and too short-sighted, for the rigors of modernity.

As defined by loose amalgamations of poets, journalists, artists, and Greenwich Village aesthetes in the years 1890-1914, American cultural radicalism was a creative and effervescent "county fair" of demonstration and activity. "The Village lived in perpetual secession from the rest of the country," Martin Green has noted, stressing that the adventurous, rough-riding, pioneer attitudes of Village-frequenting leaders such as Big Bill Haywood, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, Mabel Dodge, and Gertrude Stein coalesced in an affirmation of renewal and action.[14] A heady, if ultimately naive critique of Progressive Era institutions, this philosophy always implied a cure, because "wrong could so easily be put right by a change in consciousness," or, in Randolph Bourne's words, by "freshness of style."[15] Early modern cultural radicals put their faith not so much in progressive institutions as in the progressive individual, the artist, writer, or critic bent on experiencing life's spontaneity and fullness. Although the philosophy of these creative exemplars could be loosely defined as socialistic, in that emancipation of society was their ultimate goal, unlike the Marxist-oriented generation of the thirties it had no concrete ideological framework.[16] It was "lyric," Floyd Dell wrote in 1912, prophesying that major changes were about to be effected by the muse, a revolutionary force in the world. It was pluralistic, wrote Bourne in 1914, "slowly linking the chains of social consciousness, and thus transforming the individual persons, the individual groups, lifting them to a higher level, giving them a more abundant sense of sympathy and unanimity." Summarizing these loosely structured, idealistic motives, Van Wyck Brooks wrote near the end of the 'teens, "No true social revolution will ever be possible in America till a race of artists, profound and sincere, has brought us face to face with our experience and set working in that experience the leaven of the highest culture."[17]

Beginning in 1902 but particularly evident in the years 1905-13, Alfred Stieglitz was leavening his own style of progressive optimism by designing *Camera Work* and 291 as forums for energetic, experiential, and no-holds-barred thinking.

It was not his intention, for example, to show that manipulated photography — prints altered for "pictorial effect" in the printing and/or developing process — was better or worse than "straight" photography, but that each was worthy of concerted investigation if and only if the practitioners had something vital and original to say. (In the late 'teens, after he had committed himself to straight photography, he was to revise this opinion.[18]) In *Camera Work*, divergently premised articles and reviews were pitted one

against another. The key forum for this was an occasional column of reprinted newspaper reviews Stieglitz called "The Photo-Secession and the Press." Again, it was not Stieglitz's desire to feature one writer over another, but to stage an arena for a variety of views, leaving the reader free to formulate his/her own conclusions. (Stieglitz did provide one key for evaluation: the articles must have evidenced "some solid gray matter of brain."[19])

Within the matrix of thought experimentation and aesthetic reeducation that Stieglitz created, a utopian and psycho-therapeutic agenda emerged. This aspect of early twentieth century American life was an index to the nation's wider move towards exploratory research and intellectual liberation. In fact, cogent analogies may be made between Stieglitz's gallery, in his view an aesthetic laboratory, and the agricultural experiment station movement of 1875-1906.[20] However, the most significant contemporary models for Alfred Stieglitz at this time were psychological. The gallery agendas he established for his visitors and himself made this clear. For Stieglitz, art was the means through which sufficiently sensitized individuals could rediscover themselves as aesthetically motivated beings. It was his passionately held belief that those individuals should be given the chance, via their exposure to art in a low pressure, non-commercial context, to bare their souls, thus stripping away the conventionality and artificiality of commercial and other falsely egocentric values.[21]

Just as Stieglitz inserted art into experience, William James suggested that outdated "isms" be replaced by radical empiricism, by "a world of pure experience." It can justifiably be stated that both presented a world that cannot be apprehended as a single fact, and that fades into ambiguity at its edges; a world in which theories are instruments, but not answers to enigmas; a world in which the disenfranchised soul must indulge in faith at its own risks.[22]

John Dewey's philosophy occupied common ground. Along with James, this preeminent psychologist would enter the Stieglitz circle in 1911 through the writings of journalist, *Camera Work* contributor, and collector Agnes Ernst Meyer, Dewey's student and a reader in Jamesian pragmatism. In Dewey's view psychology meant the study of mental operations rather than mental elements. In order to "functionalize" effectively, students of Deweyan anti-formalism were encouraged to free associate, to relate psychology to other fields of science and human endeavor, and — most importantly — to divest themselves of all a priori conceptions. This was a key "paradigm of free psychology."[23] What Stieglitz seems to have been after in his own gallery talks (he did not stand by while his visitors mused, but engaged them in a Socratic dialogue by means of pointed questions, leads, and parables) was a continuing process of psychological analysis similar in broad strokes to that taught in functional psychology classes at Columbia University. Like John Dewey and his colleagues there, Stieglitz conceived his role to be a capacity-oriented one. As he wrote in 1909, "Don't believe

that experts are born. They are the results of hard work. Remember inspiration is usually nothing more than perspiration recrystalized [sic]."[24] Recalling Stieglitz's energizing leadership style in 1914, American anarchist writer Hutchins Hapgood noted that an artist could stand on his head in the Little Galleries if he so desired, provided this act was motivated by a sincere desire "to see straight, to feel beauty and form directly, without an undue regard for convention, tradition, and authority." "One thinks of [the gallery]," art critic Christian Brinton wrote, "as an outpost, an experimental station, quite as much as a gallery, and nothing could be more stimulating than such a state of mind." In such an atmosphere, painter Arthur B. Carles pointed out, "everything seemed to fit into everything else."[25]

Granted his premises, it comes as no surprise that Stieglitz attracted to his stable a type of journalist equally committed to group dynamics, and to debunking stale material values and stale thinking. A follower of "debunker" journalist H. L. Mencken, Benjamin de Casseres, the most outspoken of Stieglitz's writers, believed that revolt was the key impetus to creative expression, and that the creative individual must be vaunted over existing social mores, particularly the specter of Puritanism. While grounded in fervent moral idealism, de Casseres felt that ingrained, speciously moral attitudes should be exposed as dated, shallow, comical, and ultimately subject to radical revision.[26] By his own admission de Casseres was a born writer with a pedigree (he claimed to be a direct descendant of philosopher Baruch Spinoza), an anti-Semitic Jew, and a rebel and anarchist. (In 1913 he announced his candidacy for New York's mayor; Stieglitz volunteered to head the "Street Cleaning Department.")[27] A native of Philadelphia, de Casseres began his literary career as an editorial writer and drama critic, then moved to the *New York Herald*. After a brief stint in Mexico City in the employ of the anti-government paper *El Diario* (it was suppressed around 1907), de Casseres moved back to New York, and began frequenting Stieglitz's gallery. By 1910 he was a Stieglitz circle intimate, prominent in the "pecking order" at the photographer's famous lunches, held in Manhattan's Holland House.[28]

Honed by subjection to the critical fire of Stieglitz's other associates (in 1910 these included Caffin, painter Max Weber, Mexican caricaturist Marius de Zayas, who was de Casseres's friend and a former *El Diario* illustrator, and photographer/critic J. Nilsen Laurvik), de Casseres's wit became the rapier-sharp "fight song" of *Camera Work*. "If you gave ... De Zayas, and myself full swing we could make *Camera Work* the most famous magazine in the English speaking world," de Casseres wrote to Stieglitz, concluding, "you know I am a born rebel. Rebellion is life."[29] That Stieglitz rapidly did give de Casseres "full swing" is demonstrated in the latter's early "chorus," composed in the context of a review of de Zayas's first (January 1909) show at 291:

> Mr. de Zayas ... insists that his art must be taken seriously. And why not? A caricaturist, like a great novelist, a great painter, a great sculptor, sees the human race in his own way, his unique way, his own terribly sincere way. He, like them, is a divinizing psychologist.
>
> The caricaturist has his message. But here in New York it so happens that this message carries at its core the one great sin, which is a violation of the Anglo-Saxon injunction: Thou shalt not commit irony! To the caricaturist the world exists to be sneered at.[30]

As shown in this essay, de Casseres's style was "buncombe oratorical," a righteously puritanical anti-Puritanism.[31] Puritan methodology mapped out a world of discrete entities, each systematized according to causes and effects (if caricature, then irony). Its points were hammered home through the atomization of experience into rigid dichotomies (sincerity and sin). De Casseres's ideas gain in significance when compared with those of Mencken and Theodore Dreiser, as well; these writers also dramatized the struggle of man against fate before a backdrop of cruel and impersonal New York.[32] Mencken in particular would have been an influential catalyst for de Casseres's view that cultural radicalism could be depicted as an ongoing, secessionist struggle between talented individuals and an "ignorant, venal mob," and that the function of the critic was to provoke by "felling the shibboleths of outworn creeds and ideals."[33] As the latter wrote in 1909:

> In artistic matters, the crime of the American is indifference. Squat on her haunches, sucking at the dripping dugs [sic] of the Golden Calf, Columbia would use a Monet or a Whistler for a seat — if they were not worth gold. Stupidity and Vulgarity, thy name is America! ... What can these Medusas of Indifference know of the eternal renascence in art of the rebel?[34]

Although de Casseres claimed allegiance to Symbolist poetry and philosophies, like his fellow debunkers he was more interested in utilizing the declamatory and celebratory power of existing critical languages — fulminating rhetoric and humor — than in effecting new states of being through the power of alternative linguistic forms. Whereas Stéphane Mallarmé, one of his avowed sources,[35] abandoned systematic description and anecdotes in order to develop "a rapid series of linguistic gestures or notations" keyed to "the successful rendering of sensation,"[36] de Casseres played with anecdote, satire, and journalistic description. He felt he was an iconoclastic philosopher, clocking atomistic minutes and prophesying a "renaissance of the irrational,"[37] but at best his writing, like Mencken's, evoked lively character types with romantic effervescence and bravado. (At worst, it lapsed into uncontrollable hyperbole.) As he described his reactions to the 1907 Colman

Smith exhibition at 291:

> She has smitten with the rod of her imagination this adamant world of such seeming solids and vaporized it. And out of this vapor she has shaped her visions of life, her symbols done in color, her music matrixed and moulded to concrete shape. ... And that seems to me to be the metaphysic of Pamela Colman Smith, and into all her work has passed her soul, drunk with the wonder and the mystery of things.[38]

Besides exalting individual genius (the sculpture and sketches of Auguste Rodin, shown by Stieglitz in photographic reproduction and in his gallery respectively, also occasioned a display of his effulgent prose[39]), de Casseres extolled an endangered, death-defying present, a powerful theme for *Camera Work* which others would develop in turn. "The spirit that rules life is neither a spirit of destruction nor a spirit of creation," he wrote in 1909. "It is the Spirit of Evanescence, a lapsing of shadow into shadow, a fusing and interchanging, with a perpetual tendency to extinction."[40] Intimating that sensation might not only be described, but also revivified and restructured in a language of consciousness, de Casseres touched upon a key precept of Impressionist criticism and heralded the writings of Sadakichi Hartmann. The American literary Impressionists, a group of writers and critics which included Hartmann and his more famous contemporary James Gibbons Huneker (a noted debunker and friend of de Casseres's, as well), were dedicated to elevating sensation to new levels of subtlety, refinement, and imaginative power. According to their aesthetic, the critic and appreciator were assumed to have become one. While it was deemed necessary that the latter understand a creative idea, it was more important to "appreciate," "delight in," and "feel" the "primal vital" excitement or "effect" that originally stimulated that idea.[41] The Impressionist critic conveyed as much about himself as the subject under evaluation. So entranced was Huneker, for example, about his own iconoclasm that he wrote books on it, calling one collection of art essays *Promenades of an Impressionist* (1910).

The arts, Impressionist criticism also stipulated, were the highest in the hierarchy of sensate forms because they stimulated the headiest — and earthiest — aesthetic responses. As Huneker wrote in evaluations of the work of Matisse (which he had seen at 291) and Cézanne:

> [Matisse's shapes are] more plastic than music and as emotional. ... He can make his pencil or brush sing at the bidding of his brain, better still, that brain is fed by eyes which refuse to see humanity or landscape in the conventional terms of the school. ... [He has the] power to evoke tactile sensations ... as vigorous, rhythmic, and subtle as the orchestration of Richard Strauss.

> Cézanne's still-life attracts by its whole-souled absorption; these fruits and vegetables really savour of the earth. ... When Paul Cézanne paints an onion you smell it.[42]

A more scholarly group of individuals than the debunkers, although equally committed to unhampered, individual expression, Impressionist critics looked to Europe for stylistic models, and found there — particularly in the writings of Anatole France and Walter Pater — a prescient, in-depth treatment of the sensate individual, the soul adventuring among masterpieces.[43] Predicated on feeling, Pater's sensuous, luscious prose particularly exemplified model Impressionist sensibility, a meld of imbibed, protracted moments and revivified sensations. In *The Renaissance* (1873), the English critic wrote:

> All that is actual in [the impression is] a single moment, gone while we try to apprehend it, of which it may ever be more truly said that it has ceased to be than that it is. To such a tremulous wisp constantly re-forming itself on the stream, to a single sharp impression, with a sense in it, a relic more or less fleeting, of such moments gone by, what is real in our life fines itself down. It is with this movement, with the passage and dissolution of impressions, images, sensations, that analysis leaves off — that continual vanishing away, that strange, perpetual weaving and unweaving of ourselves.[44]

Pater's notions of sensation were closely allied to those of the French Symbolist critics and poets, likewise sources for American Impressionist criticism. Both Pater and his contemporary Mallarmé, for example, believed that in order to communicate sensation (in the latter's famous definition, not a phenomenon, but the effect produced by it[45]) new linguistic forms and literary structures were needed. Perceived imagery provided the nuclei for a point of view, and delineated elements with which that point of view might be revivified. However, conceived form — the structure of the work of art, poem or essay — unified these elements, reconfiguring, straining, and ultimately prolonging their impact. As David Scott has explained:

> The vocation of the poet as art critic was discovered precisely in the writer's unique ability through language to elaborate and articulate painting's ideas in a way impossible to the painter. But, at the same time, nineteenth-century writers and poets were increasingly to try and absorb into their literary texts some of the vivid sensual impact, the plastic qualities of the painterly image.[46]

These ideas were seminal for Hartmann, an American Impressionist who circulated freely in avant-garde European literary milieus. A "raffish orphan

of the American fin-de-siècle,"[47] Sadakichi Hartmann was born in Japan to a Japanese mother and a German father. His mother having passed away soon after his birth, Sadakichi was reared in Hamburg, Germany, home of his paternal uncle, a wealthy aesthete who encouraged his precociousness and early love of literature and the arts. Through a series of colorful twists and turns Sadakichi ended up in the United States, completing his education in libraries and museums and utilizing the income from printing and writing jobs to finance periodic trips back to Europe.[48] There, particularly through his encounters with Jules Laforgue, Henri de Régnier, and other writers in Mallarmé's Paris circle (entree into which was provided by American poet Stuart Merrill in 1892), Hartmann absorbed a substantial dose of Symbolist literary theory and psychology. Other memorable influences were American: Walt Whitman, whom he met in 1884 and subsequently interviewed at length (his Conversations with Walt Whitman was published in 1895), and Impressionist critic Sidney Lanier, a source for his *Camera Work* pseudonym "Sidney Allan."[49] A drifter with no apparent leadership abilities but a prolific pen, Hartmann was attracted to the fledgling New York art photography movement and, under Stieglitz's tutelage, became the Photo-Secession's key aesthetician, apologist, and critic during its formative years 1902-05. He also wrote for *Camera Work* from 1909 to 1912.

Appearing frequently in the initial issues of *Camera Work*, Hartmann's early word portraits, predicated on "the techniques of mystery and blurred effects,"[50] established him as an Impressionist writer in the tradition of Pater and Laforgue. Two particularly vivid examples of his aromatic and musky prose occur in essays Stieglitz published in mid-1903:

> A perfectly straight or clear line seems to us almost as offensive as the introduction of geometrical figures. We do not want the representation of facts, but of appearances, or merely the blurred suggestion of appearances and the swift reflections and subtle quivering of light do not permit exact copyism.
>
> What does all this mean? Futile question. Can you explain the melancholy beauty of the falling rain, or tell why the slushy pavements, reflecting the glaring lights of Fifth Avenue stores, remind us of the golden dreams the poets dream?[51]

In the April-July 1911 issue of *Camera Work*, Hartmann's seminal article, "Rodin's Balzac," was published. It appears that based on viewing Steichen's stark, reductivist photographs of the Balzac (a sculpture of 1898) in New York, Hartmann was able to abjure mystery and fog and reach a perception of pure, clean, abstract form. (It is, however, important to note that the Steichens were not as abstract as Hartmann made them out to be; in this case his writing was more advanced than his source.) "Form," Hartmann

stated in "Balzac:"

> becomes musical when special stress is laid on surface treatment or the juxtaposition of light and shade. ... In the "Balzac" form is felt rather than seen. It is orchestration by the blending of planes — and by the vibration of light on these planes to produce a vague atmospheric effect.[52]

In another article of the same year, Hartmann elaborated on the geometrical, "structural units" of art, concluding that the "painter who pursues ... the harmonic relation of parts will have the big conception ... of proportion and inner harmony."[53]

Expanding sensate form to sensate experience, Hartmann defined his version of Impressionist sensibility:

> It is not the glorification of classic form, but of an abstract idea. ... It produces instantaneously a tangled mass of sensations; this is the first impression, vague and vacillating but intense, and thereupon slowly, with the help of our intellect, do we arrive at a clear and distinct pleasure. We repeat the same process of soul activity which the statue represents.[54]

Hartmann's April 1912 *Camera Work* article, "Broken Melodies," postulated the essay itself as a simulacrum of protracted aesthetic perception, as a construct of sensation in its own right. Following a Mallarméan model, in Hartmann's words "a poem, set in type of different sizes and with blank spaces placed occasionally in the midst of a verse, instead of the customary periods and dashes," Hartmann reminisced of a critical experiment he had discussed with composer Claude Debussy in the early 1890s. Could such "white interludes" be applied to music?[55] While not going so far as to design his article for different type faces and sizes, as Mallarmé had done in *Un coup de Dés* (1899), Hartmann did avail himself of certain Mallarméan devices (variable spacing between words and upper and lower case letters), in order to suggest that critical thought proceeds in moments, each relative to the other. Using correspondence and musical analogy — key Paterian devices — Hartmann passed from Debussy to Whistler to Greek sculpture by means of fragmentary, floating impressions, such as the following:

> A broken melody, ending abruptly in silence or in sounds unrelated to the melody, starts us up from our "mystic musings." It is subtler, irritating, it makes us think. Conditions are not positive. The object or idea of representation becomes less real. The effects are more uncertain. The result is half-fancied. It is like struggling in the breakers.[56]

Although his technique and content were somewhat marred by the prevalence of "mystery and blurred effects" (for Mallarmé, sensation clarified itself in the compact structure, shape, and spatial configuration of language), Hartmann's goal in "Melodies" was, in Mabel Dodge's words, the creation of "perceptions, conditions, and states of being, never before quite consciously experienced."[57]

Indeed, Hartmann was the first of Stieglitz's group to create a critical language based on the Paterian notion of sensation as a constantly moving river of perceived objects, time, and temperament, as well as the Emerson-Whitman concept of manifold meanings unfolded in singular life voyages.[58] The essays of Cubist painter Francis Picabia and his wife Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, published in *Camera Work* in 1913, seem to have been tailor-made to advance the notion of musical, temporal, and abstract perception adumbrated by Hartmann in 1911 and 1912. That Stieglitz commissioned them demonstrates his interest in these avant-garde ideas. In the preface to his March 1913 show at 291, Picabia spoke for pure painting and pure contemplation, for a pleasurable, joyous, and continuous state of mind approaching abstraction. While manifestly writing an apologia for her husband's art, Buffet-Picabia also spoke for a new mode of critical inquiry which could further radicalize that suggested by Hartmann. This mode would be abstract, protracted, and experiential rather than analytical. It would result in a new language free of objectivity, "expressive by the force of its rhythms, and the relations of line and color — a convention, abstract and free and pure — expressive of the artist's imagination and desire."[59] What Hartmann, and after him the Picabias, were attempting to do was initiate a new way of thinking about art that would reflect the most advanced temporal and formal conceptions oftheir time. In his 1903 work, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, the influential French philosopher Henri Bergson had called for a new kind of cognition, and by implication a new kind of criticism. For Bergson, a supremely temporally conscious being evolved in his thinking as he came to perceive the individualizing, yet transcendent domain of ideated sensation.[60] Bergson's Creative Evolution was published in 1907; Stieglitz extracted a segment for the October 1911 issue of *Camera Work*:

> Intelligence, by means of science, which is its work, will deliver up to us more and more completely the secret of physical operations. ... But it is to the very inwardness of life that intuition leads us — by intuition I mean instinct that has become disinterested, self-conscious, capable of reflecting upon its object and of enlarging it indefinitely.[61]

Echoing these and other related ideas promulgated by members of his circle,[62] at the end of 1912 Stieglitz stated, "*Camera Work* is more than a picture book of beautiful photographs: it is a vital force." The radicalism of 291,

Stieglitz explained, was also a matter of language. "Just as we stand before the door of a new social era," he wrote at the same time, "so we stand in art too before a new medium of expression — the true medium (Abstraction)."[63]

By 1912 Stieglitz had introduced Americans to Cézanne and Picasso, and was preparing to mount a show of abstract caricatures (themselves based on Cubist painting, Cubist-related mathematical theory, and Futurist concrete poetry) by Marius de Zayas.[64] Undoubtedly influenced by Bergson's ideas and Hartmann's tentative linguistic experiments, by late 1912 Stieglitz had also published a "special number" of *Camera Work* devoted to two essays by Gertrude Stein.

Not critical texts per se, the essays, word portraits entitled "Henri Matisse" and "Pablo Picasso" (c. 1909), followed upon, yet ruptured the notions of sensation, time, and form already familiar to Stieglitz's subscribers. This is because Stein's works critiqued and ultimately rejected Impressionism's lingering indecisiveness and complexity. (Although Hartmann's "white interludes" might have induced abstract sensations — considerations of thoughts and pauses in the context of sequential relationships — their romantic and highly associative content held equal sway.) Predicated on "diagrammatic psychological relations," "patterns of action," the "patterning of sound equivalences," and progressive verb forms, Stein's word portraits were unromantic, object-oriented, and radically re-constructive.[65] Postulating a new language parallel to but not restricted by the object, a language of "drastically limited semantic resources," Stein prefigured the radical reconstructive tactics of the Russian avant-garde, who believed the evolution of transrational, "alogical," and "decompositional" strategies were key to effecting revolutionary change.[66]

By 1912-13, Stieglitz had refueled the fires of 291's anti-conventionalism by supporting the painting and theories of Vasily Kandinsky, creator and disseminator of apocalyptically-premised abstraction. In addition, in his own work Stieglitz had moved as close as he ever would to a subversive formal language, wherein signfication was "to be dependent upon the passage of signifiers themselves."[67] Cogent analogues may be made between his Manhattan harbor photographs of 1910 and the Prouns that Russian Constructivist artist El Lissitzky would create in the early 1920s. Just as, in the Prouns, "space ceases to be a vacuum between objects and becomes spherical or arched,"[68] in the Stieglitz river photographs space expands, contracts, and occasionally cuts into objects (although to a lesser degree than in the fully abstract El Lissitzky drawings).

Granted the quantity and quantity of evidence justifying a counter-argument to the one I have proposed, namely, that Stieglitzian cultural radicalism might have been grounded in anti-conventional, debunking critical attitudes (his own and de Casseres's), but was expanded through the creation and dissemination of experimental linguistic forms (his own, Hartmann's, and Stein's), a fundamental question arises. Why was it left to others — leading

members of the European avant-garde — to evolve a truly radical literary and pictorial movement? The answer, I believe, lies partly in Stieglitz's circle (despite the fact that they were a forward-looking group of individuals), but primarily in Stieglitz, whose leadership was marred by inconsistency and doubt.

In conjunction with his intense focus on the individual, de Casseres came to abjure absolutes and universals, subscribing to the more experimental notion that form could be unique to a unique creator. However, he could not reconcile his modern theories, evidenced in statements such as, "Unity sleeps; nothing remains but units,"[69] with modern art. Whereas in less than a year and in three *Camera Work* issues he had effectively set his comic and barbed sights to blast the old and usher in the new, de Casseres seems to have missed what was really new in 1908 and 1909, namely the hard, elemental forms of Matisse. (Caffin analyzed this work, shown at 291 in the spring of 1908, for Stieglitz's readers in a seminal article of January 1909; de Casseres did not mention Matisse until 1911.)

Hartmann's disquisitions, although frequently brilliant, were notoriously uneven. For example, in "Visions of the Nude" (*Camera Work*, July 1910) he proclaimed the "frank nobility of human passions" and the "savage joy of life," then lapsed curiously into a soliloquy on mystery and blurred effects. Also in 1910, he published a book on James A. McNeill Whistler, evidently preferring that painter's "atmospheric and musical" color secrets to Matisse's hard nuggets of hue. During the same time period, he reviewed a 291 exhibition of American painting inspired by Matisse and Cézanne in terms more appropriate to Symbolist painters of the previous generation, stating:

> All I realize is this, that all these men love color, they drink it in, they bathe in it, they worship it on their knees and become intoxicated with its joy and glory. The sun has risen at last; they have witnessed them, those rainbow lights of the sky and their magical influence on all terrestrial scenes and conditions.[70]

A perusal of Hartmann's effulgent and occasionally psychedelic dramatic oeuvre reveals that he was thinking less of modern art than of his own neurasthenic color drama *Buddha* (1895).[71]

Having foreseen that abstract thinking had reductive and conceptual coefficients, and having experimented with these notions himself, Stieglitz would reasonably have been expected to feature only those writers and artists who were moving in a similar, nonobjective direction. But he did not. Just as in the early days of 291, he tended to be inclusive and pluralistic, allowing diverse voices to be heard so that varying points of view might have equal billing. Although this attitude could still be considered novel in 1906, by 1911 it had become a standard Stieglitz bill of fare, and its novelty and validity were questionable. This is because Dewey and James, Stieglitz's key

American intellectual models, moved toward defining consciousness not simply as an aggregate of free ideas (the "paradigm of free psychology"), but as a probing implement or utility. In their view free association yielded to problem solving, the ability to formulate innovative concepts and restructure the enormity of experience. For example, in Dewey's view consciousness entailed functional reorientation of the experienced environment. Abjuring Spencerianism, which viewed the mind as a tool of natural forces, James also posited a pioneer model of intelligence, stating that "there might be in the mind principles quite as natural as those of the outer world which nevertheless alter the shape taken by the outer facts in thought." Pragmatism (codified by James and others in the period 1890-1907) stipulated that "elegant," "economical" theories should supersede, not coexist with outdated and ungainly ones.[72]

Sandwiched between dense, opaque packets of retro prose, *Camera Work's* truly novel and radical critical perspectives lost the freshness and verve they might have had if featured, say, in "special" or designated numbers. In 1912 and 1913 Stieglitz did publish two "modern art and literature" numbers of *Camera Work* (the fulcrum of both was the prose of Stein), but he also continued to publish feverish diatribes by de Casseres, each more outlandish than the last.[73] Considered in the context of Jamesian pragmatism, Stein's semantic economies (themselves influenced by James) were of far greater value in revealing unexpected combinations of thought and action than de Casseres's tortuous prose. Paralleling this procedure was Stieglitz's exhibition and illustration policy. Excited about the dynamic, reductive photographs of Karl Struss, Stieglitz published them in the October 1912 issue of *Camera Work*. In succeeding issues, however, typically pictorialist "fuzzygraphs," the imagery of *Camera Work's* infancy, reappeared, along with uninspired (even pedestrian) portraiture and entirely non-innovative genre work. Even more disturbing, Stieglitz's new work, done in Paris in 1911, waffled between Cubist abstraction and romantic realism.

In his autobiographical article "The History of a Literary Radical" (1919), Randolph Bourne noted that as he developed a "fiery zeal for artistic and literary propaganda in the service of radical ideas," he also came to feel the vigor of new literary forms. For him form was the key to a "constructive pointing of the way;" both the "old school" critics and the Impressionists, he felt, were too intent on repeating their tried and true agendas to strike out in new directions. At bottom was the issue of self-criticality "both severe and encouraging. It will be obtained when the artist himself has turned critic and set to work to discover and interpret in others the motives and values and efforts he feels in himself."[74]

Albeit an excellent barometer and promoter of new trends and trendsetters, Alfred Stieglitz never aspired to Bourne's notion of severe self-criticism, at least where aesthetics was concerned.[75] In 1912 he may accurately have termed Stein's word portraiture "a Rosetta stone … a decipherable clew

[sic] to that intellectual and esthetic attitude which underlies and inspires the [modern] movement," but pressed to define the modernity of his own art nine years later he simply stated, "I was born in Hoboken. I am an American. Photography is my passion. The search for truth my obsession."[76]

Notes

1 B. P. Stephenson, review of John Marin exhibition at 291, reprinted in *Camera Work* 30 (April 1910), p. 45; Alfred Stieglitz to Hollie Elizabeth Wilson, 2 April 1915, *Collection of American Literature*, Yale University (hereafter cited as *YCAL*).

2 J. Edgar Chamberlin, review of Max Weber exhibition, reprinted in *Camera Work* 36 (October 1911), p. 32. Réné Guy Du Bois was even more extreme in his comments, likening 291 to a union hall and the Photo-Secession, to the I.W.W. (the "Wobblies," which was fast becoming the most politically radical union in America). See his review of Frank Burty exhibition, reprinted in *Camera Work* 33 (January 1911), p. 43.

3 Edward Steichen was acting as Stieglitz's Paris contact and correspondent at this time, but had informed him only of the potential availability of works by Rodin.

4 James S. Terry, *Alfred Stieglitz: The Photographic Antecedents of Modernism*, Ph.D. dissertation (State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1980), pp. 223-24; [Stieglitz], "The Editors' Page," *Camera Work* 18 (April 1907), p. 37. On that page Stieglitz wrote:

> The Secession Idea is neither the servant nor the product of a medium. It is a spirit. Let us say it is the Spirit of the Lamp; the old and discolored, the too frequently despised, the too often discarded lamp of honesty; honesty of aim, honesty of self-expression, honesty of revolt against the autocracy of convention.

5 Pamela Colman Smith, "Should the Art Student Think?" *The Craftsman* 14 (July 1908), pp. 417-19; William I. Homer, Alfred Stieglitz and the American Avant-Garde (Boston, 1977), pp. 42-44, 67. In 1907 Stieglitz undertook a critique of the most extreme pictorialist practice, the staging of ethereal, mysterious figural tableaux, with fellow Photo-Secessionist Clarence White. For a discussion of his conclusions, see G. W. Kiefer, *Alfred Stieglitz and Science, 1880-1910*, Ph.D. dissertation (Case Western Reserve University, 1990), pp. 425- 27.

6 Charles Caffin, "Tweedledum and Tweedledee," *Camera Work* 19 (July 1907), p. 27.

7 "[*Camera Work*] is the only publication of its kind in the world, and it is the only publication containing the complete history of the evolution of Modern Art both in this country and abroad" (Stieglitz to Ryerson Library, Chicago, 28 April 1916, *YCAL*).

8 G. W. Kiefer (cited, n. 5), pp. 441-53.

9 Dallett Fuguet, "291," *Camera Work* 47 (July 1914), p. 63.

10 Edward Steichen, "291," *Camera Work* 47 (July 1914), p. 65.

11 [Stieglitz], "Henri Matisse at the Little Galleries," *Camera Work* 23 (July 1908), p. 10; "The Exhibitions at 291," *Camera Work* 36 (October 1911), pp. 29, 30.

12 Stieglitz, "Conversations," undated, TMs, *YCAL*.

13 Homer (cited, n. 5), pp. 259, 261.

14 Martin Green, *New York 1913: The Armory Show and the Paterson Strike Pageant* (New York, 1988), p. 21.

15 *Ibid.*, p. 14; *Randolph Bourne, War and the Intellectual, Collected Essays, 1915-1919*, ed. Carl Resek (New York, 1964), p. 182, quoted in Arnold L. Goldsmith, *American Literary Criticism: 1905-1965*, vol. 3 (Boston, 1979), p. 58. Edward Martin has equated the style of culturally radical literature with muckraking journalism. Both revelled in sensational extrav-

agance and "lurid appeals" to emotion, and both operated on the assumption that the "righteous knowledge" of the American people, if piqued, would ultimately set things right (Edward A. Martin, *H. L. Mencken and the Debunkers* [Athens, Georgia, 1984], pp. 27-28).

16 It is important to note that American cultural radicalism encompassed far Left political groups such as the Wobblies and anarchists. However, its literary creed is best described as anti-organizational. "[Culturally radical] poetry," Green writes, "tried to be transparent to their lives, and become [sic] in fact the rhetoric of their self-presentation" (Green, [cited, n. 14], p. 42).

17 Edward Abrahams, *The Lyrical Left: Randolph Bourne, Alfred Stieglitz and the Origins of Cultural Radicalism in America* (Charlottesville, 1986), p. 2; Bourne, quoted in Abrahams, p. 42; Van Wyck Brooks, *Letters and Leadership* (1918), quoted in Goldsmith, vol. 3, (cited, n. 15), p. 30.

18 Stieglitz to R. Child Bayley, 9 October 1919, *YCAL*.

19 Stieglitz, "Editorial," *Camera Work* 14 (April 1906), p. 17.

20 Kiefer (cited, n. 5), pp. 348-52, 328-30.

21 Homer (cited, n. 5), p. 48; Dorothy Norman, ed., "Alfred Stieglitz: Ten Stories," *Twice a Year*, vols. 5-6 (1940- 41), pp. 138-39.

22 *The Collected Writings of William James*, ed. John J. McDermott (Chicago, 1977), pp. 177, 135, cited in Henry Adams, "William James, Henry James, John La Farge, and the Foundations of Radical Empiricism," *The American Art Journal* 17 (Winter 1985), p. 66.

23 Edwin G. Boring, *A History of Experimental Psychology*, 2nd ed. (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1957), pp. 559, 561. See also Agnes E. Meyer, Notes, 21 January 1969, pp. 23- 24, Agnes E. Meyer Papers, Manuscript Division, Library of Congress.

24 Stieglitz, "Twelve Random Don't's," (1909), in *Alfred Stieglitz: Photographs & Writings*, eds. Sarah Greenough and Juan Hamilton (Washington, D. C., 1983), p. 191.

25 Hutchins Hapgood, reprinted review in *Camera Work* 38 (April 1912), p. 43; Christian Brinton, "Multum in Parvo," *Camera Work* 47 (July 1914), p. 45; and Arthur B. Carles to Stieglitz, 8 February 1912, cited in Roy A. Kotynek, *291: Alfred Stieglitz and the Introduction of Modern Art to America*, Ph. D. dissertation (Northwestern University, 1970), p. 124.

26 Martin, (cited, n. 15), pp. 10-14, 27-30.

27 Peter Plagens, "The Critics: Hartmann, Huneker, de Casseres," *Art in America* 61 (July-August 1973), p. 70; Ileana B. Leavens, *From "291" to Zurich, The Birth of Dada* (Ann Arbor, 1983), p. 91.

28 Temple Scott wrote of a typical Stieglitz-presided lunch at the Holland House late in 1910, where discussions of the fourth dimension eternalizing itself (by "Weaver"/Max Weber), enriched by soliloquies to truth and beauty (by "Cockayne"/Charles Caffin), were electrified by caustic comments about money making, American indifference, and New York Philistines (by "Church," obviously de Casseres). See Temple Scott, "Fifth Avenue and the Boulevard Saint-Michel," *The Forum* (December 1910), pp. 665-85.

29 De Casseres to Stieglitz, undated, *YCAL*, cited in Leavens (cited, n. 27), p. 15. In this letter de Casseres also included Sadakichi Hartmann and the poet Leonard van Noppen among his group of rebels. On these individuals, see Leavens, pp. 152- 53.

30 Benjamin de Casseres, "Caricature and New York," *Camera Work* 26 (April 1909), p. 17.

31 In its most hostile manifestations, turn-of-the-century American literary debunking took the form of "buncombe oratory" or satire, a declamatory form of writing that turned the style, substance, and power of Puritan invective against the very values that informed Puritanism, namely the self-satisfaction, genteel pretension, and complacency of the middle class. (Art was excluded from Puritan experience altogether.) Apocalyptic in tone, this high-pitched form of literary art reveled in the display of sensation, claiming that "laughter was the most

aerobic and cleansing of psychic responses" (Martin [cited, n. 15], pp. 13-14, 29). Whether ominous or celebratory, the language of debunking was thick with righteous indignation and emotional extravagance, and de Casseres used it keenly in the pages of *Camera Work*.

32 De Casseres's book, *Mencken and Shaw: The Anatomy of America's Voltaire and England's Other John Bull*, was published in 1930. On Dreiser's urban "blizzards," see Ellen Moers, *Two Dreisers* (New York, 1969), pp. 3-14.

33 W. H. A. Williams, *H. L. Mencken* (Boston, 1977), pp. 34, 28.

34 De Casseres, "American Indifference," *Camera Work* 27 (July 1909), pp. 24, 25.

35 De Casseres, "Modernity and the Decadence," *Camera Work* 37 (January 1912), p. 18.

36 David Scott, *Pictorialist Poetics: Poetry and the Visual Arts in Nineteenth-Century France* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 35.

37 This is the title of de Casseres's penultimate article in *Camera Work* (Special Number, June 1913, pp. 22-24).

38 De Casseres, "Pamela Colman Smith," *Camera Work* 27 (July 1909), pp. 18, 19.

39 De Casseres, "Rodin and the Eternality of the Pagan Soul," *Camera Work* 34/35 (April-July 1911), pp. 13-14.

40 De Casseres, "Colman Smith," (cited, n. 38), p. 20.

41 Goldsmith, *American Literary Criticism, 1860-1905*, vol. 2 (Boston, 1979), p. 110.

42 James Gibbons Huneker, *New York Sun*, 27 February 1910, quoted in Arlene R. Olson, *Art Critics and the Avant- Garde, New York, 1900-1913* (Ann Arbor, 1980), p. 48; Huneker, *Promenades of an Impressionist* (New York, 1910), p. 5.

43 Anatole France, cited in Sadakichi Hartmann, "Random Thoughts on Criticism," *Camera Notes* 3 (January 1900), p. 101.

44 Walter Pater, *The Renaissance* (London, 1914), pp. 235-36, quoted in Lee McKay Johnson, *The Metaphor of Painting: Essays on Baudelaire, Ruskin, Proust, and Pater* (Ann Arbor, 1980), p. 197.

45 Stéphane Mallarmé, quoted in Scott (cited, n. 36), p. 109.

46 Scott, (cited, n. 36), p. 36.

47 Harry Lawton and George Knox, introduction to *The Valiant Knights of Daguerre* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London, 1978), p. 1.

48 For a detailed biography, see Lawton and Knox, introduction to *Buddha, Confucius, Christ, Three Prophetic Plays, by Hartmann* (New York, 1971), pp. ix-xlvi.

49 It was Lanier's belief that English poetry was an abstract art composed of verbally, aurally, and visually comprehensible relationships. "In short," he wrote, "when we hear verse, we hear a set of relations between sounds; when we silently read verse, we see that which brings to us a set of relations between sounds; when we imagine verse, we imagine a set of relations between sounds." Like Mallarmé, Pater, and Huneker, Lanier was a theorist of correspondences: for him verse was equivalent to coloristic and particularly tonal harmonies. Lanier's key axiom, "A formal poem is always composed of such sounds and silences (or the conceptions, of such sounds and silences) as can be coordinated by the ear," was to propel Hartmann to the most innovative writing of his career, his "concrete" essay "Broken Melodies," discussed below (Sidney Lanier, *The Science of English Verse* [New York, 1880], pp. 23, 33).

Hartmann took the name "Allan" from another revered source, Edgar Allan Poe. See Jane A. C. Weaver, *Sadakichi Hartmann: Herald of Modernism in American Art*, Ph.D. dissertation (University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1985), vol. 1, pp. 170-71.

50 This is the title of an essay by Hartmann in *Camera Work* 7(July 1904).

51 Sidney Allan [Sadakichi Hartmann], "The Value of the Apparently Meaningless and

Inaccurate," *Camera Work* 3 (July 1903), p. 18; Sidney Allan, "A Visit to Steichen's Studio," *Camera Work* 2 (April 1903), p. 28. According to Laforgue, writing in 1883:

> No longer an isolated melody, the whole thing [French Impressionism] is a symphony which is living and changing like the "forest voices" of Wagner, all struggling to become the great voice of the forest — like the Unconscious, the law of the world, which is the great melodic voice resulting from the symphony of the consciousness of races and individuals (Jules Laforgue, "Impressionism," in *Linda Nochlin, Impressionism and Post-Impressionism, 1874-1904; Sources and Documents* [Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1966], p. 17).

52 S. H. [Hartmann], "Rodin's Balzac," *Camera Work* 34/35 (April-July 1911), p. 21.

53 Hartmann, "Structural Units," *Camera Work* 36 (October 1911), pp. 18, 19.

54 "Balzac," (cited, n. 52), p. 21.

55 Hartmann, "Broken Melodies," *Camera Work* 38 (April 1912), p. 33.

56 *Ibid.*, p. 34. The spacing given here is not exactly that of the original, as the excerpted quote begins in mid-paragraph and is right justified.

57 Mabel Dodge, "Speculations," *Camera Work*, Special Number (June 1913), p. 6.

58 It has been demonstrated that R. W. Emerson was a faithful reporter of multiplicity and a believer in perception as a mind-generated process, "a continual reaction of the thought classifying the facts, and of facts suggesting the thought." Yet for Emerson the mind was not as important as "the habitual posture of the mind — beholding" (Emerson, quoted in Charles Feidelson, Jr., *Symbolism and American Literature* [Chicago, 1953], pp. 127, 128). For Whitman, perception was identical to the process of becoming, and creative vision rendered a world in process; as he wrote in *Leaves of Grass* (1855):

> Allons! to that which is endless as it was beginningless,
> To undergo much, tramp of days, rests of nights,
> To merge all in the travel they tend to, and the days
> and nights they tend to,
> Again to merge them in the start of superior journeys
> (*Ibid.*, p. 18).

On Transcendentalism in Stieglitz's stable of American painters, see Matthew Baigell, "American Landscape Painting and National Identity: The Stieglitz Circle and Emerson," *Art Criticism*, vol. 4, no. 1 (1988), pp. 27-47.

59 Francis Picabia, "Preface," *Camera Work* 42/43 (April-July 1913), pp. 19-20; Gabrielle Buffet-Picabia, "Modern Art and the Public," *Camera Work*, Special Number (June 1913), p. 12.

60 Henri Bergson, "An Introduction to Metaphysics" (New York, 1949), p. 24, cited in H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society* (New York, 1961), p. 117.

61 "An Extract from Bergson," *Camera Work* 36 (October 1911), p. 20.

62 In 1912 Max Weber wrote a Bergsonian paean to the Brooklyn Bridge, "enlarging it indefinitely":

> This morning early I was on the old Bridge of this New York. Midst din, crash, outwearing, outliving of its iron and steel muscles and sinews, I stood and gazed at the millions of cubes upon billions of cubes pile upon pile, higher and higher, still piled and still higher with countless window eyes, befogged chimney throats clogged by steam and smoke — all this framed and hurled together in mighty mass against rolling clouds — tied to space above and about by the infinitely numbered iron wire lines of the bridge, spreading interlacedly in every angle (Max Weber, "On the Brooklyn Bridge," (1912), quoted in Phylis B. North, Max Weber, *American Modern* [New York, 1982], p. 56).

63 Stieglitz to George D. Pratt, 7 December 1912, quoted in Leavens, (cited, n. 27), p. 14; Stieglitz to Heinrich Kühn, 14 October 1912, quoted in Abrahams, (cited, n. 17), p. 190.

64 For the mathematical imagery in de Zayas's caricatures, see Willard Bohn, "The Abstract Vision of Marius de Zayas," *Art Bulletin* 62 (September 1980), pp. 434-52.

65 Leon Katz, "Matisse, Picasso and Gertrude Stein," in *Four Americans in Paris* (New York, 1970), p. 60; Jayne L. Walker, *The Making of a Modernist, Gertrude Stein from "Three Lives" to "Tender Buttons"* (Amherst, 1984), pp. 79, 76.

66 Walker, p. 79; Kazimir Malevich, cited in Jo Anna Izaak, *The Ruin of Representation in Modernist Art and Texts* (Ann Arbor, 1986), p. 73.

67 Izaak, p. 73.

68 Boris Brodsky, "El Lissitzky," in Stephanie Barron and Maurice Tuchman, *The Avant-Garde in Russia 1910-1930: New Perspectives* (Los Angeles, 1980), p. 92.

69 De Casseres, "Modernity and the Decadence," *Camera Work* 37 (January 1912), p. 17.

70 S. H. [Hartmann], "Visions of the Nude," *Camera Work* 31 (July 1910), p. 30; Hartmann, *The Whistler Book* (Boston, 1910), pp. 247-48, quoted in Weaver, vol. 1 (cited, n. 49), p. 236; and untitled essay headed "Sadakichi Hartmann has written the following on this exhibition," *Camera Work* 31 (July 1910), p. 48.

71 Hartmann, *Buddha* (cited, n. 48), pp. 116-17.

72 William James, "Spencer's Law of Intelligence," quoted in Robert J. Richards, *Darwin and the Emergence of Evolutionary Theories of Mind and Behavior* (Chicago and London, 1987), p. 426; Morton White, *Science and Sentiment in America* (New York, 1972), p. 209.

73 Key *Camera Work* essays premised on experiential and formalist concerns include: "Some Recollections of Rodin," by Agnes Ernst Meyer (34/35 [April-July 1911], pp. 15-19); "Photography and Artistic Photography," by Marius de Zayas (42/43 [April-July 1913], pp. 13-14), and Buffet-Picabia's "Modern Art and the Public."

74 Bourne, *War and the Intellectuals*, pp. 190, 193, quoted in Goldsmith, vol. 3, (cited, n. 15), pp. 57-58.

75 Stieglitz was intently self-critical where science (photochemical experimentation) was concerned. See Kiefer (cited, n. 5), pp. 147-50, 225-28.

76 Stieglitz, "Editorial," *Camera Work*, Special Number (August 1912), n.p.; and "A Statement," in Exhibition of Stieglitz Photographs (New York, 1921), quoted in Sarah Greenough, *The Published Writings of Alfred Stieglitz*, Ph.D. dissertation (The University of New Mexico, 1976), p. 109.

Unbosoming Lennon: The Politics of Yoko Ono's Experience

Kristine Stiles

On the the album *Double Fantasy* recorded just before his murder in 1980, John Lennon publically avowed his difficulty in being able to "hardly express" that "Woman ... I'm forever in your debt."[1] In the song "Woman," Lennon continued, "Woman, I will try to express my inner feelings and thankfulness for showing me the meaning of success." On the same album, in "Watching the Wheels," Lennon imputes the notion of attaining success which was, for him, merely "playing the game." He described the process as "wheels going round and round" and, as the most infamous bread-baking, child-rearing, househusband in the world, Lennon said he simply "really loved to watch them roll." But, he was equally content, he crooned, "to watch shadows on the wall." For, "I'm no longer riding on the merry-go-round," he sang, " I just had to let it go."

In these songs, Lennon rejected the conventional codes of the male rock n'roll star's measure of achievement. He also abandoned the caricature of the swaggering, crotch-bulging, thick-lipped Mick Jagger — like, hard, wet, womanizing, musical cock of the rock, jazz, and country music business. He confessed, "Woman, I know you understand the little child inside your man. Please remember my life is in your hands."

In his unabashed and unembarrassed acknowledgment of woman, Lennon sang to Yoko Ono. Euphemistically he made "a clean breast" of his thoughts and promised her, "I'll try to express my inner feelings." In short, Lennon "unbosomed himself." Both references to female mammary glands — unbosoming and making a clean breast of something — are synonyms for the verb "to acknowledge" when used in the context of disclosure. Lennon publically unbosomed himself in oracular confession and corporeal display. His disclosures simultaneously manifested the site of manhood as well as allowed Lennon to divest himself of traditional masculine control. His psychic and physical disrobings and his awkward but sincere embarkations into women's spaces offered an implicit critique of male behavior which provided the powerful impetus for the ridicule heaped upon him when he retreated from public life.

A source for Lennon's uncommon proclamations, the public reports on his psychological state, may be found in the lyrics Ono sings in "Beautiful Boys," a cut also on *Double Fantasy*. In "Beautiful Boys," she instructs boymen to invert and, thereby subvert their culturally determined control. She urged them:

> Never be afraid to cry ... never be afraid to fly ... never be afraid to go to hell and back ... [and] ... never be afraid to be afraid.

The attitudes Ono expressed in such songs, along with her performative art and proto-feminist philosophy, dismantled the stereotypical masculine facade of one of the most beloved and powerful international heroes of pop culture. She offered him an alternative epistemological frame through which to experience sexual difference, through which to begin to reconstitute himself along the lines of women's experience and, perhaps in part, through which to re-channel some of the dominating repressions of his own eurocentric, patriarchal experience. Lennon listened. Moreover, he listened conscientiously. Then he admitted, "Yoko changed me. She forced me to become avant-garde and take my clothes off when all I wanted to be was Tom Jones."[2]

None of the legendary heroic or villainous accounts of Ono or Lennon have probed the content and structure of this couple's contribution to cultural formations. But I believe that their union provides a unique cultural model for ways in which gender and racial equality may be constructed in heterosexual relations. In large part, the means by which they architected this political and social practice are to be found in the body codes Ono helped to pioneer in Happenings and Fluxus, codes and practices that empowered both artists individually and in union with each other. I believe their struggle reveals a passionate will to fulfill need with desire and to transform anger, emotional pain, and suffering into a model for interpersonal and multinational love. Furthermore, I want to suggest that the psychophysical permissiveness which is a quality of performative art, played a critical role and was a determining component in Lennon's ability to rehabilitate his gender identity and to continually redefine himself as the more complete artist that he aspired to be, an artist complete enough to display his own self-reconstruction and renaissance.

This essay is an attempt to convey some of the ways in which Ono's avant-garde performance work helped nurture the architecture of LENONO, the neologism they coined for a record label.[3] This fused identity also appears in the photomontage of their two faces created for the poster for Ono's 1971 exhibition "This Is Not Here," at the Everson Museum of Art in Syracuse, New York. Three aspects of LENONO deserve exploration: first, the biographical and artistic origins of Ono's art actions and her proto-feminist concerns as they contributed to Lennon's entrance into the avant-garde;

second, the ways in which the history of avant-garde performance helped Lennon to articulate his own male space for feminist practice; and finally the ways in which together Ono and Lennon utilized the vehicle of live performed art to realize the activist potential of their union beyond the insularity of the art-world in popular culture.

In redirecting attention to the biographical and artistic aspects of Ono's development as the foundation for LENONO, I do not seek to diminish the uniqueness of Lennon's ideals or his courageous public displays of personal struggle. Rather, I hope to revive long-neglected aspects of Ono's artistic contributions and to sharpen the focus on the artist Lennon refered to as "the most famous unknown artist in the world." For even the numerous recent exhibitions of and articles on her work have failed to probe the germinative role her art played in Lennon's transformation. But moreover, they have also neglected to grapple with the substantive value and quality of the way she constructed and then directed her art to address difficult social dilemmas. Finally, the performative dimension of her contribution to social formations has been neglected until recently.

II.

Together, in the domain of physical and emotional disclosure, Lennon and Ono created a wedge in social, political, racial, and sexual discourses of their era. Already in November 1968, with the release of the album *Unfinished Music No. 1: Two Virgins*, under whose cover Lennon and Ono appeared as two naked lovers who gazed into the eyes of the music consumer, Lennon had entered Ono's double articulated cultural space — the space of Woman and ethnic Other, the space of an Asian Woman. Ono represented not only Woman and Other but she was publically seen as the other woman, the adulteress who wrecked Lennon's marriage and the concubine who ruptured the Beatles.

A redoubling and consequent intensification of the spaces of Otherness and Womanness occurred in Lennon's own masculine disrobings. For in his nakedness, his public exposure, Lennon entered woman's space where he exhibited himself as an object for the male gaze. The intense reluctance of many men to expose their intimate physical or emotional self is culturally supported in the stereotype of the "strong and silent man," a prototype to which playwright Vaclav Havel, President of Czechoslovakia, gave poignant testimoy in letters to his wife Olga written from prison in 1981. Havel explained, "My aversion to 'disrobing in public' was a factor in my decision to stop writing poetry and start writing plays, a genre in which the persona of the author is best concealed.[4] In spite of his own aversions, Lennon literally contronted entrenched constructions of masculinity. He rendered himself multiple and vulnerable by appearing naked in public and, thereby, magnified his rejection of the ubiquity of the masculine cover.

The "change" that Lennon felt Ono had occasioned when he "took his clothes off" might be understood as an analogue to the culturally circumscribed female space where emotion is possible to unbosom. Stripped of his clothes, Lennon symbolically prostrated himself before the world, shedding the protective masculine skin of his prior model Tom Jones in order to experience the political dimension of the feminine in his own male body. His naked public exposure helped Lennon to understand how the body might become a cultural medium or, as feminist philosopher Susan R. Bordo writes, "to operate as a metaphor for culture."[5] Equally, Lennon's unbosoming was his public manifestation of his private need and desire for the utopian condition he repeatedly called "love." This act may be understood, retrospectively, as a reaction to what feminist anthropologist Murial Dimen has described as "the intransigence of the patriarchal state:"

> The intransigence of the patriarchal state is the reason that we must maintain a utopian vision of a society in which desire is empowering, not weakening, in which all parts of the self can come out of the closet — passion and need, will and empathy, the anger that, through a paradoxical love, can make our society realize its ideals of democracy and decency even while hell-bent on betraying them.[6]

Lennon's desire for Ono empowered him to abandon certain elements of patriarchy and supported in his partnership with Ono, he repeatedly "came out of the closet" with a utopian social program of love envisioned in the imagination and enacted before the world. Lennon considered such actions, his public disrobings, to be gestures of submission, of "surrender," the word Lennon and Ono repeatedly selected to describe what they considered to be their united state of nonresistance.

Moreover, appearing naked in public also qualified Lennon, he felt, to be "avant-garde." For Lennon associated the avant-garde with the codes of Happenings and Fluxus, avant-garde practices to which she both had contributed and to which she introduced him but, moreover, genres in which the nude figure often appeared as the principle material of expression. Thus, Lennon's nudity not only accrued the power to "change" him but was coextensive with his conception of the "avant-garde."

Lennon and Ono's achievements were neither ubiquitous nor without problems. Certainly in the popular press, they depicted their journey as one fraught with pitfalls that initially caused strains and then temporarily ruptured their marriage. In Lennon's words, his separation from Ono, "started in '73," a complex time in which at one point he "ended up as part of mad, drunk scenes in Los Angeles" and which, he remembered, he "finally finished … off on me own.[7]

In this regard, one of the most telling incidents in Lennon's struggle for

identity, within and outside of his relationship to Ono, is the account he offered of an event that occurred at the Troubadour nightclub and restaurant in L.A. when he emerged from the toilet with a Kotex sticking to his sweating head. A reporter recorded that Lennon supposedly asked a waitress, "Do you know who I am?" Lennon remembered the event differently. He said:

> If I'd said, 'Do you know who I am?' I'd have said it in a joke. Because I know who I am, and I know she knew because I musta been wearing a Kotex on me head, right? I picked up a Kotex in a restaurant, in the toilet, and it was clean and just for a gag I came back to the table with it on me head. And 'cause it stuck there with sweat, just stayed there, I didn't have to keep it on. It just stayed there till it fell off. And the waitress said, "yeah, you're an asshole with a Kotex on.[8]

However, far from "knowing" who he was at that time, by his own admission, Lennon floudered in his separation from Ono. His question — "Do you know who I am?" — and his simultaneous assertion of that identity — "I know who I am." — reveals the ways Lennon displaced his transforming male identity. The phallic-shaped cultural object, the Kotex signifying Woman and mensus, paradoxically, became the symbol through which he represented the woman — Ono — responsible for reshaping his identity.

This event provides a humorous but very touching example of the personal conflict Lennon waged in his effort to redefine himself within the confines of conventional patriarchy. For Lennon repeatedly admitted his stake in culturally defined norms of masculine order. Months before his death, he stated, in a *Newsweek* interview:

> I was a working-class macho guy who was used to being served and Yoko didn't buy that. From the day I met her, she demanded equal time, equal space, equal rights. I said, 'Don't expect me to change in any way. Don't impinge on my space.' She answered, 'Then I can't be here. Because there is no space where you are. Everything revolves around you and I can't breathe in that atmosphere.' I'm thankful to her for the education ... It's like a play — we wrote the play and we're acting in it. It's John and Yoko — you can take it or leave it... Being with Yoko makes me whole.[9]

Ono took a wider, more compassionate view of Lennon's gender identity:

> I know the kind of machoism that he was surrounded with ... in his environment — his nature itself was not very macho, he was a sweet, sensitive person but he was in that society so he didn't know any better—and when he met me, and when he saw society attacking me, I think his sort of knighthood side came out... He observed it all, so then he realized what it is for women in this

> world. And that did a lot of good really — for him to understand feminism. He was a real feminist, you know, and he read a lot of books about it.[10]

I do not mean to present an unproblematized view of Ono's cultural position. In terms of the stereotypes for "feminine" behavior, she was frequently described in the press and sometimes by other artists as stubborn, willfull, aggressive, and opportunistic. Clearly she refused to be ignored either in the new music, Happening, and proto-Fluxus circles of the avant-garde, the pop culture of the Beatles, or as a business woman.[11] While such behavior is rewarded in men, it is typically, vilified in women. Her assertive determination was converted into a representation of aggression and her persistence deemed opportunistic. Having suffered the kind of abuse heaped upon her in the popular press, it is a remarkable testimony to her strength of character and vision that she continued.

Furthermore, in the 1970s when her proto-feminist position was channeled into the organized forum of the burgeoning feminist movement, her behaviour proved equally problematic. For although she was acknowledged as a feminist and even invited to perform for delegates of international conference sponsored by the National Organization for Women (NOW), in 1973, she continued to flaunt her sexuality by appearing in erotically titillating clothing — hot pants and low-cut blouses — and she refused to behave in a politically submissive manner.

Later, as an established business woman, she equally disrupted convention. For it appeared to the public that Lennon had complied with what was perceived as her dominating personality by remaining at home to assume the primary childrearing role. In all of these examples, her public image was that of an uncontrollable woman, someone who defied social conventions.

Cultural retribution for such women is swift. They are frequently cast into the role of the *vagina dentata*, the fatal woman so vividly and maliciously depicted by Picasso and de Kooning. But regardless of the painful personal repercussions, Ono continued to challenge and removed obstacles to her desire, confront repression, publically denounce sexism, and, by being her uncompromising self, she became what the public considered a profound nuisance.

III.

By the time Ono met Lennon, in November, 1966, she had pioneered and realized many of the variegated aspects of 1960s event art in perfomances that ranged from Happenings, through Fluxus, to agit-prop actions, Body and Conceptual art. All of these various manifestations of live art anticipated the Performance Art that emerged as a generic medium and style in the early 1970s. It is well-known that she entered the New York art world in the new

music circles with her first husband Toshi Ichiyanagi and that John Cage was the critical influence in her development.

Ono's work evolved in the interdisciplinary, collaborative, and participatory environment of the burgeoning movement of Happenings characterized by their non-matrixed juxtaposition of events. Yet even in her earliest events, Ono's concentration upon the phenomenological and psychological content of solitary actions was clear. For example, in *A Grapefruit in the World of Park*, one of a series of "operas" she presented on November 24th, 1961, at Carnegie Recital Hall, she lit the stage so dimly that participants had to strain to see. The darkness allowed her to emphasize silence and, quoting Cage's attention to silence, Ono reframed silence so as to illuminate the physical sensation of alienation. In this sense, while some of her early works (such as *A Grapefruit in the World of Park*,) included the simultaneous presentation of non-related events, her works seldom had the disparate baroque *gesamtkunstwerk* theatricality of the Happening. She was not interested in exploring what she described as the Happening's "assimilation of the arts" but rather, she was concerned with the "extrication of various sensory perceptions," not the "get togetherness ... but a dealing with oneself" because "life is like that," she commented.[12] She wanted the participants in her work to "start to see things beyond the shapes ... [to] hear the kind of sounds that you hear in slence ... to feel the environment and tension and people's vibrations ... the sound of fear and of darkness ... [and] of togetherness based on alienation."[13]

Her attention to simplified, repetitive formal structures and the use of common objects in concentrated, short events drew her into an alliance with artists with whom she helped to formulate the emergence of Fluxus. This milieu witnessed La Monte Young's proto-Fluxus publication *An Anthology* which, although it was not published until 1963, was assembled several years earlier. It also reflected experiences by many of the contributing artists who had participated in John Cage's legendary class on musical composition at the New School for Social Research, 1958-59. The performances she and La Monte Young sponsored in her Chamber Street loft, beginning in December 1960, were critical to the later development of Fluxus and were attended by many artists eventually associated with Fluxus, most importantly, its founder and principle organizer, George Maciunas.

At this time, Ono seems to have joined the manipulation of objects with the use of her body as both a material tool and psychological agent of process. It has been reported that in one loft-event of 1961 Ono:

> Came out with a bag of peas and threw them at the audience while at the same time whirling her head so that her long black mass of hair hissed in the loft air. She said the movement of her

hair was providing the musical accompaniment to her pea throwing.[14]

Whether this action is precisely remembered or not, a memory of her unique approach to objects and actions remained. Clearly Ono had impressed her peers with actions that in her use of the body already anticipated Body Art as defined by critic/artist Willoughby Sharp in 1970.[15]

In 1964, Ono published her book *Grapefruit*, which contains sections on music, painting, events, poetry, objects, film, and dance.[16] These scores for events, consistently demonstrate the relationship between the physiological and the psychological. *Laugh Piece* and *Cough Piece*, both of 1961, call for the performer to "Keep laughing a week" and "Keep coughing a year." In her *Pieces For Orchestra*, 1962, the performer must "tear, touch, and rub." In 1963, she emphasized the heart and the circulatory system in *Pulse Piece* and *Beat Piece*. In *Body Sound Tape Piece*, of 1964, she focused on the sound of emotion through the ages of human development. *Beat Piece* was quietly performed in 1965 when people came onto the stage at Carnegie Hall and lay down on each other's bodies to listen. The most eloquent and moving performance of *Beat Piece*, however, was internationally felt and transmitted when the work appeared transformed on Lennon's and Ono's album, *Music No. 2: Life with the Lions* where, in 1969, the couple recorded the heartbeat of their foetus, the baby that Ono later miscarried while Lennon camped at her bedside on the hospital floor.

Ono's multisensual works, and her acute attention to touch, anticipated not only aspects of essentialist feminism of the early 1970s and cultural feminism a decade later, but equally the theorization of certain elements of biological determination in the post-structuralist theory of the French feminist Luce Irigaray. In 1981, Irigaray described woman's pluralistic eroticism in this way: "Woman has sex organs just about everywhere."[17] Her multiplicity of sexualized zones, Irigaray noted, creates a plurality that is based on the primacy of touch. While Ono's score for *Touch Piece* preceded Irigaray's theory by twenty years, *Touch Piece*, (which reads simply "*Touch*") reinforces Irigaray's claim for this polysensuality. In her song, "Kiss Kiss Kiss," on *Double Fantasy*, Ono described a polyphysicality based on individual need, the attempt to "deal with the self." She sang:

Kiss kiss kiss kiss me love...
I'm bleeding inside
It's a long, long story to tell
And I can only show you my hell
Touch touch touch touch me love...
Just one touch, touch will do...
I'm shaking inside
Its that faint faint sound of the childhood bell
Ringing in my soul.

Ono exaggerated and highlighted physical intimacy in her Bag Piece, a process sculpture that eventually became the model for a series of works she began to realize in the early 1960s but which would also appear later in her collaborations with Lennon. "Bagism" called for a single performer to get into a large black muslin bag, remove his or her clothing and either redress or simply sit silently to create a static silhouette that resembled a large rock. Sometimes the work was called *Stone Piece*, a title related to her exhibition *The Stone* at the Judson Church Gallery in 1966.[18] A variation of the *Bag Piece*, might be performed by a couple who get into the bag and do various actions that include making love. All versions produced a quixotic kinetic form. Paul Krassner, editor of the *Realist* during the mid-1960s, has been reported to have remembered that Ono and Tony Cox performed something similar to this piece at a macrobiotic restaurant, the Paradox, where Ono worked in 1966 as a waitress. He said:

> I'd been to the Paradox and I'd met Yoko and Tony. There was this tiny, tiny, stage in the back room, and they'd get into these big black bags and fuck, or not fuck. It was a very strange phenomenon. I was intrigued. So I gave her two thousand dollars — to fuck, or not fuck, in a bag.[19]

A tantalizing advertisment for this "show" appeared in the *Village Voice* on July 14,1966, which announced "New York is a Stone Summer Festival" (a not too subtle allusion to being "stoned"). The add continued:

> Let the others go to Fire Island, the Berkshires, Provincetown. While they are away relaxing in the sun (spending lots of money) you can beat them to the cocktail hour conversation draw by dropping down to the Paradox, 64 E. 7th St., to participate in the *Stone* — art form of the future. Is it psychedylic? Is it avant-garde? Is it Zen? Whatever you think about it, you will have something to talk about. Everybody else is. Stop in any day 1-11 PM and spend an hour cooling out... Anthony Cox & Yoko Ono know. (p. 2)

Once Ono and Lennon coupled, in 1968, they employed the bag as a multivalent form of personal and public defense. The "Bag of Laughs" mocked war and "Bagism" embraced peace and gender equality. At the same time, they could be seen to have publically "bagged it," in the vernacular of the period. In other words, together they made a peformance of surrender by refusing to "play the game," or, in current academic jargon, they rejected "the dominant narrative."[20]

The content of Ono's works originated in her self-professed hunger to be touched and kissed, expressions of physical intimacy that she hoped would cauterize her bleeding inside and quell the shaking of the little girl whom she

frequently described as inhabiting her when she recounted her own lonely childhood.[21] The centrality of touch as a theme in her art and its relationship to her biographical history is critical as a series of studies undertaken immediately following World War II on the significance of touch in human development demonstrate.

At that time, the pioneering Viennese child psychoanalyst René A. Spitz wrote a paper entitled "Hospitalism: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood."[22] In his work, Spitz discussed the high mortality rate and incidence of severe developmental and psychiatric problems in individuals who, as infants, suffered from the lack of physical stimulation and the absence of the mother. Spitz pointed out that crib deaths actually resulted from a lack of affective interchange, from the lack of touch, even though babies were well fed and lived in sterile environments. Those infants offer powerful evidence to the life-supporting primacy of touch.

Considered in the light of Spitz's work, Ono's own childhood during the Second World War in Japan, where she experienced deprivation, poverty, and a prolonged separation from her father, provides a stark background for the development of her art. Her emphasis on touch and her repeated removal of herself and her lovers to a dark inner sanctuary where she might hide with them, constituted an effort to metaphorically and physically continue to exist within the sensual motion of the womb. Equally poignant was Lennon's retirement to a similar place of removal in the mid-1970s in the Dakotas. One might argue that he was metaphorically bagged away in the protected womb of his wife. His own difficult working-class background in reconstructionist Britain provides ample evidence for Lennon's own psychological need for the reasssuring protection of a hidden space within which to heal.[23]

In addition to her fascination with kinesthetic and sensual experience, Ono's work equally originated in a rejection of patriarchal domination. She manifested her defense against phallocentricity in humor and in metaphors of violence and destruction. In a brief essay she authored in 1967, she wrote:

> I wonder why men can get serious at all. They have this delicate long thing hanging outside their bodies, which goes up and down by its own will. First of all having it outside your body is terribly dangerous. If I were a man I would have a fantastic castration complex to the point that I wouldn't be able to do a thing. Second, the inconsistency of it, like carrying a chance time alarm or something. If I were a man I would always be laughing at myself. Humour is probably something the male of the species discovered through his own anatomy. But men are so serious. Why? Why violence? Why hatred? Why war? ... Men have an unusual talent for making a bore out of everything they touch. Art, painting, sculpture, like who wants a cast-iron woman for instance.[24]

Later continuing her critique of penial culture, Ono and Lennon held the phallus up as an object for examination and ridicule, a humor tinted with mockery as in their film *Erection*, of 1971. In *Erection*, they record the construction of a building with its steel girders and supports by filming the building from the same point of view over a period of time. Commenting on *Erection*, critic John Hanhardt described the gradual evolution of the structure on an empty lot as an "organic form 'growing' before our eyes."[25] Hanhardt's formalistic description of a process, however, fails to stress the ideological statement Ono expressed in the selection of an architectual metaphor for the rigid phallus. Here the erection of a building parodies the cultural construction of phallic identity embodied in the edifice of erection. In *Erection*, Ono and Lennon cleverly satirized, by juxtaposition, the false symmetry of culturally constructed nature/culture dichotomies in the identification of gender.

Even before 1967, Ono had created proto-feminist art actions that commented on women's submissive domestic roles. For example, in 1961, Yvonne Rainer performed Ono's event *A Piece for Strawberries and Violins.* In this action:

> Rainer stood up and sat down before a table stacked with dishes. At the end of ten minutes, she smashed the dishes. Her action was accompanied by a rhythmic background of repeated syllables, a tape recording of moans and words spoken backwards, and an aria of high-pitched wails sung by Ono.[26]

Four years later, in 1965, Ono offered one of her paintings as a critique of suburban female etiquette when she laughed:

> I can just see a Bronxville housewife saying to her guests 'do add a circle to my painting before you have a drink...'[27]

One rejected normative gender roles very early and such works laid the foundation for the more aggressive feminist position both she and Lennon asserted in the 1970s. They co-authored song "Woman is the Nigger of the World" in1972 and recorded the song on *Sometime in New York City* and on *Shaved Fish.* In this song, they publically acknowledged the repression of women and owned up to the psychological and social state of denigration shared between women and blacks. In this way, they used the term of black defilement, "nigger," to reclaim for woman, and for peoples of color (like Ono), a place where the injustice of language and the epistemological systems that underpin that language might be confronted.[28] They sang:

> Woman is the nigger of the world ... think about it ... do something about it. We make her paint her face and dance. If she won't be a slave, we say that she don't love us. If she's real, we

> say she's trying to be a man. While putting her down we pretend that she's above us. If you don't believe me, take a look at the one you're with. Woman is the slave of the slaves.[29]

Indeed, the kind of gender suffering described in "Woman is the Nigger of the World," runs throughout Ono's work. It erupted early in angry scores such as *Wall Piece For Orchestra to Yoko Ono*, 1962, in which she instructed the performer simply to "Hit a wall with your head." Ten years later, in 1972, she again expressed this self destruction in her song "I Felt Like Smashing My Face In A Clear Glass Window," recorded on the album *Approximately Infinite Universe*.

But in 1962, she wrote the score for *Conversation Piece* which emphasized the necessity for human beings to narrate individual pain, to "tell," to share and to communicate even in the face of public indifference. The instructions for this piece read:

> Bandage any part of your body.
> If people ask about it, make a story
> and tell.
> If people do not ask about it, draw their attention to it and tell.
> If people forget about it, remind
> them of it and keep telling.
> Do not talk about anything else.

Ono invented bandaged wounds to articulate her psycho-physical pain. This impulse to narrate suffering, to describe the unspeakable conditions of interior life is central to finding a voice through and by which to repossess and recover a sense of the concreteness of personal experience. But moreover, and certainly as urgent, to communicate that autobiography to someone else. In this sense, Ono's work anticipated by several decades what Mae G. Henderson has recently described as the "body as historical text" in her brilliant analysis of Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. Henderson writes that Morrison's task was,

> to transgress, discursive boundaries by setting up a complementary and dialogic relationship between the 'interiority' of her own work and the 'exteriority' of the slave narrative... To the degree that (Morrison's) work is intended to resurrect stories buried and express stories repressed, Morrison's relationship to the slave narrators, as well as the relationship of her text to its precursor narratives, can be profitably compared not only to the relationship of the historian to his or her informant, but also the analyst to the analysand.[30]

Ono's *Conversation Piece*, may be understood as a kind of auto-analytic, auto-biographical transformation of an essentially private knowledge into a

public aesthetic form through and in which others might find a vehicle to personal voice. Her ability to create models from personal and intimate experience for public and social actions is critical to the radical social content of her art and of her impact on future actions with Lennon.

Ono's suffering represented her need to be loved and touched as much as it equally reflected her experience as woman both powerful and deep currents that run throughout her work. She clearly needed to "tell" and that telling bespeaks something of woman's experience as described by feminist Muriel Dimen who has observed:

> Every time a woman goes for a walk, her mind and her body are invaded by a social definition of her femininity that threatens to disconnect her from her own experience. This is the experience of domination, the loss of one's sense of and wish for autonomy, as a result of processes that play on one's doubts about the reality and validity of one's self, one's perceptions, and one's values.[31]

Indeed, Dimen's evocation of the violence that women experience when simply walking on the street was a theme that Ono explored in 1969 with her film *Rape*. In this film, the camera (operated by Nic Knowland) and the sound (produced by Christian Wangler and Ono) relentlessly follows a woman (Eva Majlath) on the street pursuing her aggressively into her apartment. As John Hanhardt has written, the camera becomes a "transgressor of privacy, an invader of the human body and thus an extension of the male film crew and of ourselves as viewer-voyeurs."[32] *Rape* also proclaims the cultural domination of women, escape from which preoccupies many women to the extent that little energy remains for the validation and development of self. As Dimen notes:

> Individualizing is a mainstream cultural ideal. Connoting autonomy, agency, and singularity, it also suggests the kind of adult who is responsible for himself and no one else... Relatedness, then, connotes the personal and the interpersonal, the particular and the pragmatic, care and nurturance, and invisible, ephemeral processes and feelings...[33]

Feminist scholar Susan Gubar has pointed out in her essay "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity," that "woman's image of herself as text and artifact has affected her attitudes toward her physicality and she argues how, then, these attitudes in turn shape the metaphors through which she images her creativity."[34] Gubar continues:

> Women have had to experience cultural scripts in their lives by suffering them in their bodies... For the artist, this sense that she

> is herself the text means that there is little distance between her life and her art.[35]

In this sense, Ono made her art a way to narrate her life. She provided scores and scripts for her viewers to tell their own intimate experiences and to keep telling them until the repetition had dimmed not only the meaning of these tales but the feeling of pain.

In *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, the authors point out that sociolinguists have observed "a tendency for women to ground their epistemological premises in metaphors [that] suggest [that] speaking and listening [are] at odds with visual metaphors that scientists and philosophers most often use to express their sense of mind."[36] These authors write:

> Visual metaphors encourage standing at a distance to get a proper view, removing — it is believed — subject and object from a sphere of possible intercourse.[37]

However, these feminist theorists have observed that in women's emphasis on speaking and listening a different kind of knowledge and mind is constructed for:

> Unlike the eye, the ear operates by registering nearby subtle change. Unlike the eye, the ear requires closeness between subject and object. Unlike seeing, speaking and listening suggest dialogue and interaction.[38]

In her work, Ono sought to redress alienation precisely by plunging experience into the unstable space of audial sensory intercourse. Her film *Fly*, of 1970, for example, featured a continuous shot of a fly traversing the nude body of a woman, a film that was accompanied by a soundtrack from Ono's record (of the same name) which featured "a 22-minute long series of alternately soothing or gratingly raw, but elemental female vocal noises — sighing, screeching, pathetic humming, and childlike crying, burping, choking, etc.[39] This film highlights both the tactile and the audial elements found in *Conversation Piece* where Ono stressed the "telling," and "telling again" of pain, a "telling" that brought the individual in contact and touch with another of several other individuals.

The theme of relatedness that runs throughout Ono's work, her need to tell, her compulsion to scream — that scream that appeared in what Lennon called her "sixteen multitrack voice" which surfaced in the Plastic Ono Band and anticipated the dissonant sounds of punk — appeared most powerfully in her action *Cut Piece*, a piece she realized in 1964 in Japan, on March 21, 1965, at Carnegie Hall, in New York, and again, in 1966, before

an international gathering of artists in London, at the Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS).[40]

DIAS took place in London throughout September and Ono participated in both the DIAS three-day symposium as well as numerous performed events that were sponsored under the DIAS umbrella.[41] In *Cut Piece*, Ono sat motionless on the stage after inviting the audience to come up and cut away her clothing. Both in New York and in London when she performed *Cut Piece*, she covered her breasts at the moment of unbosoming. *Cut Piece* entailed a disrobing, a denouement of the reciprocity between exhibitionism and scopic desires, between victim and assailant, between sadist and masochist, and, ultimately, of man and woman, and the unveiling of the gendered relationships of subject and object. *Cut Piece* also recalls her psychic experiences, intimate sensations of self expressed in this "Statement":

> People went on cutting the parts they do not like of me finally there was only the stone remained of me that was in me but they were still not satisfied and wanted to know what it's like in the stone.[42]

But *Cut Piece* is also an intervention that went beyond the social, political, and gender issues to aesthetic concerns. For *Cut Piece* also deconstructed the subject/object relationships that reside behind the edifice of art — the often presumed opaque neutrality of the ubiquitous art object and distant art observer. In *Cut Piece*, Ono demonstrated the responsibility that the viewer has to the condition, reception, and preservation of objects of art by addressing the destructive side of creation.

Ono felt that it was precisely the kind of relentless psychological and psychic feeling typified in *Cut Piece*, that marginalized her work in the New York art world. Her explanation, I think, is reasonable. She said her work was "not well accepted even in the avant-garde because the New York avant-garde was into cool art, not hot," and, she continued:

> What I do was [sic] too emotional. In a way they thought it was too animalistic.[43]

In the post-abstract expressionist school of Beatnik cool that hardened in New York into the ice of Minimalism, Ono's work was felt to be too much. Indeed both Ono and Carolee Schneemann, two women whose work dealt with visceral expressions of sexuality and emotion, felt ignored within their own milieu despite their ability to exhibit and perform. Schneemann has described the experience as simply not belonging to the "men's art team" despite their pioneering work.[44] A telling reflection of the differences between European and North American tolerance for and interest in erotic and expressionistic work, however, is the fact that both Schneemann's and

Ono's work was supported more readily in Europe than it was in the States even though the art "scene" was equally male-dominated and gender exclusive.

Indeed, while Ono was part of the aesthetic underground in New York, her involvement with the political underground dates from her European period beginning with her participation in DIAS. DIAS, in fact, set the stage for Ono's introduction to Lennon. For, immediately following DIAS, in November, 1966, she held an exhibition at Indica Gallery, then in Mason's Yard near St. James's Piccadilly. Indica was housed in the same building as the British underground newspaper, the *International Times* (*IT*). Miles (Burrows) not only served on the editorial staff of *IT*, the voice of the counter-culture, but had been part of the honorary organizing executive committee of DIAS. In the November issue, *IT* carried an advertisement for Ono's historic Indica exhibition that November 9th through the 22nd. Ironically, the ad announced an "ONO — WOMAN SHOW" and went on to explain that this "one-man show" would consist of *Instruction Paintings*. It was "the first showing of her works outside the USA and Japan ... in which the audience will be directly responsible for the construction of the paintings."

Even before her Indica exhibition, Ono had identified herself with the radical counter-culture in subtle but unmistakable ways. Notes to her program of DIAS performances explained that, "The bicycle used in *Bicycle Piece for Orchestra* is one of the original White Bicycles made by the PROVOS when they were brought here to London earlier this year by DIAS." In this manner, Ono linked herself, through DIAS, to the agit-prop Happening events originated by the Dutch PROVOS in Holland where, since 1965, the PROVOS had sparked demonstrations by workers and students that resulted in riots and incidents provoking and challenging the government.[45]

The infamy Ono earned in Europe was derived principally, however, from her Film No. 4, *Bottoms*. While the first version was done in New York in 1966 and was included in Fluxfilms, she shot *Bottoms* again in London with Tony Cox in early 1967 where it gained its notoriety.[46] Stylistically a minimalist Warholian film, *Bottoms* featured the silent movement of 365 naked, and often famous, London bottoms. *Bottoms* failed to pass the British Board of Film Censors at the time.[47] Ono continued to encounter problems with *Bottoms* in Belgium when, in the summer of 1967, she was invited to enter her film in a Festival of Experimental Films held in Knokke-le-Zoute. Once there, however, despite censorship, she participated in a scandalous protest-Happening by appearing naked along with many other artists in the *Election of Miss Festival*, an agit-prop action, orchestrated to protest a nearby military installation and to impress the Belgian Minister of Justice who presided over the festival.[48] The protest was staged by the French painter, poet, pioneer of Happenings in France, and political activist Jean-Jacques Lebel, a protest which subsequently landed Lebel in prison briefly. He had been found guilty

of insulting public morality. Ono's association with Lebel only added to her pedigree as an associate of the radical artistic underground.[49] Although much has been written about Lennon's associations with radicals such as Jerry Rubin, Ono had prepared the ground for such interactions several years before their pictures were taken with Rubin, in 1971, on their way to a benefit for Attica Prison.

While it is unlikely that Rubin and other political activists would have ever sought out Ono without her connection to Lennon, what is essential to grasp is that her experience in the environment of the international activist underground helped her to refocus the happening as a political action into which she later drew Lennon. In this regard, *Cut Piece* is critical as a transitional work, not only for the resonance it had in the international underground, but for the way in which she transformed the aesthetic event into a socially critical work. For although *Cut Piece* remains tied to her own private struggles to find a tactile outlet through which to voice a language for pain, *Cut Piece* was equally social commentary, an unbosoming of the complicit relationship first between individuals and, secondly, between the individual and the social body, its constructs, and its collectivised behaviors.

IV.

Once Ono began to live with Lennon in 1968, their collaborations served as a model for the extension of performance out of the private, egocentric sphere of personal body-action (with its communication of a self-reflective psyche) to a performative act self-consciously realized in the public arena as collective social intervention and political action. In March 1969, for example, when Ono and Lennon married, they immediately moved into the Amsterdam Hilton for their honeymoon. There, they converted the ubiquitous 1960s gathering-of-the-flock, the "Be-In," into a week-long "Bed-In" for peace. During this event, they conducted interviews ten hours a day "to protest," they explained, "against any form of violence." They noted, "Bed-Ins are something that everybody can do and they're so simple. We're willing to be the world's clowns to make people realize it."[50] In May of that year, in Montreal, Canada, they repeated the "Bed-In" and conducted more than sixty radio interviews during the process. The "Bed-In" anticipated an art of electronic and global dimension fifteen years before Nam June Paik's Satellite Program "Good-Morning Mr. Orwell," of New Years Day, 1984.[51]

The use of the "Be-In" as an aesthetic strategy had already appeared in Ono's work before her union with Lennon. In the August 1967 issue of *Art and Artists*, for example, an announcement publicized a "Be-In" by Ono. The ad for this Happening-transformed-Be-In read:

> Yoko Ono, whose now famous 'bottom' movie is being shown to the general public at the Jacey Cinema, Charing Cross Road, is

> holding a weekend of Events at the Midlands Art Centre in Birminhgam on October 14th. She is planning to present a 'be-in,' lectures, two film showings, a concert and whatever else might flash ito her ever active mind. The Brumies may not realize what hit them until after the event — Miss Ono being noted for the enigmatic quality of her work.[52]

The mystery and enigma inherent in Ono's earlier work became overt and accessible in her collaborations with Lennon as when they revised Ono's Beat Piece and recorded the actual heartbeat of the foetus she eventually miscarried. The "Bed-In" extended the "telling" and "touching" — implicit and explicit in all of Ono's art — from the private intercourse of the nuptial bed to a discourse with the public. In the "Bed-In," the couple allowed themselves to be seen but, more importantly, to be heard in the promotion of a personal will for the public construction of what they called "peace and love." Moreover, in the "Bed-In," Lennon and Ono defied racism and classism in their presentation of an aristocratic Asian woman in bed with a working-class European man. The "Bed-In" underminded sexism in the representation of a marriage of equality. The "Bed-In" subverted conventional as well as radical politics by fusing the public art-event, the Happening, or "Be-In," with the private events of the human body. In this way, Lennon and Ono returned politics to the bedroom, site of private neuroses, battle ground of the sexes, and territory of their possible recovery.

Furthermore, Lennon and Ono transformed her artistic "Be-In" into their joint political statement, a paradigm for public action. The "Bed-In" represented a powerful plea for international peace symbolized by love and signified in the nuptual bed. The "Bed-In" for peace located Ono and Lennon at the popular cultural center of the international pacifist movement. But their legacy resides in Lennon's name alone. For example, one aspect of the international impact of Lennon on pacifism John Bushnell cited in *Moscow Graffitti*. Bushnell points out that all branches of the Soviet counter-culture identified with Lennon:

> Counter-culture pacifists were, from the beginning, prolific graffitti writers. The pacifist message lent itself to clear statement more readily than did the diffused ideas of the hippies. ... [For] hippies, intellectually committed to disengagement from the world, did not seek to spread their views [while] pacifists, by contrast, were determined to address Soviet society.[53]

Furthermore, Bushnell notes that:

> Lennon has become the patron saint of the Soviet pacifists, as the annual memorial observances of his death would indicate. In 1983, pacifists in Riga asked to be officially registered as the

> John Lennon Peace Committee. [But even earlier] memorial meetings on the anniversary of John Lennon's death, were held on the Lennon hill overlooking Moscow. The very first of these memorials was in fact held immediately after Lennon was gunned down in December 1980.[54]

These are just two of numerous examples that might be cited in which Lennon, not Ono, is associated with world-wide pacifism.

Nevertheless, as the "Bed-In" was a paradigm that linked sexual union with political and social intercourse, Lennon and Ono clearly rejected violence and destruction as effective models for the resolution of conflict. This position signaled an important clarification, if not shift, away from the element of violence and destruction present in her work since the late 1950s. Such scores as her *Blood Piece*, 1960, for example, had called for the performer to:

> Use your blood to paint. Keep painting until you faint (a) Keep painting until you die (b).

Tony Cox discussed the destructive aspects of Ono's work in the article he wrote for the special issue on "Auto-Destructive Art" that *Art and Artists* published in August, 1966, an issue which anticipated the Destruction in Art Symposium. However, although Ono recognized the affinities that her work shared with destruction as it was used to create art, and although she participated in DIAS, she had also relentlessly separated herself from the actual violent and destructive expressions which she encountered at DIAS. Rafael Ortiz, a Puerto-Rican American artist and DIAS participant, recalled that at one of the earliest DIAS press conferences during which he performed Chair Destruction, she took the podium after he finished his action. Ortiz remembered that she announced:

> I don't think destroying a chair is destruction art. I don't think throwing blood around is destruction art. It's much more subtle than that.[55]

The point is that although Ono's work contained both conceptually masochistic and violent elements, these functioned as imaginary techniques for communicating and, thereby, confronting pain, frustration, anger, and sorrow. Ono employed these elements to express the inexpressibility of pain. In her important study *The Body In Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World*, Elaine Scarry demonstrates how pain and imagining are aspects of each other. She observes:

> Physical pain ... is an intentional state without an intentional object; imagining is an intentional object without an experience-

> able intentional state. Thus, it may be that in some peculiar way it is appropriate to think of pain as the imagination's intentional state and to identify the imagination as pain's intentional object.[56]

In Ono's scores for perfomances, many of which may be found in *Grapefruit*, she refers to destruction and violence as an aspect of imagination. Ono asks the performer to think pain into objecthood. In this state of imagining, one may literally objectify that which has no objective reality and by so doing move toward not only sharing but enduring and, perhaps, even overcoming that pain. In 1970, Ono wrote that "Violence is a sad wind that, if channeled carefully, could bring seeds, chairs and all things pleasant to us."[57] She also observed that "The job of an artist is not to destroy but to change the value of things."[58] Together with Lennon, she was able to dispense with the masochistic, self-destructive elements in her work and Lennon's well-documented aversion to violence should not be underestimated in the healing and refocusing of Ono's art.

After the "Bed-In," Lennon and Ono continued to condense personal issues into a public discourse on broad political concerns. In a Montreal press conference December 15, 1969, at the height of the Vietnam war, they launched a Christmas peace billboard campaign: "War is Over, If you want it." They strategically installed their billboards in urban centers around the world — Times Square, Sunset Strip, and Shaftsbury Avenue in central London. Then holding up a black bag they called the "Bag of Laughs," (again a transformation of Ono's *Bag Piece*) at their Montreal press conference, they simultaneously signalled the folly of war and the joy of peace. They laughed in the face of institutionally circumscribed "states of war" and they insisted that responsibility for change and peace was lodged in the individual "If you want it."

Their billboards were not simply located in major cities, but in the entertainment districts: the film industry of Hollywood, the theatre, literary, and art district of London around Shaftsbury.[59] There the public announcement linked entertainment as spectacle with the theatre of war where art-actions might intervene. Times Square, in short, provided the densely populated stage-set for the conjunction of art and politics, an arena that other artists would soon begin to mine.

"War is Over" was immediately followed in January 1970 with an action in which the couple got radical haircuts — haircuts that in their severe style anticipated Punk in the midst of Hippie hair fetishism. This action functioned as a metaphorical protest, an inversion of the culturally proscribed, a critique of conformity within even radical ranks. For, the length of one's hair still signified the credentials of youth, rebellion, and alternative values. In addition, the sale of the trimmings had an important economic function. Ono and Lennon donated the funds to Michael Abdul Malik, a.k.a. Michael X, the radical Black poet and human-rights activist from Trinidad. He used the pro-

ceeds from the sale of their hair to start up a black-culture center in London. Malik had been earlier involved in the "Free Playgronds," a community-based attempt to clear and rehabilitate remaining bomb sites left from World War II in London's under and working-class neighborhoods. One of these playgrounds, significantly, became the primary site for DIAS. Malik's Blackhouse burned down months after it was begun; he was arrested for robbery; in 1973 he was convicted of two murders and hanged in 1975, a death sentence that artists and activists throughout the world vigorously protested.[60]

Such media events and involvement with the underground of the late 1960s, however, served equally as the volatile material evidence that was eventually used against Lennon by the United States government in his immigration attempts. These efforts occupied Lennon's attention until 1975 even though the government's case against him was based upon a 1968 conviction for possession of marijuana.[61] Given Ono's and Lennon's many years of litigation against the United States Government, one might speculate that such associations form the background for the curious absense of critical attention to some of her most provocative process and action-oriented work. A public image seems to have been architected very carefully to distract attention from what I, for one, consider to be not only the most telling, but also the most compelling aspects of her art and its history. So, for example, in a late interview (1986), when she mentioned the Knokke-le-Zoute festival, in Belgium, where she and Tony Cox appeared nude and where Jean-Jacques Lebel had been arrested as organizer, she explained merely:

> There was a film festival in Belgium in 1967, the Kuokke [sic] Film Festival, and they invited me to show the "Bottoms" film. You're supposed to sign some document to register for the festival first, and I forgot that part of it. So I went to the festival, and they showed my film and some of the judges came from America obviously, and they said 'We were determined give you a prize, but we can't because you didn't register.'[62]

Recently, the pamphlet accompanying her exhibiton at the Whitney in 1989, only mentions her DIAS participation in a brief sentence: "She was invited to participate in the "Destruction in Art Symposium" in London, a conference of some fifty artists from around the world."[63] Such references discretely distance Ono from the more controversial and politically volatile elements of the 1960s counter-culture. [64]

Certainly, from a legal standpoint, it became not only reasonable but expedient and advisable to do so. For while struggling to be accepted as an artist — an acceptance she found, ironically, in the radical underground — she also needed to carefully construct a context for the reception of her work in a manner that suited her evolving social position as much as Lennon's

legal situation. Nevertheless, this period in Ono's life and art was pivotal to the impact both she and Lennon had in the public.

V.

The London art critic, Jasia Reichardt, observed that Ono's influence operated by infiltration.[65] Indeed, infiltration by diffusion made it possible for Lennon and Ono to couch the category "art" in the vernacular activity of the period, the "Be-in," and to transform that act into a "Bed-In" of international political significance. Infiltration by diffusion was also the agent of Lennon's change.

In *Madame Butterfly* Pinkerton describes his geisha as fluttering "like a butterfly" with a "divine sweet little voice." He states:

> I cannot say whether it's love or caprice. Certainly I know she has seduced me with her ingenious ways... I am seized by a wild desire to pursue her, even though I should crush her wings in doing so.

Madame Butterfly represents the condensation of a patriarchal Western narrative of authority — the ability to possess, use, abuse, and finally discard the seductress whose ingenuity is blamed for boiling wild passion in the man — a tale of power that is equally based upon the control of the obedient, submissive women exercised in Asia up to the Second World War. This is the narrative the public employed then and now to strip Ono of her authenticity and originality and to vilify her. The opera condenses this Western male desire then displaces and reconstitutes it in the arena of least resistance, upon the cliché of the Asian woman as the ultimate object, a being of fragile vulnerability and bound feet, the willing masochist. *Madame Butterfly* is a drama of female powerlessness and male authority over the ethnic, female other.

Yoko Ono posed a deeply threatening challenge to this stereotype and the structure of power upon which it rests. For what was the public to make of this delicate, small, Japanese woman, with her child-like voice, shy demeanor, and breathless personal style — the perfect Butterfly — who, nevertheless, defied these concepts and whose famous and publically adored husband subjugated himself to her by sleeping at her feet and admitting, "I'm forever in your debt."

Hounded, mocked, and discredited, John Lennon authorized male feminism in his exemplary existence with Ono. However, rather than the serious psychological and ideological statement that Lennon's transformations represented, fans, the media, and even friends commonly dismissed his actions as excess and eccentricity. His struggles to divest himself of traditional gender and culture categories, his house-husband phase, was even rumored in popu-

lar culture to be a guise behind which he hid an addiction to heroin. Lennon's valorization of woman's activity earned the vibrant Ono the deadly epithet "Dragon Lady." Cast into the role of the castrating female, the term "dragon" (a metonym for Asia) revealed the thinly disguised spectre of Western racism: the fear of the mythic "Yellow Peril," the continued repressed fury over the indignity of Pearl Harbor, the deeply-rooted Western stereotype of the Asian as devious and secretive. Ono's public rebellion, her rejection of Japanese customs, manners, and the rigid conformity demanded by the aristocratic tradition into which she was born added to the confrontation she posed to Western concepts of a Japanese woman.[66] Thus, in the United States her ethnic identity was collapsed into that of the "alien culture" that contributed to the World War II, survived to produce electronic wonders like portable radios and instamatic cameras, and was the exotic source of an industry that swelled the market with colossal quantities of commercial kitsch. It should not be forgotten that in the cultural climate of the 1960s, all of these associations would have formed the subtext of Ono's identity. And, all of them clashed with the network of aesthetic practices espoused by both the bohemian, intellectual milieu of the art world to which she belonged as well as with the working and middle-class values of the pop music consumers and milieu from which Lennon emerged.

The blame projected onto Ono for Lennon's transformations stripped him of the responsibility he took for himself in choosing the multiple factors that empowered and liberated him — woman, otherness, and the naked body on public display. In this way he was deprived of the honor he might have claimed for his rejection of the position of dominance, his exemplary support of woman, and his adaptation of feminist principles that became, in the 1970s, the foundation for his music and lyrics. Ono too was systematically negated, robbed of recognition for her unique contributions to art, for her part in the liberation of Lennon, and for her joint authorship of LENONO. In the end, not the public but the internal politics and institutions of criticism of both the visual arts and pop music contributed most substantially to dispossessing Ono and Lennon of the achievements they had made in the cultural and sexual domain of each other.

While Lennon remained center-stage during his life, Ono's prior work formed the foundation and architecture of their activities. She had clearly observed the distinction between art and life and did not share the naive, universalizing view that art might merge with life which so many artists and critics throughout the last thirty years have maintained. On the contrary, in 1966, she wrote:

> Art is not merely a duplication of life, to assimilate art in life, is different from art duplicating life.[67]

She seemed to realize that the radical element in presentational art is the *difference* it *demonstrates* between art and life, a difference constructed on distance across which the performance conducts a metonymic transit that reveals momentarily the contingency between culture and body like a synaptic impulse communicating from the metaphoric to the actual, from the simultaneously individuated and constructed conditions of the personal to the collective.

Ono elaborated her emotive ways of knowing by pioneering techniques and methods of performance that conveyed the feminist ideology and politics that feminized Lennon. In large measure through Lennon, her art and philosophy diffused into world culture — that imaginary space about which Lennon sang in "Imagine,"1971, a place without geographical, national, racial, or sexual boundaries. Ono described this space when she wrote:

> A dream you dream alone may be a dream, but a dream two people dream is a reality.[68]

Together then, Lennon and Ono repeatedly sought and explored ways to be the producers of their own discourse and the authors of a state they might claim as authentic. They reinvented themselves continually from their beginning in "Two Virgins," to their Primal Scream regression therapy, and in songs such as "(Just Like) Starting Over." Together, with the structural support of the aesthetics of performance, Ono and Lennon anticipated an alternative model for experience, something akin to what the Irish psychoanalyst R.D. Laing identified, in 1967, as "the politics of experience," or what feminists described when they insisted that "the personal is the political."[69] Their continual reinvention, redefinition, and restatement of the conditions of felt experience was not employed solely for the purpose of their narcissistic self-fullfillment but as a process connected to both the social and political climate of their historical moment, and most importantly, to a history they actively participated in constructing.

Lennon and Ono continually confronted or refused to be complicit in construction of stereotypical roles except the ones they invented and except, most significantly, the institution of marriage. Indeed, marriage provided a culturally defined form in which they ironically defied social mores and undermined class divisions and cultural racism. For the marriage pledge legitimized the much debated and contested state of their union. In other words, they used the institution of marriage against the racism of the very society that established it as an institution.

From the public's perspective, Lennon seemed to have nothing to gain from his marriage to Ono. But his actions repeatedly demonstrated that it was not the public sphere that he honored but rather the private, that space traditionally consigned to women. Upon the site of this woman, Yoko Ono, Lennon constructed something of a Self resembling that self he identified as

John Lennon. He repeatedly acknowledged his need for and love of Yoko Ono which, in large measure, seems to have fortified his will to forge circuitous paths, however unstable, toward his own authenticity, an authenticity and freedom he identified as coextensive with Yoko Ono.[70] Just before his death, he made this experience clear when he sang on *Double Fantasy* :

> Even when I'm miles at sea
> And nowhere is the place to be
> Your spirit's watching over me dear Yoko...
> After all is really said and done
> The two of us are really one
> The goddess really smiled upon our love dear
> Yoko.

This essay represents an attempt to account for an aspect of the critical exhange with social and cultural formations that John Lennon and Yoko Ono undertook in the 1960s and 1970s. In exploring the biographical and cultural events that belong to the various histories that have been constructed around this couple, I have sought to recover and situate their vital interchange in the context of the theory and practice of live performed art. The ideological and formal elements of Happenings and Fluxus contributed an important share in providing them an alternative structure through which to redefine ways not only of being-in-the-world but also of affectively intervening in the world. In this sense, as a link in the complex chain of changes that have transpired across the twentieth century, Performance Art in all its various manifestations continues the utopian aim of early twentieth century artists to intervene in and alter life. This genre of visual art has always been revolutionary and controversial because at its structural center, the presentation of the body is a moral and ethical act that comments upon the ideological space that impinge upon that body. For, as the material of such a living art is the human body, as the material of performed art is human action in real time and space, and as the content of live art is human experience, the political dimension of the body in a social nexus is, thus, always manifest in this art.

The visual art event, with its emphasis on the body, permitted Ono and Lennon to use their bodies as the primary site for the construction of social and cultural change. They literally became acting agents able to demonstrate the relationship, interconnectedness, and contiguity of acting and viewing subjects. In this sense, and in the context of art, it may be argued that as acting subjects before viewing subjects, their social performance helped to diminish some of the aesthetic distance maintained between the traditional art object and viewing subject. But beyond the limited confines of aesthetic discourse, as acting subjects they could transgress the philosophic alienation existentially experienced between human subjects by demonstrating connectedness. In their public actions, they equally functioned as human material,

paradigms through which the value of social exhange could be forged. They offered an example for human reciprocity not only between genders, classes, races, and nationalities but equally they provided a model for how to negotiate a responsible interaction in the political order.

Ono realized this dimension of her aesthetic practice and she taught it to Lennon who, himself, experienced aspects of the power of the presentation of the body in his musical performances. But rock n'roll performers, at least during the period of the Beatles, had only begun to become self-conscious about their practice and had not evolved the complex theoretical and ideological program that visual artists who created events had constructed long before.

However, drawing upon this history and elaborating it with the mutual appropriation of aspects of each other's gender experience and identity, this remarkable woman and man created a transgressive opening in culture, internationally. Their opening in the social should not be described as a rupture in the usual radical sense of the avant-garde. Rather it was a blossoming, an unbosoming, that continues to constitute an example of a liberating experience. Their struggle is pre-paradigmatic of a new epistemology of human interaction that is the task and challenge of the twenty-first century.[71]

Notes

Kristine Stiles is an artist and assistant professor at Duke University, this article is dedicated to Sherman Fleming whose collaborations with me in Performance Art and whose unconditional personal support provided the emotional foundation upon which I was able to gain intellectual insight into the depths of LENONO. The research for this essay was also supported, in part, by fellowships from Duke University Research Council and Duke University Women's Studies. I want to thank Donald Kuspit for his immediate and enthusiastic support of my work. Alison Hagge deserves thanks for bringing this issue to press. Jon Hendricks, Curator for the Gilbert and Lila Silverman Fluxus Collection carefully read and corrected factual errors in the manuscript. Ruth-Ellen B. Joeres and Barbara Laslett, editors of *Signs: Journal of Women In Culture and Society, at the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies*, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, also offered thoughtful suggestions for the text. Carolee Schneemann, Griselda Pollock, and Jean O'Barr (Director of Women Studies at Duke University) are all friends whose feminism continues to provide unfailing intellectual guidance. I presented an abbreviated version of this essay first at a symposium on "Feminism, Performance and Postmodernism," organized by Kathy O'Dell and David Joselit at the Institute of Contemporary Art, Boston, April 8, 1990. Without the impetus from this symposium, I might not have given the rewarding work of Yoko Ono such careful examination. I would lke to thank particularly Kathy O'Dell whose friendship and intellectual companionship has been a continual inspiration for nearly two decades.

1 John Lennon and Yoko Ono *Double Fantasy*, Lenono Music (BMI). Los Angeles: Geffen Records, 1980. All quotes from songs that appear in this essay come from this album unless otherwise noted.

2 *The Ballad of John and Yoko* eds. Jonathan Cott and Christine Doudna (Garden City, New York: Rolling Stone Press Book, 1982), p. xviii.

3 LENONO is an important but unrecognized antecedent for the significant wholistic aesthetic practices of such artist couples an Helen and Newton Harrison. Kate Erickson and Mel Ziegler, Jean-Claude and Christo, and John Latham and Barbara Steveni, and others.

4 Vaclav Havel, *Letters to Olga: June 1979-September 1982*. Translated and with an Introduction by Paul Wilson (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1989), p. 158. Originally published by Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1983.

5 Susan R. Bordo, "The Body and the Reproduction of Femininity: A Feminist Appropriation of Foucault," in *Gender/ Body/ Knowledge/ Feminist Reconstructions of Being and Knowing*, eds Alison M. Jagger and Susan R. Bordo (New Brunswick and London: Rutgers University Press, 1989), p. 13.

6 Muriel Dimen, "Power, Sexuality, and Intimacy," in *Gender/ Body/ Knowledge*, p. 48.

7 Pete Hamill, "Long Night's Journey into Day, " June 5, 1975, in *The Ballad of John and Yoko*, p. 147.

8 *Ibid.*

9 Barbara Graustark, "The Real John Lennon," *Newsweek*, September 29, 1980, p. 44.

10 Yoko Ono, *The guests go in to supper: John Cage, Robert Ashley, Yoko Ono, Laurie Anderson, Charles Amirkhanian, Michael Peppe, K. Atchley*, eds. Melody Sumner, Kathleen Burch, Michael Sumner (Oakland and San Francisco: Burning Books, 1986), p. 178.

11 George Maciunas demonstrated an example of how Ono's work was perceived sometimes to be opportunistic when he wrote: "A Footnote" published in *Film Culture* 48-49 (Winter/Spring 1970): p. 33. Maciunas wrote: "No. 5 film of Yoko is exact copy of first half of Chieko Shiomi's "Disappearing Music for Face" which she (that is, Yoko) herself performed in winter 1965. Chieko's film was shot at 2000 frames per second (which makes sense for transition but not for just smile). No. 5 by Yoko, made in 1967, also uses 2000 frames per second. Ben Vautier has a "smile" piece of 1961." Jon Hendricks insists that "Smile was Yoko Ono's idea," May. 1991.

12 Yoko Ono, "To The Wesleyan People (who attended the meeting)," January 23, 1966, reprinted in Yoko Ono's *Grapefruit*, 2nd ed. Introduction by John Lennon (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), n.p.

13 Jerry Hopkins, *Yoko Ono* (New York and London: Macmillan Publishing Company and Collier Macmillan Publishers, 1986), p. 29. A cautionary word is in order concerning Hopkin's quotes because no sources are ever given. While I have attempted upon many occasions to contact Ono, she has never returned my letters or calls and I have been unable to substantiate Hopkins claims with her. I have included some of his references because of the ways in which information circulates around public figures, such as Ono and eventually constructs a public record. In this regard, it is important to note that Ono's name does not appear on the "official" record of the performances that took place between December 18, 1960 and June 7, 1961 at her loft. Only the following artists' names appear on the programs: Toshi Ichianage, Joseph Byrd, Jackson Mac Low, Richard Maxfield, La Monte Young, Simone Morris, and Bob Morris. However in an unpublished tape-interview Maciunas states that "This series of La Monte Young at Yoko Ono's loft got in touch with serious composers such as Yoko Ono, Toshi Ichianagi, Henry Flynt... In this series I met such composers as Dick Higgins, Walter De Maria, Ray Johnson and Ayo. This whole series gave me an idea to imitate it and make an even more extensive series at our new gallery." Maciunas' mention of Ono's name suggests that while this description of the event may not be precise, she must have performed something similar. In addition, immediately following the end of these performances in June, Maciunas invited Ono to exhibit at his nearly bankrupt AG Gallery in late July 1961. He recalled that her two week show of paintings and drawings included *Do It Yourself Paintings*, paintings "that looked like cleaning rags hung on the wall ... (a) painting with holes in it that you could look through" and other items that he deemed "Very successful (although) we didn't sell anything." See George Maciunas unpublished tape-discussion on the "AG Gallery" in the Jean Brown Fluxus Archive, now housed in the J. Paul Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 25.

15 See Willoughby Sharp, "Body Works," *Avalanche* 1 (Fall 1976).

16 *Grapefruit* was first published in Tokyo by Wunternaum Press, 1964.

17 Luce Irigaray, "Ce Sexe qui n'en est pas un," Ce Sexe qui n'en pas un (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1977), trans. in *New French Feminisms* eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1980), p. 103.

18 Barbara Moore has explained that "*The Stone* was a collaboration between Ono, Anthony Cox, Michael Mason, and Jeff Perkins that was organized by Jon Hendricks during his tenure as director of the Judson Gallery, New York, March 1966. Somewhat inspired by Ono's earlier *Bag Piece* (in which two people get into a bag, take off their clothes, take a nap, put their clothes back on, and get out), Cox built a sound, light, and film environment in which visitors enclosed themselves in Ono's bags ("Bagwear" was also available for sale at the time of the show), appearing as stones to an outside observer." In addition, Ono created "a large rectangular bag of crinkled cotton, open at one end," that had been "washed and somewhat faded, particularly on one side." See *Catalogue C* (New York: Backworks, n.d.).

19 Hopkins, *Yoko Ono*, p. 52.

20 Ono later commented on the subject of surrender when, on January 24, 1983, she took out an advertisement in The New York Times to publish her essay "Surrender to Peace," reprinted in Jon Wiener's "Give Peace a Chance: An Anthem for the Anti-War Movement," *Give Peace a Chance* ed. Marianne Philbin (Chicago: Chicago Review Press, 1983), p. 29. In this article Ono remembered: "In the summer of '72 in New York City, John and I invited the press to announce the founding of a conceptual country called Nutopia. Anybody could be a citizen of this country. Citizens were automatically the country's ambassadors. The country's body was the airfield of our joint thoughts. Its flag was the white flag of surrender; a surrender to peace. ... A radical friend of ours expressed taht he ... disliked the term (surrender). "Surrender sounds like defeat," he said. "Well, don't you surrender to love, for instance?" I looked at him. "No." ... I thought "Are women the only people who know the pride and joy of surrender?" ... It's a waster of time to explain to a macho radical, didn't I tell you?" said John, a man who surrendered to the world, life, and finally to the universe."

21 See, for example, *Ono in The guests go in to supper*, pp. 171-84; also see Donald Kirk, "In Tokyo," in *The Ballad of John and Yoko* and Jerry Hopkins's *Yoko Ono*.

22 René A. Spitz, "Hospitalism: An Inquiry into the Genesis of Psychiatric Conditions in Early Childhood," *The Psychoanalytic Study of the Child* (New York) 1 (1945), pp. 53-74. This essay is reprinted in René A. Spitz: *Dialogues From Infancy: Selected Papers*, ed. Robert N. Emde (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1983). Spitz wrote that: "The term "hospitalism" designates a vitiated condition of the body due to long confinement in a hospital, or the morbid condition of the atmosphere of a hospital. ... At the beginning of our century one of the great foundling homes in Germany had a mortality rate of 71.5 percent in infants in the first year of life." (p. 5) While those conditions had "greatly changed" after the war, Spitz still could write that "The Children in Foundling Home showed all the manifestations of hospitalism, both physical and mental. In spite of the fact that hygiene and precautions against contagion were impeccable, the children showed, from the third month on, extreme susceptibility to infection and illness of any kind." (p. 10) I would like to thank Angela O'Rand, Professor of Sociology at Duke University, for her assistance on this section of the text.

23 For a historical account of the conditions that resembled those in which Lennon matured see Alan Sinfield's *Literature, Politics, and Culture in Postwar Britain* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: The University of California Press, 1989). This book is the twelve in a series on "The New Historicism: Studies in Cultural Poetics" issued by The University of California Press.

24 Yoko Ono, "Yoko Ono on Yoko Ono," *Film Culture* 48-49 (Winter/Spring 1970), p. 32.

25 John Hanhardt, *Yoko Ono* (New York: Whitney Museum of American Art, 1989), p. 8.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 1-2.

27 Yoko Ono letter to Ivan Karp, June 4, 1965 in *Grapefruit*: n.p.

28 For more on the subject of the word "nigger," see Sherman Fleming's "Nigger as Antibody," in a special edition on art and healing edited by the author for *WhiteWalls* 25 (Spring 1990).

29 Lennon Plastic Ono Band, *Shaved Fish*. Los Angeles: Capitol Records, 1975.

30 Mae G. Henderson, "Toni Morrison's 'Beloved: Re-Membering the Body as Historical Texts,'" in *Comparitive American Identities*, ed. Horilinar Spellers (NY: Rutledge, 1991), pp. 63-4.

31 Dimen, p. 37.

32 Hanhardt, pp. 9-10.

33 Dimen, p. 39.

34 Suan Gubar, "'The Blank Page' and the Issues of Female Creativity," in *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, Literature, and Theory*, ed. Elaine Showalter (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), p. 295.

35 *Ibid.*, p. 299.

36 *Women's Ways of Knowing: The Development of Self, Voice, and Mind*, eds. Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, Jill Mattuck Tarule (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1986), p. 18.

37 *Ibid.*

38 *Ibid.*

39 Emily Wasserman, "This is Not Here: Yoko Ono at Syracuse," *Artforum* 10:6 (January 1972), p. 73.

40 For information on the Destruction in Art Symposium see my articles "Synopsis of the Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS) and Its Theoretical Significance," *The Act* 1 (Spring 1987), pp. 22-31, and "Sticks and Stones,"*Arts* 65 (January 1988), pp. 54-60. Ono has consistently de-emphasized her participation in DIAS. Furthermore, this critical biographical event is frequently absent from accounts of her art and is not mentioned in either of the two prominant critical articles on her work. See for example Carlo McCormick's "Yoko Ono Solo," *Artforum* 27: 6 (February 1989), pp. 116-21, and Emily Wasserman's "This is Not Here," op. cit.

41 See DIAS program entitled "Two Evenings with Yoko Ono," in the *Hanns Sohm Archive* Stattsgalerie, Stuttgart. DIAS sponsored two evenings of Ono's performances at the Africa Center, the site of the DIAS symposium in the heart of London's Covent Garden district. The two programs included *Wind Piece* to be performed throughout two evenings and "*Toilet Pieces*" displayed continually "in the lavatory." Program A of September 28the included: "*Line Piece, Bag Piece* (with simultaneous performance of *Bicycle Piece* for Orchestra), *Cut Piece* (audience participation), *Sky Piece, Dawn Piece* (audience participation), *Touch Poem* (audience participation), *Fly Piece* (audience participation)." Her Program B on September 29th offered: "*Bag Piece, Strip Tease for Three, Cut Piece* (audience participation), *Question Piece* (audience participation), *Wall Piece* (audience participation), and *Clock Piece* (audience participation)."

42 See Ono's "Statement" in the *Village Voice*, October 7, 1971, p. 20.

43 Yoko Ono in *The guests go in to supper*, p. 174.

44 Carolee Schneemann, *More Than Meat Joy*, ed., Bruce McPherson (New York: Documentext, 1979), p. 196.

45 The term PROVOS was first coined by Wouters Buikhuisen, a Dutch sociologist, in his doctoral dissertation presented January 22, 1965, at the State University of Utrecht. Derived from the two syllables of the word "provocateur," Buikhuisen used the word PROVO to draw a distinction between the Black Shirts of an earlier generation and the aims, behavior, and social composition of discontented urban youth of the late 1950s and early 1960s such as Beatniks, Mods, Rockers, and the Dutch Nozzems. A loosely knit movement of initially no more than fifty activists in Amsterdam, these youths adopted the term to describe their

numbers who were often artists, poets, and bilingual students (usually Dutch, French, English, and German) in the social sciences mostly between the ages of eighteen and thirty. These poets and artists admired the COBRA group and were influenced by the International Situationists. PROVO leader, Bernhard de Vries, was, in 1966, a twenty-five year old poet, artist, and student of Dutch literature who won a seat in Amsterdam government in a municipal election that reflected the momentary political power exercised by the PROVOS in 1965-66. De Vries and Irene Donner van der Weetering arrived June 22nd, 1966, in London for a press conference to kick off DIAS. Their action included riding about London on white bicycles, the symbol for the PROVOS' urban platform of reform called the "White Plans." For more information on the PROVOS see: Bernard de Vries, "Provo vu de l'interieur," *Provo kanttekeningen bij een deelverschijnsel* ed. F.E. Frenkel (Amsterdam: Polak and Gennep, 1967); Hans Tuynman, *Full-Time PROVO* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij de Bezige Bij, 1966); Duco van Weerlee, *Wat De Provo's Willen* (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij de Bezige Bij, 1966); C. Vassart and A. Racine, *Provos et Provotariat: Un an de recherche participante en milieu Provo* (Brussels: Centre d'étude de la Delinquance Juvenile, 1968); Brenda Jordan, "Some Facts About the Provos," *Socialist Leader* (London), July 23, 1966; and "On the Poverty of Student Life: considered in its economic, political, psychological, sexual, and especially intellectual aspects, with a modest proposal for its remedy," (1967) reprinted in *Situationist Anthology* (Berkeley, California: Bureau of Public Secrets, 1981), esp. pp. 323-24.

46 Anthony Cox initially befriended Ono during a severe depression in Tokyo, in 1962, at which time she attempted suicide and was hospitalized. In 1963, they married and that year Ono gave birth to their daughter Kyoto.

47 See Paul Overy, "London," *Artscanada Suppliment* 24 (June-July 1967), pp. 10-11. See also the *Evening Standard* (London) April, 12, 1967, which features a photograph of Ono in a picket-protest outside the offices of the British Board of Film Censors.

48 *Jean-Jacques Lebel: Happenings, interventions et actions diverses* (1962-1982) (*Paris: Cahiers Loques et Polyphonix*, 1982), n.p.

49 Lebel was notorious as the organizer of orgiastic Festivals of Free Expression, the first of which featured Carolee Schneemann's legendary *Meat Joy*. These festivals utilized the Happening structure to politicize erotica as a vehicle for liberation and featured polymorphous perversity and sexuality of every variety. Lebel had veen virtually raised by Jean-Paul Sartre and Andre Breton, and was the son of Robert Lebel, the first biographer of Marcel Duchamp. He was also friends with Julien Beck and Judith Malina of the Living Theatre, with Beat poets such as Gregory Corso and Allen Ginsberg, and with political activists like Danny "The Red," Jerry Rubin, and Abbey Hoffman. Both Rubin and Hoffman have credited Lebel as a primary source for the adaptation of techniques of the Happening to their political media-events, his work was widely acknowledged by the PROVOS to have been a critical source for the formation of their agit-prop events, and he has been a friend of Bernhard de Vries since the early 1960s. Lebel was also associated with the International Situationists, was central to many of the may events of paris, 1968, including the take over of the national theatre, the Odeon, and was involved in the burning of the Paris stock exchange that year. Since the 1980s, he has been the director of Polyphonix, a multidisciplinary festival of the arts.

50 Ritchie Yorke, "Boosting Peace: John and Yoko in Canada, February 7, 1969," in The Ballad of John and Yoko, p. 57. See also John Papworth's "An Open Letter to John and Yoko," in *Resurgence* (London) 2 (Spring 1970), pp. 2-4.

51 On Nam June Paik, see *Art for 25 Million People: Bon Jour, Monseiur Orwell: Kunst Und Satelliten In der Zukunft* (Berlin: Daadgalerie, 1984).

52 "Briefly," *Art and Artists* 2 (August 1967), p. 4.

53 John Bushnell, *Moscow Graffiti: Language and Subculture* (Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1990), pp. 125-26.

54 *Ibid.*, p.133, p. 120.

55 Rafael Montanez Ortiz in an unpublished interview with the author, February 27, 1982, Piscataway, New Jersey. A fascinating paradox is that while Ono publically deplored Ortiz's art, his development of Destruction Art was the impulse for the social-psychologist Arthur Janov's development of Primal Scream therapy which she and Lennon later undertook under Janov's direction. In the introduction to his book, *The Primal Scream*, Arthur Janov credits Ortiz as the source for his development of Primal Scream therapy. See Janov's *The Primal Scream, Primal therapy: the Cure for Neurosis* (NY: A Delta Book, 1970), pp. 9-10. See also my *Raphael Montanez Ortiz: Years of the Warrior 1960 — Year of the Psyche 1988* (NY: El Museo del Barrio, 1988).

56 Elaine Scarry, *The Body In Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), p. 164.

57 George Maciunas, "A Footnote," *Film Culture*, p. 33.

58 See, Yoko Ono in Emily Wasserman's "This Is Not Here," p. 69.

59 I would like to thank my colleague Jill Meredith for this and other astute observations.

60 See Action No. 39 in *GAAG: The Guerrilla Art Action Group 1969-1976, A Selection* (New York: Printed Matter, Inc., 1978): n.p.

61 See Ralph J. Gleanson's "Fair Play for John and Yoko," June 22, 1972; Joel Siegel's "Back in the U.S.S.A." October 10, 1974; and Chet Filippo's "Imagine: John Lennon Legal," September 9, 1976, all in *The Ballad of John and Yoko*, pp. 135-141.

62 Yoko Ono in *The guests go in to supper*, p. 175.

63 Barbara Haskell, *Yoko Ono*, p. 3.

64 DIAS organizers, artist Gustav Metzger and poet John Sharkey, were tried in the summer of 1967 and found guilty for having "unlawfully caused to be shown a lewd and indecent exhibition" (a performance of the *Orgies Mysteries Theatre* by the Austrian artist Hermann Nitsch). For a reconstruction of the trial of Metzger and Sharkey see my unpublished doctoral dissertation, "The Destruction in Art Symposium (DIAS): The Radical Cultural Project of Event-Structured Live Art," University of of California, Berkeley, 1987.

65 Jasia Reichardt, "Art Is Big, Round and Good," *Studio International* 174 (September 1967), p. 80.

66 For a penetrating analysis of Asian women's perception see Amy Ling's "Chinamerican Women Writers: Four Forerunners of Maxine Hong Kingston," in *Gender/ Body / Knowledge*, pp. 309-23.

67 Yoko Ono, "To the Wesleyan People," n.p.. Many critics misunderstand Ono's astute strategy and understanding of the differences between art and life. Most recently see Carlo McCormick's "Yoko Ono Solo," op. cit., p. 120. While seeking to explicate Ono's art, his glib commentary works at cross-purposes to his intent and diminishes the cultural significance and political import of artworks like *Bed-In*.

68 Emily Wasserman, "This is Not Here," p. 72.

69 See R.D. Laing, *The Politics of Experience* (New York; Penguin Books, 1967). It is noteworthy that Laing had been involved and powerfully influenced, since the late 1950s, by some of the artists who later participated in DIAS, especially Jeff Nuttall, John Latham, and Gustav Metzger. Laing's associate, the American psychiatrist Dr. Joseph Berke, participated in DIAS and knew Yoko Ono. Although in a telephone conversation with the author, Berke denied his participation in DIAS, Hanns Sohm photographed Berke while sitting at the DIAS speaker's table at the Africa Center September 11, 1966. These photographs may be examined in the Sohm Archive, Stattsgalerie, Stuttgart. Furthermore, an excerpt of Berke's presentation was reprinted in *Studio International* 172 (December 1966).

70 Much has been made of the psychoanalytic dynamics of Lennon and Ono's love but it may only be endlessly theorized. For example, both Lennon and Ono may be analysed as masochists. Lennon identified with the subjugation of woman and Ono was "defeminized" and "un-womanly," according to Freud, in her ambition to succeed in art and business — the

traditional domain of men. On this subject, see Kaja Silverman, "Masochism and Male Subjectivity," *Camera Obscura* 17 (1988), pp. 31-67. Silverman quotes Freud on female mosochism in "A Child is Being Beaten," in *Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James and Alix Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1924), pp. 172-201.

71 This essay was conceived in 1989 and written in 1990, two years before it finally reached publication. Since that time, Barbara Haskell's and John G. Hanhardt's book *Yoko Ono Arias and Objects* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books, 1991) appeared, and Jon Hendricks is currently bringing out another book that will deal more fully with Ono's performance. As stated earlier, Jon helped to edit the early version of this text. While there are many aspects of this essay that I might modify today, I have decided to permit the text to stand as it was in 1990.

Duchamp as Pervert

Randall K. Van Schepen

> Who in the world am I? Ah that's the greatest puzzle!
>
> Who am I then? Tell me that first, and then, if I like being that person, I'll come up; if not I'll stay down here till I'm somebody else...
>
> "Who are you?" said the Caterpillar.
> This was not an encouraging opening for a conversation.
> Alice replied, rather shyly, "I-I hardly know, sir, just at present — at least I know who I was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then."
> "What do you mean by that?" said the Caterpillar sternly.
> "Explain yourself!"
> "I can't explain myself , I'm afraid sir," said Alice, "because I'm not myself, you see."
> "I don't see," said the Caterpillar.
> "I'm afraid I can't it put more clearly," Alice replied very politely, "for I can't understand it myself to begin with..."
>
> Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*

During the course of his life Marcel Duchamp's works and persona challenged some of the most revered thoughts about the role of art, artist and viewer. Certainly much of this was planned, conceived, or at least consciously encouraged by Duchamp. As a result, there have been many analyses of his writings, cryptic notes and iconoclastic gestures that have searched for stated or implied explanations by Duchamp of his actions. What has been generally found, however, is that attempts to categorize his work or to conceptually frame him have either failed to be convincing or have robbed the work of its visceral power. Finding "answers" to Duchamp's work is extremely complex because its nature is often posed as a question, or, at most, a positive statement by the artist with a knowing wink. In part, this results from his understanding of the power of suggestion and the consequent role of the viewer "completing" the work by the associations that he/she brings to it. He understood the viewer's role, then, as equal to that of the artist.

More importantly for my purposes here, some of the mystery of Duchamp's work results not from willed action on Duchamp's part, but from subjects, acts, and works that reveal aspects of himself despite his plans otherwise. It will be fruitful, I believe, to analyze Duchamp's iconoclastic gestures and works in light of theories which allow going beyond surface intent and meaning in order to theorize about the psychoanalytic "intent" and "meaning" based on chosen examples of his work.

In defense of such a psychoanalytic approach for Duchamp, one might use a statement he himself made at a talk to the American Federation of the Arts in 1957 — he spoke of the mediumistic nature of the artist:

> If we give the attributes of a medium to the artist, we must then deny him the state of consciousness on the esthetic plane about what he is doing or why he is doing it. All his decisions in the artistic execution of the work rest with pure intuition and cannot be translated into self-analysis, spoken, written, or even thought out.[1]

It is, perhaps, ironic that an artist who spent so much time jotting down notes for works and who "was always inclined to 'intellectualize' his works"[2] would suggest that we not assume that he knew what he was doing. What Duchamp seems to be advocating is an artist who works on an "intuitive" or unconscious level, who is only sure that his art "works" because it "clicks" with something in his psyche. If we read the above statement as an admission on Duchamp's part that much of an art work's power results from subconscious factors placed in the work and subconscious resonances in the viewer, then some current theories about Duchamp's work become inadequate.[3]

Indeed, Duchamp's statement: "Art doesn't interest me. Artists interest me,"[4] would seem to lead one to use personality theory for Duchamp's work more than anything else. In fact, with Duchamp one gets the feeling that his playing with psychosexual notions was on both a conscious and unconscious level. If, however, he was conscious of playing with these psychosexual notions it does not make one's task of analyzing them any easier; rather, this often results in repressing more useful information than it reveals. Seeing the art work as "wish-fulfillment" is one way, borrowed from Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams*, that is used to explain the relationship between the artist's unconscious motives and the resulting form of the art work. The work becomes, in part, an example in condensed and displaced form of the artist's unconscious "projects." Ellen Handler Spitz, in *Art and Psyche*, explains that "the genius of his[Freud's] contribution lies ... in the recognition of multiple, intimate links between the realms of art and dream."[5] The dream has meaning in its own time but this meaning also carries over into our waking hours indicating a continuity between these varying states of consciousness as well as the possibility of an interpretation of art based on the interpretive tools of

dreams. The use of psychoanalysis as a contemporary critical tool, however, is complicated by the fact that, as Ernst Kris said, "during the last decades psychoanalytic insights into the process of creation have themselves become part of art."[6] Despite the fact that this self-conscious use or exploration of psychoanalysis by artists can be a barrier and that images, be they in dreams or in our conscious existence, can be "condensed," interpretation is both possible and desirable.

Classical Freudian analysis sees a primary project in the individual's psychosexual life as the resolution of the Oedipal issue and its relation to genital sexuality. The analyst's task is to find evidence of "penis envy," "castration complexes," and fetishes and this in turn becomes the task of the critic as well. "According to classical psychoanalytic theory, the vicissitudes of the sexual, aggressive, and self-preserving instincts follow an inner timetable of psychosexual stages through which all human beings, irrespective of time or place, period and culture, must pass to reach maturity."[7] There are both obvious and subtle examples of classical Freudian issues in Duchamp's work. However, rather than concentrating on a purely classical Freudian theory I believe that it will be fruitful to analyze Duchamp in light of a creativity theory espoused by Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel in *Creativity and Perversion* — which reads works of art in the manner in which they manifest perverse tendencies.[8] Duchamp's attitude, art, and life seem particularly suited to such a reading.

Before exploring Chasseguet-Smirgel's theory one must set it in the context of the psychoanalytic field's understanding of perversion. The most obvious place to start is with Freud's seminal work *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) which laid the groundwork for the inquiries which have followed. As mentioned above, Freud bases his theories on the presence of the childhood psychosexual stages present in everyone's childhood development. These sexual stages necessarily exist because our sexual nature is foisted upon us by our biological nature, by "sexual instinct," or "libido" and not merely by society. Freud begins *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* with just such an appeal to biological destiny: "The fact of the existence of sexual needs in human beings and animals is expressed in biology by the assumption of a 'sexual instinct,' on the analogy of the instinct of nutrition, that is of hunger."[9]

The oral, anal, phallic, latent, and puberty stages of development occur consecutively and at approximately the same time in all people. If the stages occur without any traumatic experiences the individual will, in all likelihood, develop "normally" — a problematic term if there ever was one. If, however, during any one of these stages the individual experiences intense sexual, aggressive, or other traumatic events, the development through a given stage may be incomplete and resurface later as a perversion. These infantile forms of sexuality may survive in the individual as sexual behaviors which part from the normal sexual aim which "is regarded as being the union of the gen-

itals in the act of copulation."[10] According to Freud, "Perversions are sexual activities which either (a) extend, in an anatomical sense, beyond the regions of the body that are designated for sexual union, or (b) linger over the intermediate relations to the sexual object which should normally be transversed rapidly on the path towards the final sexual aim."[11] This early formulation of perversion by Freud is summarized by Franz Alexander in "A Note to the Theory of Perversions" as follows:[12]

> Fixation to early forms of sexual expression may be the result of the constitutional intensity of partial instincts; but it may also be reinforced by accidental sexual experiences in infancy or childhood. Such fixations may lead to perversions in adults. Interference in normal psychosexual development, which mostly occurs at the Oedipal barrier, may interrupt the psychosexual maturational process and initiate a regression to early forms of sexual expression (fixation points). ... In such cases, the pregenital partial instincts do not become organically incorporated in their totality in mature genitality, or this incorporation is so loose that, when obstacles occur (i.e., the Oedipus complex), they break up and sexual expression regresses to the phase which characterized it before the partial instincts were integrated.[13]

Marcel Duchamp was a pervert. Yet the sense in which I will apply this term to him is different than it would be for a classical psychoanalytic theoretician. The theory of perversion that Chasseguet-Smirgel puts forth in *Creativity and Perversion* is less reliant on the instinctual drive theory of psychoanalysis and deals with pre-Oedipal issues in the more recent tradition of object-relations theory.[14] For Chasseguet-Smirgel perversion functions in a broader manner than the most popular sexual connotations of the word as vulgarity and also broader than the almost purely biological definition of Freud's early formulation. For her, perversion occurs when an individual denies the aspect of life which creates boundaries and distinctions between groups such as male/female, animate/inanimate objects, animal/person and even person/God. Citing the Judeo-Christian belief structure as our collective Western heritage, she views this collective ethic as particularly "distinctual," or "differentiated;" that is, concerned with the maintenance of boundaries in nature. A number of references are made to the distinctive nature of God and to His will for a creation in which distinctions are maintained: Leviticus 19:19, "Do not mate different kinds of animals. Do not plant your field with two kinds of seed. Do not wear clothing woven of two kinds of material." In Genesis God distinguishes between light/dark, land/sea, animal/man and in general formed distinction out of the "formless and empty darkness," Genesis 1:2; additional citations come from the Levitical law. The God of Jews and Christians reveals an intolerance to what Chasseguet-Smirgel calls perversion–the blurring of "given" categorical boundaries.

Set against the God of distinction and purity is the pervert. The pervert's action toward "objects" is the breakdown of, disbelief in, or inability to sustain the "objects'" created distinctual categorization. The motivation for such a destructive impulse comes from pre-Oedipal conflicts, which later give rise to a regression to the pre-genital, anal stage of development. The attraction of the individual to the anal stage results from their desire to regress to a time of intense bonding with the mother — where the world is an undistinguished mass of self/other. Chasseguet-Smirgel does not lay as strong an emphasis on the castration complex, phallic mother, or fetishizing objects as on the inadequacy felt by the child when it feels the genital relationship that exists between the parents cannot be achieved by itself. The pervert begins, in early infancy, with a strong mother/child bond which is eventually partially broken by the father/mother relationship. Upon understanding the phallic power of its father and the genital relationship of its parents, the child feels inadequately equipped to be involved on the adult "sexual" level. When a boy understands that he cannot participate equally in the genital universe because his sexual development is far behind his father's, or when a girl understands that the genital relationship her mother needs is with a male, the feeling of omnipotence caused by earlier maternal bonding is shattered, resulting in feelings of inadequacy. Feelings of inadequacy lead the pervert to desire a reuniting with the mother in the non-threatening, pre-genital, anal stage where their sense of self was tied intimately with the mother and where the differentiation that occured with genitality does not exist.[15]

The child desires to regress because in the anal stage the child experienced a powerful bonding with the mother, which even took precedence over the father's bids for attention. In this stage the differential barriers between people, objects and even parent and child are blurred, if not indistinguishable. Regression to this stage allows such distinctions to be digested, processed and expelled as homogeneous excrement. The project of the pervert, as it is understood here, is to create a "world" in which the pre-genital experience of union with mother and world is recreated and where the rule of the genital universe is non-existent. The individual reverting to this stage creates an "anal-sadistic universe."[16] This universe is created in the world of art as a substitute/dream world of wish fulfillment, a world in which the pervert regresses to a time of blissful maternal bonding.

Summarizing her basic argument about perversion, Chasseguet-Smirgel says:

> I have already counterposed the universe of perversion — that of mixture — to the Biblical universe, which is both the basis and the expression of our ethic. This world, as distinct from the pervert's, is that of division and separation. By perversion, I had in view a universal human temptation, going beyond the limits of sexual deviation, strictly defined. At the same time, I tried to

> show the pervert attempts to take the Father-Creator's place in order to make a new universe from the chaos and mixture, a universe where anything becomes possible, and towards which he tends to return. Differences having been abolished, the feelings of helplessness, smallness, inadequacy, as well as absence, castration and death — psychic pain itself — also disappear.[17]

Having discussed the sense in which "pervert" should be understood in relation to Marcel Duchamp, one may have become aware of similarities between this theory and other theories about Duchamp's work, in particular those of alchemy and anarchy. The largest body of critical writing on Duchamp falls into the category of alchemy, its leading proponent being Arturo Schwartz.

Alchemy too is based on the presupposition of certain given distinctual boundaries, in its case binary oppositions. In alchemy, however, the opposition of these binary pairs is said to be inauthentic and a result of artificial splitting. These pairs are not perversions when brought together but, according to alchemy, they become reconciled to each other in a synthesis which is greater than the two individual elements. Both a theory of perversion and of alchemy attempt to ferret out these opposites or differing elements in the art work such as male/female, literature/art, art/objects ... and to see how these elements are brought together. For the alchemist bringing them together represents a uniting, or perhaps more accurately, a reuniting; while Chasseguet-Smirgel would see such a union in destructive terms — a breaking of conventions.

The bases of alchemy and psychoanalytic inquiry are very different. Alchemy claims to be a primal urge in the collective unconscious[18] that comes from a desire within everyone to reconcile the conflicting dualities of life. A psychoanalytic theory of perversion, on the other hand, claims that the urge to blur distinctions or to simply not recognize them results from especially traumatic experiences in an individual's life, from an "un-whole" self acting out. It is interesting to note that those who both support and deny the validity of alchemical analysis for Duchamp use the same quote from him to support their claims: "If I have ever practiced alchemy, it was the only way that it can be done now, that is to say, without knowing it."[19]

Another theory used to interpret Duchamp's life and art is anarchy. It has been recorded that he had an interest in the obscure German philosopher, Max Stirner,[20] whose theories supported ultra-individualism against any form of authority, structure, or system — including philosophy. Authority, structure, and systems were also held in little esteem by Duchamp, causing him to reject not only institutional systems but any sort of repetition in his own oeuvre. In fact, as Francis Naumann pointed out, "when one submits in principal, as Duchamp did, that an artist does not have to have any system, one can finally only contradict the system one tends to create."[21] Artists

since Duchamp have not often picked up on his notion of non-repetition. However, other artists, such as Arman who knew Duchamp in the 1960's, picked up on the destructive anarchical impulse in Duchamp and Dada to call into question various societal institutions, including art. Duchamp's oeuvre certainly contains works which could be aligned with an anarchical position, but Duchamp realized that to destroy all systems would be a futile gesture; any such principal of contradiction would negate or invalidate itself.

The question is whether the theories of anarchy and alchemy can add in a significant or interesting way to our knowledge of the motives or reasons behind the creation of works by Duchamp. Or more to the point, if his works do have elements of these or other theories in them, then what is it about Duchamp that would lead him to such positions? What alchemy in particular tends to do is to package Duchamp neatly into a socially acceptable box — it solves the problems in Duchamp's work and life rather than admitting the problematics so evident in them. Duchamp's "instinct" to contradict himself would seem to run contrary to any such comprehensive systems. Thus, while dealing with the issues of boundaries in Duchamp's work, alchemy and anarchy seem to miss the more personal aspects shaping his destructive oeuvre. Methods relying on personality theories, those that are open to a wide variety of influences, which explore the psycho-logical rather than purely logical, should prove to be more fruitful. After all, Freud himself addresses the important notion of opposites by saying, "Dreams show a special tendency to reduce opposites to a unity or to represent them as one thing."[22]

Even though a perverse undercurrent can be felt in virtually all of Duchamp's work,[23] there are particular works in his oeuvre which fit closely with the theory of perversion held by Chasseguet-Smirgel. Duchamp's early work from 1902 to 1910 is, however, aesthetically disappointing in its fairly stilted unimaginative use of impressionist and post-impressionist techniques. Despite (or perhaps because of) the fact that the subject matter at that time was personal, and included friends, family members and familiar surroundings, there is little that intrigues the viewer in the manner of later works. He was no child prodigy.

His work began to come into his own in 1910 when he painted three works in his own version of Symbolism: *Baptism, Draught and the Japanese Apple Tree*, and *Paradise* — the most interesting of the three works being *Paradise*. An interpretation of the birth of "man," it is an Adamic scene with a couple in a simplified landscape. The figures are depicted in broad curvilinear planes with little detail. "Adam" is standing on the right looking left, "Eve" is sitting on the left looking right, but their glances do not meet; each is isolated in his or her own world. One may notice that Duchamp's idea of "paradise" is not as blatantly sexual as in his later works. Both "Adam" and "Eve" cover their genitals, "Adam" with his hands and "Eve" with a strategically placed knee, hiding the sexual differentiating elements. This could be a depiction of the scene after the fall in the garden of Eden — yet he still calls

it *Paradise*. "Paradise" here is apparently the dawn of man's blurring of sexual distinctions — whether by hiding with hands, legs, fig leaves, or the eventual development of gender specific clothing (later picked up in Duchamp's creation of Rose Selavy). This scene of the birth of man's shame/sin can also be seen as the birth of perversion, causing natural distinctual differences to be covered up and denied for homogeneity.[24]

Symbolist techniques held Duchamp's attention for only a short while, from 1910 to 1911. His interests then moved to the cubist avant-garde, a group in Puteaux that included his brothers Raymond Duchamp-Villon and Jacques Villon.[25] The group also included Frank Kapka, Albert Gleizes, Ferdinand Leger, Roger de la Fresnay, and Jean Metzinger. Meeting to discuss developments in modern art, the group also discussed current scientific and, in Duchamp's case, geometrical theories focusing on a fourth dimension. For most of the artists in the group, theories of a fourth dimension became a justification for their breakdown of illusionistic pictorial space. Tying their concept of the creation of flat cubist pictorial space to mathematicians' contemporaneous attempts to find other levels of reality gave their artistic cause some form of scientific validity. For Duchamp, however, these discussions of non-Euclidean geometry were less for specific application at this time and more to bring the conversation to a greater level of mental play.[26] It was not the actual ideas that fascinated him so, but the possibilities of expanding one's consciousness to envelop other forms of thinking and the possibilty of using such theories for his own perverse reasons.

Some works created during this "pure cubist" period of 1911 display little technical creative exploration beyond what other Puteaux group members were doing and were therefore readily accepted by them. *Sonata*, *Dulcinea*, and *Portrait of Chess Players* are all examples of this relatively pure cubism. In these works Duchamp used a palette of earth tones and a breakdown of forms into interpenetrating planes that look familiar to anyone with a knowledge of other cubist works of this period. The interesting thing about these works is not their technical artistic methods, but the thematic ideas that are used and expanded on in Duchamp's later works.

In *Sonata* we have a picture of Duchamp's mother standing and presiding over her three daughters. Two are obviously playing music, the third is Duchamp's favorite sister Suzanne, with her back to them. In this simple diamond shaped composition the figure of Duchamp's mother dominates the scene. The soft blue of her dress is the only blue in the picture and her face is delineated with the darkest lines in the painting. Becoming almost mask-like in the schematization of the nose, lips, and almond eyes, it is much less subtle than the faces of Duchamp's sisters. In addition, her breasts are proportionally much larger in the painting than they appear in concurrent photographs, giving her the look of an abstract/simplified all-seeing fertility figure.

An important aspect of *Sonata* that has not been pointed out is the form

behind the head of Duchamp's mother — the faint form of a car seemingly passing through her head. The roof of the car loses definition and appears to meld with the upper contour of her head, the front and rear portions projecting out of the position of the ears on either side. This is very significant information for the development of the "mechanomorphic," sexually charged images that followed.[27] In this work one has the most potent sexual figure in one's development combined with a machine which is, in a sense, the epitome of machines.[28] Traditionally, the introduction of the machine into Duchamp's work is associated with the painting *Coffee Mill*.[29] And while it is true that this was the first work entirely occupied with a machine image, attention must be drawn to the fact that the introduction of machine imagery is tied to Duchamp's mother, and in turn, to his sexual history.

The works *Dulcinea* and *Portrait of Chess Players*, also of 1911, introduce themes that coincide with the ones introduced in *Sonata*. In *Dulcinea* Duchamp depicts a woman, who remained anonymous to him, parading diagonally down and across the picture plane in successive poses, gradually being divested of her clothing. The parallels with *Nude Descending a Staircase* of 1912 are transparent — the loss of clothing/the loss of virginity and the descent in space/the descent of stairs.

Portrait of Chess Players (1911) used the same subject as the fauvist work *The Chess Game* (1910) of only a year earlier, but a striking contrast can be made between them. In *Portrait of Chess Players* the forms have little relation to apparent reality and there is an interpenetration of background, figures, and objects. The destruction of figure and ground distinction is virtually complete, following the tenets of Cubism but also Duchamp's own perverse tendencies. The "reality" depicted in the cubist paintings is no longer a holistic, differentiated one, but a disintegrated confusing mass of matter. That is, the distinctions between figure and ground, and subject and object, are broken down as the cubist method breaks down illusionistic space.

Perhaps one cannot say that the primary motivation for all cubists was the creation of a non-distinctual, anal-sadistic universe in their work.[30] One could, however, argue that in Duchamp's case the acceptance of the cubist idiom and the introduction of the given subject matter and themes were building to a greater "digestion" of forms and categories that would be evident in later works. For Duchamp then, cubism should be viewed less as a choice of purely artistic consequence and more as an alignment with an avant-garde that professed to be anti-conventional and an artistic style that takes as its "canon" the breakup of objects' illusionary distinctness and environment in painting. This is further evident in his disregard for an "acceptable" form of cubism in his creation of "nudes" and figural/mechanical works that were at odds with his contemporaries, his rejection by the Puteaux group (because of *Nude Descending a Staircase*) and his development of a personal sort of cubism ("mechanomorphic").

Cubist works created by Duchamp that include and follow *Nude*

Descending a Staircase have been called mechanomorphic because of his unique blending of mechanical and organic forms. The work *King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes* of 1912 is one of these mechanomorphic paintings and it is interesting if for no other reason than Duchamp painted it on the back side of the canvas he used for *Paradise*. What one looks at, then, in this painting is the "flip-side" of paradise. The uneasy quietness and isolation in *Paradise* is replaced by brooding, menacing forms that "move" in a jolting manner in *King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes*.[31] The game of chess, which combines the persona of aristocratic levels and abstract representations of them, occupied much of Duchamp's time and is worthy of study in and of itself.[32] Chess, and Duchamp's cubist representation of it, is yet another example of how he is attempting, because of feelings of inadequacy, the mixture of the inorganic, in rules and structure, and the organic, in the mind's creative play, into a homogeneous anal universe. Chess, being a game in which rules play a dominant role, would seem a fitting representation of the inorganic and authoritative (the Father's universe) which Duchamp sets against the organic, subversive nature of his mind's "creative" play (the anal-sadistic universe in which he overthrows the Father). The chess pieces' cold, distinct forms are depicted in warm tones and lose their distinctively authoritative character at the service of a homogeneously painted treatment.

The *King and Queen Surrounded by Swift Nudes* and other works of 1912 are similar not only in the tension between movement and stasis, or in the continued fusion of machine and organism, but also in the method of paint application and the hues used. The subdued earth tone palette was, of course, not unusual for cubist works, but when tied to Duchamp's method of application it may prove to be more individually significant. He had "given up brushes in order to model the paint with his fingers as if it were sculpture,"[33] kneading it to an "extra smoothness"[34] in consistency. Likewise, calling attention to the physically anal nature of Duchamp's works, Robert Lebel, in the first monograph on Duchamp, discusses a proposed yet unrealized work by Duchamp:

> This is the idea for a painting which was never executed and of which the medium, by the way, was to have been wood, 'the affective translation', according to Duchamp, 'of powdered silicate'. We may note in passing, to have done with the inevitable anal system, to what degree wood or rather the color of it, undoubtedly smeared on with the fingers, appeals to Duchamp, from "Nude Descending a Staircase" to the 'yellow world' of the "Bachelor Machine."[35]

The modeling of brown paint with the fingers is the greatest extreme of what Duchamp called the physical or sensual nature of painting and in this

method he found the most palpable means of physically expressing his perverse tendencies. This view of art, as a physically intriguing object which stimulates sensual delight, was something Duchamp would soon reject in favor of work that was more clean and intellectualized, at least to Duchamp's eye.

One might ask why, if Duchamp was creating works such as *The Passage from Virgin to Bride* which are now regarded as his most interesting paintings, Duchamp moved away from painting all together. The answer to this question is obviously multifaceted but we will focus on one specific area.[36] Evidence suggests, in writings and interviews, that Duchamp rejected painting, in large part, because of its sensual/physical nature. In addition to surfaces that were undifferentiated in terms of figure and ground, the material nature of his paintings at this time (1913-1914) came extremely close to becoming a "fecal" paintings — smooth brown pigment kneaded, modelled, and applied by hand. The reason(s) Duchamp switched from the extremely sensual nature of these paintings to the "cold," more "mechanical" later works has never been adequately explored from this psychoanalytic perspective. I would suggest that in addition to previously explored motivations for Duchamp's radical stylistic change at this point one takes into consideration the distinct and strong possibility that he was subconsciously pushing away from a type of painting that brought him in a physical, tangible way back to the anal stage of development. Duchamp was attempting, in his own words, to "break up forms — to *decompose* them,"[37] (emphasis added).

Duchamp related to his personal friend Robert Lebel that his remembrance of his mother in childhood was above all of her "placidity, even her indifference, which seems rather to have hurt him until it became a goal for him in his turn to attain." Additionally, Lebel relates that Duchamp told him "Mme. Duchamp never concealed her preference for the last arrivals" of the Duchamp family, that is Marcel's younger sisters.[38] Mme. Duchamp had lost a daughter just prior to the birth of Marcel and "there is some evidence that she tried to turn the boy Marcel into a replacement for the little girl she had lost less than six months before his birth."[39]

Yet, despite the fact that the recent loss of an older sibling undoubtedly created a situation in which much recognition would be lavished on young Marcel, this period of intense attention only lasted until the next sibling, a preferred girl, came along. Because Duchamp was born in 1887 and his younger sisters were born in 1889, 1895, and 1898, Marcel had experienced a childhood in which his mother's undivided and trauma-tinged attention was transferred to his younger sisters rather than remaining with him, even when he was only two years old and still developing his sense of self. This is not to say that such a time-space between children necessarily produces problems; but it is equally obvious from Duchamp's recollection, perhaps unconsciously remembering the period of evidently great attention after the death of his older sister, that the indifference of his mother had an undeniably strong

effect on him, something which is less likely to occur if the mother consistantly gives no attention at all to the child than if she bathes it with constant attention and then changes. The anal character of these paintings is, I believe, directly attributable to the fact that the attention of Duchamp's mother was cut off from him at the time when young Marcel was passing through the anal stage of psycho-sexual development. Consequently, these hermetically detached works are an attempt to re-bond with his mother at the stage which her attention was poured out on him and not his yet-to-be-born rival siblings.

Duchamp regressed in these "fecal" paintings and in other works to the creation of an anal-sadistic universe where sibling distinctions and sexual distinctions are apparently non-existent. In this created universe, his mother's love and attention are focused on him as they once were in his pre-genital, anal stage. The reconstruction of the maternal relationship was evident in an all too-dangerous manner in the physical nature of his late paintings[40] and at that point Duchamp found the sensual nature of painting so revolting that he changed to a "completely dry conception of art."[41] These richly textured paintings brought unconscious desires too close to the conscious surface, causing Duchamp to sublimate them in mechanical drawings and paintings. Nevertheless, Duchamp's subsequent "detached" work brings into play his created anal-sadistic world.

Despite the fact that Duchamp consciously and unconsciously pushed away from the physically anal character of his paintings of 1912, their anal character is carried on in a less obvious, "under-handed," or unconscious manner in his later works. In fact, at this point we might refer to a later comment of Duchamp's to Pierre Cabanne in 1956, "I do not really love the machine ... it was better to do it to machines than to people, or doing it to me."[42] Duchamp seemed to be implying that his paintings were "doing" something destructive to the subject, something that was apparently destroying and something he would rather not do to himself or even to people. What this act is can only be guessed, but it does fit within the schema of destructive anal sadistic paintings and, as we will see, in the consequent sublimation of this issue in "machine" works. Thus, depictions of machines using the "dry" drawing techniques of an architectural plan are not a move away from important personal subject matter, but are a substitution for people, in fact for Duchamp himself.[43]

This substitutionary role of machines is evident in his first work in this post-mechanomorphic period, *Chocolate Grinder* of 1913. The anality of a painting about chocolate would seem to be self evident — although few have commented on it as such. It is usually understood iconographically as a representation of an onanistic act on the bachelor's (Duchamp's) part. Duchamp himself said that the "bachelor grinds his chocolate himself" and its product turns into "milk chocolate,"[44] thus indicating the sexually charged nature of machines in his work. This is understandably interpreted in a purely phallic, masturbatory sense and in light of Duchamp's comments the masturbatory

nature of this machine is undeniable. Yet, this ignores the fact that the primary purpose of such a machine is the grinding up of distinct units into a homogeneous product. The product of this process is closer to feces than sperm — which has been the usual interpretation. Because of Duchamp's willingness to associate the *Chocolate Grinder* with an onanistic act, one might be cautioned against accepting his prescribed meaning. "Grinding" should not only be seen in the phallic sense but also as a digestive analogy.

While working on paintings such as *Chocolate Grinder*, Duchamp began sketching and planning for a work later called *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (heretofore referred to as *The Large Glass*) of 1915-1923. It is a complex — if frustrating — work. Duchamp's aforementioned interest in N-dimensional geometry led him to a "creative" use of scientific laws. He said that he wanted to "slightly distend the laws of physics," or create "Playful Physics;"[45] which, of course, means creating a whole new "system," his own subjectively created world. The creation of domains for the bride and bachelors, the careful iconographic description in his notes, and the detailed narrative line describing the processes of the "characters" all serviced Duchamp in the creation of this hermetically sealed world/work.[46]

Extensive iconographic analyses have been undertaken on behalf of *The Large Glass* by numerous authors[47] and it is not the intent of this paper to dispute their legitimacy. Nor is it possible to give adequate treatment to all of the elements in *The Large Glass* here. In fact, Duchamp himself claimed the work as a "hilarious picture"[48] indicating its farcical nature. Thus, I am limiting the present analysis to the general creation and theme of this work and how it fits within the given theory of perversion.

As mentioned, in *The Large Glass* Duchamp essentially created a "universe" of sorts in which his "playful physics" were given free reign and were not prescribed from the order in apparent reality. The creation of another world itself (and for all of its structured interaction and self-containment it is a "world") tells one of Duchamp's dissatisfaction with the conditions of this world, his dissatisfaction with himself and the need to create one which is more to his liking; as Freud said, "Happy people never make fantasies."[49] In the case of this fantasy/work, the creation of the anal-sadistic universe is not so much accomplished by the uniting of opposites (although one could apply the theory of perversion to the extant alchemical readings of the work) but by the creation of a "world" and procreative process that are an "imitation or parody of the genital father's universe"[50] — "an attempt to substitute a world of shame and pretense for reality."[51]

Duchamp even went so far as to create new "standard" units of measure for the *Glass* called *Three Standard Stoppages*; made by dropping a one meter string from the height of one meter, fixing it to a canvas with varnish, and using this shape, either cut out of wood or encased in glass, as an anti-conventional normative "ruler." It would be impossible for Duchamp to create an entirely new universe so he was only left with distorting or perverting

the conventions (sexual, physical, psychological, spiritual...) of this one. Thus, the anal character of *The Large Glass* results from Duchamp's creation of a set of relationships between bachelors, mechanisms, and bride which do not correspond to the natural "laws" of physics, or human relationships. He creates a bride who never meets her groom (or has no single groom, unless one considers Duchamp the groom) and who has been described as a "bitch, a tease, and a flirt."[52] The bachelors are not physical presences, but molds. Thus, Duchamp's symbolic bearer of the male's sexual physical presence is revealed to be the one possessing a "lack," to be absent. These are only two examples of inversions of norm-defined and determined behavior from this incredibly rich work. Rather than commenting on the conventional understanding of "brides" and "bachelors," Duchamp deals with these sexually complex issues by creating a world that presents a fraudulent set of relationships, a perversion of the authentic. They exist in (or create) a world in which "taking over the role of the Creator by bringing about the anal universe implies the dethronement of the Creator."[53]

During the extended time Duchamp worked on *The Large Glass* he created the works for which he is perhaps most famous — the readymades.[54] These were common household objects with little physical artistic manipulation displayed as works of art. They have been interpreted as, among other things, "emblematic realism,"[55] emblematic commodities, "non-art,"[56] and as artistic role-defining questions. Duchamp's creation of readymades as non-specific signs has given rise to a panoply of responses. But the question of what these objects did for Duchamp as opposed to non-object-art remains. The anal sadistic universe at work and evident in Duchamp's earlier work is also present here. These were not "dumb" objects and, despite Duchamp's claims of a disinterested choosing method, they likely resulted from specific pressures in Duchamp's life. Freud, in a discussion of the relationship between play and fantasy, said that "when the human being grows up and ceases to play, he gives up the connection with real objects."[57] In the realm of Duchamp's play he has brought back the real object and if one sees Duchamp reverting back to a child-like state of suspending the differences between play and reality, one is not far off the mark, for this is the world of the pervert. Building on the relationship between person, play, and object brought up by Freud, Heinz Kohut also discusses the narcissistic individual's relationship to their environment. For Kohut, the "creative individual is less psychologically separated from his surroundings than a non-creative person; the 'I-you' barrier is not as clearly defined"[58] — in other words, the creative person is more likely to manifest a perverse tendency.[59] "Similarly, the creative individual is keenly aware of these aspects of his surroundings which are of significance to his work and he invests them with his narcissistic-idealizing libido."[60]

By using the insights of Freud and Kohut one can see that the objects Duchamp chooses for the readymades are likely tied to a personal investment

in them. In fact, Duchamp's refutation of the possibility that he used conscious, aesthetic criteria for choosing the objects may lead one to the understanding that there were less obvious reasons for the move to the object. For if Duchamp places all of the credit/blame of the choices of objects on disinterestedness or chance, one could respond, as Freud would, that often what we consider chance events are shaped by the projection of our own unknown, unconscious motivating factors.

It is often the point at which Duchamp introduced the readymades that criticism of his oeuvre changes from autobiographical/psychological to cultural/philosophical. In part, this may be a result of the critic's frustration when encountering these seemingly sterile hermetic works — the confrontational, banal character of the subject matter forces one to discuss the works on other than a physical level. Analyzing works as being *conceptually* anal in character or as *conceptual* evidence of the creation of a particular psychological point of view which we have called the anal-sadistic universe is without a doubt a more difficult task than analyzing paintings whose physical nature is manifestly "about" such issues. Since his "dry" academic paintings of the *Chocolate Grinder*, however, we have seen how the anal character of Duchamp's work has gone "underground" so to speak, hiding itself beneath the glossy, smooth exterior of Duchamp's work.[61] So it is with the readymades. Like a patient of Chasseguet-Smirgel who dreamt of painting a pile of logs silver, covering the fact that he had "put some excrement on the logs" with a shiny surface, Duchamp too is covering the anality of his artworks with cold representational methods "in order to idealize them, without changing their inner nature."[62]

Duchamp's readymades are a synthesis of opposing concepts such as subject/object and art/non-art and it is in this manner which they relate to his anal-sadistic outlook. The iconoclastic nature of Duchamp's display of a bicycle wheel mounted on a stool has been much commented on, as has the ramifications such a gesture had on the art world. Why such a work would be created by Duchamp becomes more clear in the light of our analysis of earlier works. We have already noted the tendency in Duchamp's work to merge "given" categories of machine and organism or of figure and ground. In the readymades, however, the breakdown of distinctual elements occurs most tellingly at the conceptual level.

When presented with an object such as a bicycle wheel as art, the most obvious question is, Is it Art? A less obvious but more potent question follows. — If this is Art, then what is my relation to it, and consequently to other objects I encounter? What readymades do at their most powerful level is destroy the traditional barrier between the art-object as an object of inquiry and the human consciousness as being directed toward this object. Breaking this barrier creates an inversion, or perversion, of the traditional structure of aesthetic experience — it directs the inquiry to the human subject rather than the object. The display of art as void rather than mass, as subject rather than

object of inquiry is the ultimate theatricality, the ultimate invasion of the beholder's space.[63]

Readymades, despite Duchamp's claims to the contrary, were always manipulated by him in some manner, whether by rearrangement, inversion, or inscription. Thus, while the choice of object plays a vital role, Duchamp also layers meaning onto the chosen object through manipulation. Despite their seemingly cold nature, the readymades can be tied to a theory of perversion in which inversions or perversions of traditional barriers between categories are destroyed or brought into serious doubt: subject and object, art and non-art (or "the real"), and self and other. Often used as a parallel to Duchamp's whimsical, "nonsensical," fantastic creations, *Alice in Wonderland* is not only a story about whimsy, nonsense, and fantasy. Equally valuable is Alice's understanding (or misunderstanding) of who she is; she had come to lose her sense of identity. When Alice fell into Wonderland she not only wondered where she was, but consequently who she was. Likewise, the carnival atmosphere of Duchamp's readymades creates a world where we not only revel in their fantasy world, but by which we come to ask what constitutes one's self and other.

Later works that are more obviously about Duchamp's self-image, gender-indeterminacy, and general confusion about self-identity are the bisexual works. Duchamp not only used bisexual images in his art (*L.H.O.O.Q.*) and design work (in book covers and window displays for Andre Breton), but created the female alter ego/pseudonym Rose Selavy, dressing up in women's clothes for photographs and even producing works of art in her name. Alchemical criticism sees Duchamp's behavior as a solution to the "problem" of separate sexes rather than as an unusual, if not strange, form of compensatory behavior. Duchamp then, was not satisfied in questioning the role of art but was compelled to pursue a continual questioning of self, which at this point became blatantly about his sexual nature. Duchamp's Rose Selavy does not present herself in such a manner as to call attention to the differences between male and female, but as a unification of the two into one image/persona. The distinction between male and female, between Duchamp and Rose Selavy, becomes even less discernable because she also "signed" many of Duchamp's works. The question arises — when is Marcel Duchamp, Marcel Duchamp and when is Marcel Duchamp, Rose Selavy? — or is such a distinction possible? It appears that Duchamp wanted no such distinction to exist. Rather, he wanted to create a situation where, at least for a time, one would not know if a given work would be claimed by Rose Selavy or Marcel Duchamp, female or male, scam or "original" artist. For the individual whose "project" is creating a world where homogeneity reigns, this confusion of "authorship" and confusion over gender is highly desirable (the "authorship" issue arises also in relationship to the later multiple editions of readymades made in conjunction with Arturo Schwartz — when Duchamp said he was "ready to rape and be raped by everyone."[64]).

The creation of Rose Selavy is Duchamp's admission of the lack of a wholly constituted self and the presence of a disintegrated, disoriented self.[65]

In his most secret, last work, *Étant donnés: 1. Le chute d'eau, 2. Le gaz d'eclairage* of 1946 -1966, Duchamp continues to turn the art world and his own work on its head. In these post-war years Duchamp created few works of art that were intended for display in traditional art settings. Often his creations were favors to friends, such as book covers, editions for catalogues, or gifts. It then came as a great surprise to virtually everyone that Duchamp's "going underground" was a smokescreen for privacy. Richard Hamilton first commented that Duchamp's earlier trips to Berlin, England, and Buenos Aires apparently triggered a creative leap that in part may have resulted from a certain amount of isolation from everyday artistic pressures. Perhaps the same could be said of Duchamp's "dropout" period. The shock of the disparate nature of Duchamp's last work may be attributed to the freedom he felt from the artistic community (a position consciously chosen early in his artistic career for the sake of artistic license).

Étant donnés and its related works bring to the surface the sublimated issues of the "clean," "dry" pieces created by Duchamp since the *Chocolate Grinder*. In fact, most of his work since 1946 is overtly sensual in a manner that had been absent from his work since his mechanomorphic paintings. Rather than "doing it to machines" Duchamp began to "do it to people," or at least to a pigskin-covered female figural form. Also, the sensual nature of art that had so revolted him because of its dangerous physical properties, that is, its ability to stupefy the artist with intoxicating fumes of paint and promises of rich material delights, now emerges. Works such as *Please Touch* (1947), *Female Fig Leaf* (1950), *Objet Dard* (1951), *Wedge of Chastity* (1954), *Torture-Morte* (1959), and *Sculpture-Morte* (1959) all show a kind of abandonment to physicality that Duchamp had earlier disparaged.

The relationship of *Étant donnés* to the *Large Glass* has been commented on in a fairly thorough manner, usually relating the recumbent nude directly to the bride of the earlier work. The treatment of the nude is undeniably the most significant singular aspect of the work, its legs splayed directly in front of the spectator/participant in a brutally confrontational manner. This "faceless" figure displays her sex as *the* identifying characteristic of herself — "dehumanizing" her by "anatomizing" her.[66] The hairlessness of the figure has been analyzed in the following manner by Dalia Judovitz: "The absence of pubic hair on the sex of the nude, rather than merely revealing the naked sex, also alludes to the pictorial tradition throughout which the female sex had been dissimulated and thus outlined even more emphatically."[67] To add the obvious to this may seem trivial, but the absence of pubic hair leaves open the possibility that the figure represents a prepubescent individual for Duchamp. Duchamp's presentation of this figure seems to once again reveal his project of reverting back to a time of intimate maternal bonding by "innocent" looking. One could view the figure as the sexually immature mother, or

sister, that Duchamp wanted because he felt neglected by his true mother, as an expressed desire to live in a place of sexual immaturity where the rule of the Father does not hold power.

Duchamp seems to know of his inability to function within a "traditional" sexual framework and of his inability to ravage the nude directly in front of him even as he was unable to have a close relationship with his mother — the genital world is sealed off by an old Spanish door. The separation of the viewer by the large door of *Étant donnés* creates the feeling of impenetrable detachment which does not allow one to be intimate in anything but a visual manner, a voyeuristic act. What has been created is a refutation of the private physical interaction with a work of art that resembles a relationship with an individual. Indeed, the "theatricality" of his earlier readymades is gone and in its place is a manifestly physical work become sign by its severing of physical and psychological ties. As John Golding put it: "Like Mallarmé, Duchamp appears to be obsessed with the idea of the work of art as a symbol or substitute for the object of love or desire which cannot be touched, for to do so would break the spell."[68] In fact, the "spell" that Duchamp does not wish to break is his creation of a world of ambiguous boundaries in which his position is secure, unthreatened, and in which he has illusory omnipotence. In a world that has strong tendencies to polarize issues Duchamp wanted to live in the "gaps" by continual contradiction and subversion.

Beginning with a theory of perversion put forth by Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel we saw how Duchamp's early "mythic" painting, *Paradise*, dealt with the hiding of sexual differences and the beginning of humanity's continual blurring of these distinctions. In Duchamp's cubist works the breakdown of pictorial space, the blurring of perceptual boundaries, and the introduction of the machine are all significant in relation to Duchamp's perversion. Concerning anality, his later paintings, such as *Passage from Virgin to Bride*, were virtual fecal paintings that in a very physical sense caused such a strong revulsion by Duchamp that he turned from painting.

In the works that were "dry" and academic, Duchamp sublimated the anal character of his paintings into a conceptual perversion. In *The Large Glass* he creates an anal sadistic universe by perverting the categories of the perceptually real world — mixing machine and man, breaking standards, distorting male/female relationships, etc. In the readymades the digestion of forms, categories and distinctions reaches a conceptual peak. Finally, looking to Duchamp's creation of Rose Selavy and other such plays with distinctions between male and female, one sees the perverse elements sublimated in the "dry" works begin to surface and culminate in *Étant donnés*.

Duchamp's "project," as revealed here, is both broader and more narrow than perceived by social, alchemical and economic theories. His work becomes all the more rich if one can understand that it was a highly intelligent, complex, yet disturbed individual who created these works. Categories, distinctions, and hierarchies bump up against each other and become the con-

fusing, indistinguishable mass of personality, concepts, work, and words which constitute Duchamp.

NOTES

I would like to thank Donald Kuspit for his helpful comments in preparing this essay, and John Bakker for his encouragement. This essay is a very condensed version of my Masters thesis, *Eros and Rroses: The Life and Art of Marcel Duchamp* (The State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1991), which is concerned with Marcel Duchamp and psychoanalysis.

1 Marcel Duchamp in a talk given at the Houston meeting of the American Federation of the Arts, April 1957, which first appeared in print in *ARTnews*, vol. 56, no. 4 (Summer 1957) rptd. in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds Michel Sanouillet and Elmer Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), p. 138.

2 Robert Lebel, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Grove Press, 1959), p. 27.

3 Systems such as alchemy, and the mathematical approach of Craig Adcock seem not to be aimed at the heart of this apparently central issue — but this is not to say that such all-encompassing systems cannot add to as well as detract from our experience of Duchamp's works.

4 Marcel Duchamp as quoted in William Steitz, "What's Happened to Art...," *Vogue*, vol. 1, no. 2 (June, 1961), p. 77.

5 Ellen Handler Spitz, *Art and Psyche* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), p. 7.

6 Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (New York: International Universities Press), quoted in Spitz, p.10.

7 Spitz, p.42.

8 Janine Chasseguet-Smirgel, *Creativity and Perversion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984).

9 Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey (New York: Basic Books, 1962.), p. 1.

10 Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, p. 15.

11 *Ibid*, p.16.

12 To characterize this model as Freud's only one is a distortion. His theory of perversion developed along with his other writings and thus cannot be as easily "boxed in" as I have presented it here. For an excellent, brief, discussion of Freud's developing theory of perversion see William H. Gillespie, "The Structure and Aetiology of Sexual Perversion." in *Perversions: Psychodynamics and Therapy*, ed. Sandor Lorand (New York: Gramercy Pub. Co., 1956), pp 28-41.

13 Franz. Alexander, "A Note to the Theory of Perversions." in *Perversions: Psychodynamics and Therapy*, ed. Sandor Lorand (New York: Gramercy Pub. Co., 1956), p. 5.

14 Michael Balint's essay "Perversion and Genitality" in *Perversion: Psychodynamics and Therapy*, ed. Sandor Lorand (New York: Grammercy Pub. Co.,1956), pp. 46-55, lays out what he believes to be the three basic theories of perversion: (1) biological, that is, anything that is not directly involved in procreation is perverse, (2) the aforementioned Freudian theory of surviving infantile sexual gratifications as perverse, and (3) object relations theories which stress the "lack of proper love for a human object or the presence of immature forms of love in perversions." Balint goes on to explain the shortcomings of each theory.

15 One is reminded of D.W. Winnicott's famous statement that "There is no such thing as a baby," only a mother and baby together as one indistinguishable unit.

16 Chasseguet-Smirgel, p. 2.

17 *Ibid*, p. 13.

18 This refers to Carl G. Jung's *Psychology and Alchemy* (1944), "The Collected Works of C.G. Jung," Bollingen Series XX, vol. XII, eds. Sir Herbert Read, Michael Fordham, Gerhard Adler, trans. R.F.C. Hull (New York: Pantheon; London; Routledge Kegan Paul, 1953).

19 Marcel Duchamp quoted by Robert Lebel in *Marcel Duchamp*, p. 73. Subsequently quoted by Arturo Schwartz in support of alchemy in d'Harnoncourt and McShine's Marcel Duchamp (New York: The Museum of Modern Art; Philadelphia: The Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1973), p. 81, and by Francis M. Naumann in Kuenzli and Naumann's *Marcel Duchamp Artist of the Century* (Cambridge; Mass: MIT Press, 1989), p. 32, to deny the validity of an alchemical reading.

20 Francis M. Naumann, "Marcel Duchamp: A Reconciliation of Opposites," in *Marcel Duchamp: Artist of the Century*, eds. Rudolf Kuenzli and Francis M. Naumann (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), p. 29.

21 *Ibid*, p. 32.

22 John A. Walker, "Dreamwork and Art Work," *Leonardo*, vol. 16, no. 2 (1983), pp. 109-114.

23 See my Masters thesis, The State University of New York at Stony Brook, 1991, for an expanded extrapolation of the works here and on works that were unable to be touched on in this format.

24 In fact, contemporary psychoanalytic theorist Robert Stoller, in *Observing the Erotic Imagination* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985), associates perversion with sin, saying: "Everyone knows that the concept of sin is at the center of the word *perversion*," p. 6; "*The acvtivity is perverse*, I shall say, *if the erotic excitement depends on one's feeling that one is sinning*," p. 7; "He [the pervert — in this case an exhibitionist] needs to believe she [the observer] is thinking that — that he is doing wrong — or the behavior fails," p. 19.

25 It is interesting to note that Duchamp was the only one of his family to keep his given name. His brothers changed their names and his sisters married and adopted their husband's names. Duchamp did, of course, adopt a pseudonym — Rose Selavy. Such a whole hearted rejection of the Duchamp family name surely points to something unusual about this family's relationships. Changing names "marks a rite of passage" and a rejection of one's background (Anselm L. Strauss, *Mirrors and Masks: The Search for Identity*, London: Martin Robertson, 1969, p. 16). Chasseguet-Smirgel also says: "as the name is what establishes filiation, it seems to me that changing one's name is equivalent to disavowing one's origin, that is, one's father," p. 72.

26 Marcel Duchamp in an interview with James Johnson Sweeney, *The Bulleten of the Museum of Modern Art*, vol. XIII, no. 4-5, 1946, pp. 19-21; reported in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp* eds. Sanioullet and Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), p. 126.

27 It should be noted at this point that the Bride in Duchamp's *Large Glass* is often referred to in terms associated with an automobile; such as in Sanoulilet and Peterson, p. 42: "contrary to the previous notes, the bride no longer provides gasoline for the cylinder-breasts." In another note for the Large Glass he explicitly associates the bride with the automobile: "the Bride basically is a motor. But before being a motor which transmits her timid-power — she is this very timid power — This timid power is a sort of automobiline, love gasoline, that, distributed to the quite feeble cylinders, within reach of the *sparks of her constant life*, is used for the blossoming of this virgin who has reached the goal of her desire...."

28 The relationship between Duchamp and his mother was, apparently, problematic. Robert Lebel describes in *Marcel Duchamp* the favoritism shown by Mme. Duchamp to Marcel's sisters and her subsequent indifference to him, p. 2.

29 This is suggested in Arturo Schwartz, *Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Abrams, 1975), p. 11 and also by many other authors.

30 Donald Kuspit's "Cubist Hypochondria: On the Case of Picasso and Braque," in *Artforum*, vol. 28, no. 1 (September, 1989): pp. 112-116, makes the case for a much more personal

interpretation of what has generally been conceived of as a primarily aesthetic movement. He says: "The Cubist picture is the first truly regressive communication from the disintegrating self. Its morbid message — and true Cubism is tangibly morbid — is the impossibility of coherent organization in a world of change that is as emotionally discomforting as it is physically exhilarating," p. 115.

31 Robert Lebel in *Marcel Duchamp* (1959), p. 13, was the first to draw attention to the possible symbolic significance of these two images occupying opposite sides of the same canvas.

32 For an insightful discussion of the place of chess in Duchamp's life and art see Alice Goldfarb Marquis' *Marcel Duchamp: Eros, c'est la vie: A Biography* (New York: Whitston Pub. Co., 1981), pp. 207-237.

33 Lebel, p. 25.

34 Marcel Duchamp quoted by Lawrence Steefel, Jr. in "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine," *Marcel Duchamp*, eds. d'Harnoncourt and McShine (1973), p. 74.

35 *Ibid*, p. 25

36 Other writings on the drastic change that occurred in Duchamp's shift away from painting concentrate on his visit to Munich, his vow of non-repetition, and his desire to put painting at the service of the mind.

37 Marcel Duchamp in an interview with James Johnson Sweeney, *The Bulletin of the Museum of Modern Art*,V.XIII, N.4-5, pp. 19-21; rpt. in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Sanouillet and Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), p. 174.

38 Lebel, p. 2.

39 Marquis, p. 11. The evidence presented is a photograph, one of several, of Marcel dressed in "white Mary Janes, long white stockings knit in an elaborate clock pattern, and a lacy white dress tied with a long, stiff sash. His hair was long and girlishly curled, cut in bangs across the forehead." The author points out that this would not have been too unusual to late nineteenth century French standards, but it does give the psychoanalytic critic pause to think that this particular photograph was taken at age three.

40 Lawrence Steefel, Jr. in his essay "Marcel Duchamp and the Machine," in *Marcel Duchamp*, eds. d'Harnoncourt and McShine (1973), comments that the subject matter is also revealing in these paintings. As "problematic outcomes of Duchamp's struggle against obsessional impulses and fantasies... the mechanomorphic works of 1911-1912 [represent] aggressive irrationality." p. 70.

41 Marcel Duchamp in a televised interview with James Johnson Sweeney, NBC, January 1956, rpt. in *The Writings of Marcel Duchamp*, eds. Sanouillet and Peterson (New York: Da Capo Press, 1973), p. 130.

42 Interview by Pierre Cabanne with Marcel Duchamp in *Dialogues with Marcel Duchamp* trans. Ron Padgett (New York: Viking, 1971), p. 39; quoted in d'Harnoncourt and McShine, eds., p. 71.

43 One might say that the physical nature of Duchamp's work becomes anal-retentive at this stage because of its utter cleanness or tidiness — thereby only placing him on the opposite end of the same anal spectrum.

44 Marcel Duchamp quoted in Lebel, p. 32.

45 Calvin Tomkins, *The World of Marcel Duchamp* (New York: Time, Inc., 1966), p. 90.

46 This notion of hermetic detachment runs through Duchamp's work: the chocolate grinder for the painting of the same name was observed through a window pane, there are windows in *Fresh Widow* and *Bagarre d'Austerlitz*, the 11 rue Larney exhibition of Surrealist works was hung with twine so thick as to prevent contact with the works, and *Étant donnés* confronts the viewer with a large door with only two peep holes allowing the work to be seen. Duchamp always seemed to prefer detachment and chance which seem to echo the "detached" relationship he had with his mother.

47 Among them are John Golding, Arturo Schwartz, Craig Adcock and Richard Hamilton.

48 Marcel Duchamp's notes for *The Large Glass* in Sanouillet and Peterson, p. 30.

49 Sigmund Freud in *On Creativity and the Unconscious*, ed. by Benjamin Nelson (New York: Harper & Brothers Pub, 1958), p. 47. This is disputed by Melanie Klein who claims that fantasy is a primary, universal process of common play.

50 Chasseguet-Smirgel, p. 11.

51 *Ibid*, p. 12.

52 John Golding, *Marcel Duchamp: The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even* (New York: Viking, 1972), p. 53.

53 Chaseguet-Smirgel, p. 5.

54 *The Large Glass* was, in fact, left by Duchamp in a state of "incompletion" thereby perverting his perversion by not allowing the "playful" laws of physics to act themselves out. The incomplete state of this work is extremely significant.

55 Werner Hoffman, "Emblematic Realism" in *Marcel Duchamp in Perspective*, ed. Joseph Masheck (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1975), p. 53.

56 David Reed, "The Developing Language of Ready-Mades," *Art History* vol. 8, no. 2 (June, 1985), p. 209.

57 Freud, *On Creativity and the Unconscious*, p. 46.

58 Heinz Kohut, *Self Psychology and the Humanities*, ed. Charles B. Strozier (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1985), p. 112.

59 Chasseguet-Smirgel discusses the higher ratio of perverse activity in the arts: "...the number of 'perverts' involved in the field of art is probably much greater than the average for the population in general. Examples are superfluous. You certainly have many in mind, from the most creative genius to the insignificant minor artist who nevertheless enjoyed his day of glory and/or left his mark on art history. It can be supposed, therefore, that the pervert inclines in some particular manner to the world of art," p. 90.

60 Kohut, p. 113.

61 Balint in "Perversions and Genitality" in *Perversions: Psychodynamics and Therapy* relates fetishistic objects to anality, "they must be used objects (or exactly the opposite: absolutely new)...." One should note that virtually all of Duchamp's objects were new and shiny (although early pictures of the *Bicycle Wheel* reveal it to be an old stool with a rung missing) and many of them were bought. In the interview with Pierre Cabbane Duchamp demonstrated how anal retentive he became about his work: "After a short while, paintings always get dirty, yellow, or old because of oxidation. Now my own colors were completely protected, the glass being a means for keeping them both sufficiently pure and unchanged for a rather long time," p. 41. This is strikingly different from the man who had earlier applied richly impastoed paint with his hands.

62 Casseguet-Smirgel, pp. 92-93.

63 I am using the notion of "theater" defined by Michael Fried in his essay "Art and Objecthood," in *Artforum*, (June, 1967) — although without his negative emphasis.

64 Duchamp quoted in Calvin Thomkins, *Off the Wall* (New York: Penguin Books, 1987), p.272.

65 The imagery of sexual indeterminacy is not limited to Duchamp's representation of himself but also includes: *L.H.O.O.Q.*, works for Andre Breton (a bookcover with Breton's face pasted on the Statue of Liberty and a bookstore window display whose female mannequin sports a water spout on her thigh), a female mannequin clothed in Duchamp's hat and sportcoat for the 1938 *Exposition Internationale du Surréalisme*, and symbolically in the "phallic" gas lamp held aloft by the recumbent female nude in *Étant donnés*.

66 Robert Stoller says such dehumanizing is necessary for the pervert to maintain distance

between themself and others — "one dehumanizes his object in order to feel safe enough to get excited," Stoller, p. 32.

67 Dalia Judovitz, "Rendezvous with Marcel Duchamp: Given" in Kuenzli and Naumann, eds. *Marcel Duchamp Artist of the Century* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989), pp. 190-191.

68 Golding, p. 99.

Painting Women; Feinting with Eros

Francis V. O'Connor

The female body has always been a major attraction for artists, and two recent exhibitions contained paintings that demonstrated the psycho-sexual variations that can be played upon this perrenial theme.

At the New York Historical Society, a fine exhibition titled *Paris 1889: American Artists at the Universal Exposition*, provided traditional views of the subject: a stunning 1889 portrait by Edwin Howland Blashfield of his first wife, and a typical society portrait by John Singer Sargent. At the Pace Gallery, in marked contrast, a comparison of paintings and drawings of women by Willem de Kooning and Jean Dubuffet offered the modernist view.

The Blashfield, at first sight, appeared to be a typical portrait of its period: a dignified matron in a visually dominating golden gown enthroned on an antique chair. Closer inspection revealed that never had clothes been painted with a greater reverence for their contents. Granting the academic technique of drawing the nude first and then draping it, Blashfield here painted the object of desire with such immediacy and detail that even the satin's seams strained at bosom and haunch with the lush flesh of his beloved wife. This was typical of the man — by any standard our American Rubens — in all his portrayals of women. Best known as a muralist, his bumptious pendentive allegories, to be found in many a court house rotunda, define the curve of that architectural member with overt erotic exuberance. I know of no painter of women so frank in his attraction yet so natural in his methods of revelation.

If Blashfield painted the content of his gowns, Sargent typically painted just the gowns and placed the contents in their virtual vicinity. The proto-Abstract Expressionist of satin, velvet and tulle, he is more than wary of the bedrock female flesh. At times more psychologically acute than Blashfield in noticing and rendering those twists of hand and humped shoulders seen among the insecure rich, he never gave any sense that these nervous creatures actually are wearing the clothes he painted with such bravura. Not surprisingly, he did much better with men — whom he usually did not clothe at all. But these paragons of the Olympian gym are mostly in his murals, which are studiously ignored for his popular portraits — despite the fact he came to

despise doing what he called *paughtrits*, and spent the last half of his career mostly painting men on walls.

Here, in two of the great turn-of-the-century artists, we have manifest the simple difference in perception, when it comes to portraying the female body, between the heterosexual and the homosexual sensibility. This suggests that a painter's specific vision is a function of eros at its most essential, and that a painter's tendency to delineate form is controlled by what the tenor of his sensuality permits him to perceive. Modernists, of course, saw Blashfield as too blatant (his wife's chair, it is true, does have buxom sphinxoid armrests which echo her endowments), and Sargent too distant and superficial. But that is not the point, if we take the art as given to its time, not received by ours — as we used to do for the modernists until we became postmodernists.

Similarly, the *de Kooning/Dubuffet: Women* show at Pace revealed diametrically opposite views of the female by two heterosexual painters. The Frenchman, in his generally muddy facture, played with the idea of the *earth mother* image of woman. But he displayed all the pent violence of Western man in his ancient, relentless and all too successful campaign to eradicate the hegemony of the mother cults from culture. In almost every image he flayed the female body down the back and spread the pelt out to dry on his canvas. Down the center stands an almost totemic (or Cakra) column of the female sexual attributes: face, mouth, armpits, breasts, navel, vagina, anus. Splayed to either side is an amorphous and often hideous oval of mottled skin. (They recall that c. 1500 B.C. golden mask from Mycenae, its features flattened out by some old cave-in, more than the c. 15,000 B.C. *Venus of Willendorf* and her sisters, which ought first come to mind.) These bodies are planes (one cannot help think, in modern parlance: doormats); they have no volume, no rotundity. To say they are not idealized — as did the artist — misses the point of their ultimate sexual indiscretion: they are dead. Congress with them becomes a necrophiliac fantasy.

The Dutch/American de Kooning, in contrast to Dubuffet's murderous attack on the female body, showed an almost comic fear of the female personality. The body is there, especially about the bosom, but the face dominates, and the body's other female characteristics are muted, played down to a general lubriciousness that became, over time, more paint than image. Indeed, unable to deny the threat of the female personality, de Kooning took pot-shots at her body. One detail in particular (in the work owned by the Whitney) stands out: a cupped right breast, with the cup of the bra split — like that famous eyeball in the film.

The traditional aspects of woman: alluring Venus, matronly Juno, and hellish Hecate, are universal archetypes. It is of interest here that only the third seemed most attractive to the modernist sensibility (as perhaps the reductive odalesques of Matisse and Picasso proved despite themselves). Incapable of idealizing, ideologically opposed to allegory, and afraid of sen-

timent, modernism could only attack woman out of its congenital melancholia. The traditional artists managed to express themselves — both their longings and their fears — while maintaining a healthy decorum; the modernists laid bare their rage, and revealed their inability to see beyond individual experience and purience.

The key, perhaps, was the loss to the modernist sensibility of any concept of eros as opposed to sex. Both Blashfield and Sargent were erotically charged by their sitters, but their innated sensuality was attracted to the content and to the surface/status of the gowns respectively. Eros is the energy of aesthetics, and is manifest as the eye of the artist can image what he feels. But in Dubuffet and de Kooning it seems entirely absent; they did not paint appearance from the fullness of an eros — charged identification, but rather from the stance of a depressive reaction. Thus their loathing of their own desires took its vengence on the subject — proving yet again the basis in self-hate of the modernist imperative.

From another angle: Sargent's 1884 *Madame X*, with her huntress crown, lavendar body powder and wayward shoulder strap, was just as shocking to Paris as de Kooning's *Woman I* was to New York during the early 1950s. But where has that left woman as the subject of art today? Blashfield and Dubuffet both painted more or less what men want, but with an invidious contrast of tact to violence. But they, at least, painted wholes; Sargent and de Kooning settled just for aspects: the sheen of the surface or status, or the devious horrors of projection. Only firmly held ideals of unity or ordering — i.e. of the sublime or the merely elegant — can presume, for the nonce, which had the better part of eros.

My bet is on Blashfield...

New York: December 1990

Countertransference and Critical Discourse: The Case of André Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire

Beth S. Gersh-Nesic

The Museum of Modern Art's exhibition *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism*, curated by William Rubin, director emeritus of the Department of Painting and Sculpture, opens the door to a host of revisionist theories for the study of Cubism through its convincing demonstration that Braque often led through innovation, while Picasso followed with variations that overshadowed Braque's quieter production. However, in much the same spirit of the poet/critic André Salmon's preference for Pablo Picasso over Georges Braque, William Rubin endorses the eyewitness reports of artist/critic Ardengo Soffici and art dealers Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler and Wilhelm Uhde over those of poet/critics André Salmon and Guillaume Apollinaire, because the former's commentaries agree with his thesis while Salmon's and Apollinaire's do not.[1] To buttress his argument, Rubin cites letters written by Picasso which disparaged the "laughable ideas" (Rubin's translation) of his critic-friends.[2]

This sort of polarization of "right" versus "wrong" historical information always astonishes me, especially in the literature on Cubism. Surely, it seems counterproductive to examine an aesthetic fraught with ambiguities and overlay in bipartite terms (even if only implied rather than fully articulated as such). Cubism (an unfortunately distracting misnomer) deserves a more holistic methodology, one more in tune with the movement's research and intentions, which include the desire to conceptually depict reality as a coincidence of relative perceptions, a simultaneous interpenetration of ordinary experiences, and a regrouping of disparate facts synthesized by a new visual language (a retrospective glance backward from the Situationist International movement to Cubism might shed new light on this aspect of the Cubists' criteria). Therefore, adding my voice to the burgeoning legions of Cubist revi-

sionists, I propose broadening our range of vision by piecing together all the divergences and contradictions in the eyewitness literature in an effort to reassess our identification of the Cubist movement and accept its wide variety of expressions: Picasso's and Braque's Cubism, Henri Le Fauconnier's Cubism, Jean Metzinger's and Albert Gleize's Cubism, Fernand Léger's Cubism, Juan Gris's Cubism, André Lhote's Cubism, second-generation *cubisant* Cubism (Georges Valmier, Henri Hayden, Marie Vassilieff, Mary Swanzy), and sculptural Cubism (Henri Laurens and Jacques Lipchitz), among others, in order to promote the notion among art historians: *Soyez-vous cubistes.*

To demonstrate this approach in this exercise, I will examine the motivation behind and merits of André Salmon's and Guillaume Apollinaire's commentaries on the history of Cubism to counter William Rubin's negative critique of their perceptions. The methodology I have consulted to inform my reading of their criticism is psychoanalysis, focusing specifically on the influence of countertransference. As Ellen Handler Spitz explains: "the unconscious affects and fantasies that the subject evokes in the interpreter."[3] The recognition and explication of countertransference in Salmon's and Apollinaire's commentaries on Cubism will help to clarify why their versions of Picasso's and Braque's working relationship differ so markedly from Soffici's, Kahnweiler's, and Uhde's, and at the same time introduce the notion that their divergences do not constitute useless "inaccuracies," but can provide kernels of truth missing in the other versions.[4]

First, let us establish that Salmon and Apollinaire used the word *cubisme* with different concepts in mind. To Salmon, Cubism meant the works of Georges Braque,[5] Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes, Fernand Léger, Robert Delaunay, and the other painters who exhibited in the public *salons*[6] (what I call "public" Cubism, as opposed to Picasso's and Braque's "private" Cubism [Salmon notwithstanding]).[7] As for Picasso, Salmon asserted: "le cubisme vient de Picasso qui ne le pratiqua point."[8] In other words, this critic decided that Picasso was not offically a Cubist, though he initiated the ideas that Braque and the other "public" Cubists tried to adopt on their own.

On the other hand, Apollinaire's definition of Cubism was more expansive, classifying the various stylistic manifestations in the following manner: Scientific (Pablo Picasso, Georges Braque, Albert Gleizes, Marie Laurencin, and Juan Gris); Physical (Henri Le Fauconnier); Orphic (Robert Delaunay, Francis Picabia, and Marcel Duchamp); and Instinctive ("ce mouvement s'étend maintenant sur toute l'Europe").[9] Implied in his system is that all practitioners of this "advanced" new aesthetic were equal in status and value to the movement as a whole.

How, then, could two friends involved with the same intimate circle of artists and writers envision and recount the same events and participants in such entirely different scenarios, as if both had seen the same play and come

away with entirely different perceptions of the plot and principal characters? This curious nexus of similarities and discrepancies constitutes the very area in need of exploration and interpretation with the expectation that the inconclusiveness of the situation will feel as satisfying as the end of Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon.*

At the heart of the split between Salmon and Apollinaire is how they viewed Picasso. Salmon wanted the artist to exist on a plane separate from his peers, while Apollinaire supported the Cubist movement as a whole, integrating Picasso's effort into the overall strength of this new wave in art. Their respective characterizations of the Spanish artist represented their conscious desire to locate the main protagonists and their participation in the history of Cubism, but on an unconscioius level they embodied these critics' tendencies to identify with their heroes. To illustrate this point, let us first consider Salmon's characterization of Picasso in his "Histoire anecdotique du cubisme," the second chapter in his 1912 book *La Jeune Peinture française.*

In his history of Cubism (the first published in a book), Salmon highlighted the protean nature of Picasso's personality and its virtuosity, citing what he considered to be the various "periods" — "Toulouse-Lautrec," "Blue," "Rose," "Harlequin," "African," and "*Picassisme, le cubisme n'était pas inventé*" — as proof of his insatiable appetite for change in any direction.[10] To enhance this portrayal, Salmon stressed Picasso's independence and originality which had been cultivated by his self-imposed discipline and isolation amid the crowd.[11] Salmon's suffering maverick (a sort of mystical figure like Christ alone with His agony or a shaman alone with his fetishes) epitomized the poet's concept of the consummate "artist-hero" (the genius, the visionary, the "messiah" of art).[12] But on another level Salmon projected himself in this image — his own sense of suffering for aesthetic ideals. Thus through his creation of the "lone-master" Picasso, Salmon in effect confirmed for himself the virtue of his own choices, perhaps soothing some doubts or displeasure in what he perceived to be his isolation since the dissolution of the *bande à Picasso.* (It should be remembered that Salmon, Max Jacob, and Apollinaire formed the intimate threesome, *la bande à Picasso*, surrounding Picasso on a daily basis from 1904-07. In 1908 this privileged fraternity was replaced by Georges Braque).

This projection of himself into the life story of his hero in the Cubist drama can be understood as countertransference, a condition whereby Salmon could not differentiate between his perception of the individual he described and his own fantasy of artistic condition (By the same token, Salmon's denial of Braque's collaboration with Picasso might have emanated from the critic's unconscious sense of rivalry with the man who diminished his relationship with Picasso, or unconscioius transference of anger from the beloved, Picasso, to the outsider, Braque, because Picasso had

reduced the intensity of their fraternal bonds.)

Salmon invented his Picasso two years and three months prior to the writing of "Histoire anecdotique du cubisme," about the time that his own poetry had been labeled nominalist (a medieval philosophy which regards all elements as separate and equal).[13] Then, in his review of Picasso's December 1910 exhibition at Vollard's gallery, Salmon raged against those who dared to insinuate that this independent artist had legitimate disciples.[14] No doubt, Salmon was directing his remarks at the presumptuous Jean Metzinger, who had invoked Picasso's name as a source of inspiration for his work (and that of Robert Delaunay and Henri Le Fauconnier) in an October 1910 article.[15] This outcry to save Picasso from being submerged into what later became a highly organized and publicized movement launched a continuous battle on this critic's part, evidenced by his repeated denials of Picasso's affiliation with *the* Cubists (as he saw them) in subsequent columns.[16] Then, in the aftermath of Cubism's ascent to the acme of avant-gardism, Salmon turned the rhetoric around to claim that Picasso's influence had been felt everywhere among his own generation and would doubtless continue in the future: "La vie de ce grand artiste ne sera pas assez longue pour parcourir tout le chemin que son oeuvre éclaire. L'Art présent et l'Art futur relèvent de sa bien faisante tyrannie."[17]

That Salmon focused his narrative and perception of Cubism on one artist-hero, Picasso, and anchored his thesis on the productivity of an independent nature reflects Salmon's orthodox faith in the early modernist concept of individualism. Based on Max Stirner's writings on individualist-anarchism and his own brand of nominalism, Salmon developed his own notion of a reality composed of individual elements, which are subject to the absurdity and relativity of perceptual scrutiny, and exist on one marvelous plane ("un fait sur le plan merveilleux").[18] This nominalist interpretation of reality was extracted from the writings of his mentor "Pataphysician" Alfred Jarry, the leading popular philosopher Henri Bergson, anarchist Max Stirner, and the fourteenth-century nominalist theologian William of Ockham.[19] Considering this composite of beliefs based on particularization, it is not surprising to find in Salmon's memoirs statements about his reluctance to join artistic movements or jump on the bandwagon for any authoritarian artistic manifesto.[20] Correspondingly, he believed that maintaining one's own integrity and artistic personality were keys to greatness. Thus, Salmon fashioned his artist-hero to conform with his way of thinking, attributing to the object of his adulation all that the poet/critic believed the superior artist should be and do. Unconsciously, he submitted to the influence of countertransference, while consciously he tried to protect and promote a genius whom he believed had no contemporary equal.

Although Salmon's powers of observation were unquestionably marred by his idolization of Picasso (and inability to fully appreciate Braque's achievements[21]), his intuitive understanding of the Spanish artist's personali-

ty seems remarkably clairvoyant, particularly in the prediction that the quick-change artist would probably move on to yet another "period" of art.[22] Also, his portrayal of how Picasso wove in and out of styles without staying put for very long depicted a true image of the artist who conducted dialogues with a number of different artists (El Greco, Toulouse-Lautrec, "anonymous soothsayers," and Braque[23]) slipping easily in and out of the conversation, and, just as easily, moving on to the next one. Considering Salmon's keen awareness of Picasso's patterns, one cannot say that Salmon's critical commentaries were all that "bad" or "wrong." Rather, it is fair to say that the Salmonian interpretation of Cubism's history can be included as a valid part of a mosaic composed of several apparent and not-so-apparent issues. (In the case of the latter, Salmon especially may prove to be a most valued source.)

In contrast to Salmon's nominalist splitting of hairs, Apollinaire viewed Cubism with a more encompassing, macrocosmic lens. His own orchestration of a *Gestamtkunstwerk* ideal, his play *La Mamelles de Tirésias* (the writing began in 1903 and the stage production was realized on 24 June 1917), and his November 1917 speech on *l'esprit nouveau* (published posthumously in 1918) epitomized his vision of a new era of collaboration among the arts and reflect his initial endeavor to present an image of Cubism as the sign of that impending collective enterprise, enriched and emboldened by a wide variety of interpretations, one no more "authentic" than another.[24] However, it should not be forgotten that Apollinaire's appreciation of the whole Cubist movement evolved from a position not unlike Salmon's in 1910 — before the offical movement came into being — and his sudden about-face in favor of the "jay[s] adorned in peacock feathers" (as he called Metzinger, Gleizes, et al. at first[25]) can be seen as a decisive step in his search for a visual arts correlative to his own programmatic aesthetics.

While at first Apollinaire's portrayal of Picasso mirrored Salmon's, his dissatisfaction with their production did not last long and in 1911 he announced that the works by Metzinger, Laurencin, Delaunay, and Le Fauconnier pleased him very much, claiming as their progenitors the absent father Picasso and the "most noble periods of French and Italian art."[26] Then, in his catalogue essay for the Eighth Salon des Indépendants in Brussels, Apollinaire announced the "public" Cubists' acceptance of their name, suppressing on this occasion kudos to one leader or leadership faction over another.[27] Finally, in a series of narratives on the history of Cubism, Apollinaire wrote (10 October 1911) that Picasso was its founder,[28] adding in a subsequent article (16 October 1911) that Georges Braque was the first to exhibit Cubist works publicly, while Picasso's work was the first to be dubbed "*cubiste*" by Henri Matisse.[29] A year later (10 October 1912), Apollinaire rephrased his story, stating that Picasso and Braque were the "founders" of Cubism, but that Picasso was the inventor and Braque had the "good sense" to "corroborate" Picasso's initiative. Again he stated that

Braque was the first, in 1908, to exhibit paintings in the Cubist idiom, but he also mentioned that Jean Metzinger was the first to exhibit a Cubist work in a juried show, the *Salon d'Automne* [of 1911].[30] Thus, the list of significant contributions to the rise of Cubism began to incorporate more members of the general movement.

In the same article the question of who received the Matisse sobriquet first was glossed over, mentioned only in that Matisse invented the term "Cubism" in response to a painting of cube-like houses (here, the name of this alleged first Cubist painter was conveniently left out). Then quickly shifting from precedents to current affairs, Apollinaire turned the reader's attention to the Cubist painters he favored (Marie Laurncin, Jean Metzinger, Albert Gleizes, Henri Le Fauconnier, Robert Delaunay, Fernand Léger, Francis Picabia, Louis Marcoussis, Georges Deniker, and the sculptor Agero), as well as informed them of the Cubist manifestations occurring "all over Europe."[31] This last version was published in Apollinaire's 1913 book *Méditations esthétiques: Les peintres cubistes* (with some minor adjustments), along with his system of classification which accommodated his all-encompassing view of the Cubist world.[32] Therefore, given another opportunity to rewrite his history of Cubism, Apollinaire chose the version which made less of Picasso's and Braque's individual contribution and more of the direction of modern art as a whole.

Although it may appear that Apollinaire began to arrange his "facts" to fit the model of his proposed ideal (*Gesamtkunstwerk, l'esprit nouveau*, or collectivity in the arts), from a psychoanalytic vantage point it seems more likely that this poet/critic also fell under the spell of countertransference through his identification with a movement that he perceived to have all the markings of messianic avant-gardism: visionary art provided by artists bound together to serve humankind.[33] Consciously, therefore, his history of Cubism corroborated Jean Metzinger and Albert Gleizes's messianic tone in their book *Du Cubisme*, published at the end of 1912, and set his criticism apart from Salmon's, which placed the future of the avant-garde in the hands of one unique visionary, Picasso. But, unconsciously Apollinare confirmed his parity with the artists he so zealously defended, enacting what was his deep-seeded desire to dominate and prevail as a "messianic poet," a prophet or visionary in his own right (hence the interst in Tiresias).[34]

The messianic component in Apollinaire's aesthetic ideology may well come from his anarchistic leanings, as was the case for Salmon.[35] However, Apollinaire's anarchist notions seemed to lean more toward Peter Kropotkin's anarchistic communism (as Patricia Leighten and Scott Bates have pointed out[36]), directly countering Salmon's Stirnerian sympathies (although in Apollinaire's case, he did not explicitly avow his influences as Salmon did — albeit nearly fifty years later in his history of anarchism, *La Terreur Noire*). One can also argue that Apollinaire's Kropotkinian overtones stem from an unconscious assimilation of the anarchist's writings,

rather than from a self-conscious effort to appropriate his ideals. However consciously or unconsciously determined, the specific predilection for collectivity, as opposed to individualism (two distinctly different anarchist ideologies), remained the touchstone of Apollinaire's prescription for the best direction for art, distinguishing his "*modernisme*" from Salmon's.[37]

Acknowledgment of Apollinaire's counter-transference can certainly help us identify his personal motivations for writing about Cubism in a specific manner, but does it invalidate his criticism because of its personalization and lack of consistency or reliability in terms of the facts? Not necessarily. Indeed, with a holistic acceptance of the permutations of Cubist aesthetics, Apollinaire's commentaries preserve the very nature of the Cubist moment, its simultaneity of thought and interactive efforts on the part of the artists, which were fundamental aspects of the Cubist program at large — that is to say, the Cubism beyond Picasso and Braque, beyond France, and beyond Western European art hegemony. In this broader sense of the movement, Apollinaire explained that Cubism signaled an internationalization of the art world, created, to be sure, by the increase in the dissemination and accessibility of art information through newspapers, magazines, books, and radio. More potent and dramatic than any other art movement up to that moment, Cubism spread far and fast throughout the art centers of Europe, Russia, and North America. With his awareness of the scope of the Cubist revolution, Apollinaire delivered an important and insightful message to furure generations, and that message should not be cast aside or belittled because it fails to corroborate the facts found in Soffici's, Kahnweiler's, Uhde's, Picasso's, or Salmon's versions. It is interesting to note that Salmon also recognized the international character of Cubism, but he chastised what appeared to him to be its emulation of an academic systematization, or a formulaic repetition of "Cézanniantics." Again, the critics interpreted the same phenomenon in opposite manners.[38]

Therefore, what emerges from Salmon's criticism is a valid notion that Picasso can still be seen as an independent agent who periodically established dialogues with living or deceased artists (or both at the same time, as in the case of early Cubism — with Braque and Cézanne). And, what emerges from Apollinaire's criticism is the emphasis on Cubism's manifold permutations which cast a wide net of influence throughout the centers of Western art. Both critical viewpoints are compatible with Rubin's careful charting of the *pas de deux* between Picasso and Braque, when we consider Cubism from a number of plausible angles.

By acknowledging the presence of the various elements at play in the Cubist commentaries by Salmon and Apollinaire, the reaction should not be one of derision, as William Rubin's essay implies, but rather one of acceptance paired with the challenge to think through the numerous possibilites which can account for the discrepancies among the eyewitness reports. It is

hoped, therefore, that this exercise will encourage investigations of the whole Cubist movement (both "public" and "private" Cubism) in a manner which emulates their conceptualiation of simultaneously intersecting planes of personal and shared realities. As William Gass recently wrote:

> Texts, because they duplicitously repeat themselves each time they are read, and because they are subject to interpretation and commentary, belong to a more powerful realm of Being than the world of unrecurring events, aging people, and transitory things.[39]

This exercise affirms that the Cubist critiques by Salmon and Apollinaire operate on these various layers of existence and that through historical inquiry, psychoanalytic theory, and holistic reasoning, we can at least begin to fathom the multiplicity of their parts without mistaking these parts for the whole.

Notes

1 In "Picasso and Braque: An Introduction," *Picasso and Braque: Pioneering Cubism* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1989), p. 47.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 47 and p. 61, n. 125, Picasso in Cérat to Kahnweiler in Paris, 17 August 1911: "Ce [sic] vraiment rigolo les idees [sic] des nos amis et je me amuse enorment [sic] ici de toutes les coupures que vous me envoyer [sic]." (Rubin assumed, it seems, that the clippings Picasso responded to were by his friends Salmon and Apollinaire, among others.); *Ibid.*, p. 47 and p. 61, n. 122; Picasso in Paris to Braque in Sorgues, 31 October 1912: "Salmon has also published a book on painting. He is revoltingly unjust to you." (trans. in *Picasso and Braque*, p. 410); *Ibid.*, p. 47 and p. 61, n. 123; Picasso in Céret to Kahnweiler in Paris, 11 April 1913: "Moi J'ai reçu le livre de Apollinaire sur le cubisme. Je suis bien désolé de tous ces potins."

3 Ellen Handler Spitz, *Art and Psyche: A Study in Psychoanalysis and Aesthetics* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1895), p. 92.

4 In agreement with Spitz's assertion: "However, even in cases where the interpreter has succumbed to these dangers [countertransference], the resulting interpretation may possess critical relevance and value." (*Ibid.*).

5 Most likely, Salmon considered Braque's early Cubist submissions to the 1909 Salon des Indépendants the first public display of the Cubist idiom. Salmon reviewed Braque's early Cubist submissions to the 1909 Salon des Indépendants in *L'Intransigeant*, 26 and 27 March 1909. These paintings also inspired the first published reference to "*cubisme*" in Charles Morice's review of the same exhibition *Mercure de France*, 16 April 1909.

6 André Salmon, *La Jeune Peinture française* (Paris: Albert Messein, 1912), p. 57.

7 Christopher Green, *Léger and the Avant-garde* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 6; augmented in concept in Beth S. Gersh-Nesic, "The Early Criticism of André Salmon: A Study of His Thoughts on Cubism," Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York Graduate School and University Center, 1989, pp. 14-15. This term was suggested to me by my dissertation advisor, Rose-Carol Washton Long.

8 Salmon, *La Jeune Peinture française*, p. 55.

9 Apollinaire, *Méditations esthétiques: Les peintres cubistes* (Paris: Figuiére, 1913); Paris: Collection Savoir/Hermann, 1980), pp. 67-69.

10 Salmon, *La Jeune Peinture française*, pp. 41-47, 48 ("*Picassisme*," perhaps meant the period 1908-9).

11 *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

12 Here I refer to Eunice Lipton's nomenclature and discussion of Salmon's contribution to Picasso's image in her dissertation, *Picasso Criticism, 1901-39: the Making of an Artist-Hero* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1976; reprint of Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1973), pp. 80-88.

13 La Palette [André Salmon], "Courrier des ateliers," *Paris-Journal*, 22 December 1910. Le Calumet probably appeared in late April-early May judging from the review published in *Paris-Journal* by Charles Morice, 16 May 1910. Jean Royére dubbed Salmon's poetry in *Le Calumet* "nominalist" in his review for *La Phalange*, 20 September 1910.

14 La Palette [André Salmon], "Exposition Picasso," *Paris-Journal*, 22 December 1910.

15 Jean Metzinger, "Note sur la peinture," *Pan* (October-November 1910).

16 André Salmon, "le 27e Salon des Indépendants," *Paris-Journal*, 20 April 1911; "Le Salon d'Automne," *Paris-Journal*, 30 September 1911; "Le Salon d'Automne," *Montjoie!* 1, nos. 11-12 (November-December 1913): 2; "La Vie artistique," *L'Europe nouvelle*, 18 January 1919, pp. 139-40; *L'Art vivant* (Paris: G. Crès, 1920), p. 110, 169-173; "Picasso," *L'Esprit nouveau,* no. 1 (1920), pp. 59-81.

17 Salmon, "Picasso," *L'Esprit nouveau*, p. 67.

18 Salmon, Postface, *Prikaz* (Paris: La Sirène, 1919).

19 On Stirner: André Salmon, *La Terreur Noire* (Paris: Jean-Jacques Pauvert, 1959), p. 38. On nominalism: Jean Royèye, review of Salmon's *Le Calumet, La Phalange* 20 September 1910, p. 8; André Salmon, "Observations Déplacées," *Les Soirées de Paris*, no. 1 (February 1912), p. 28.

20 André Salmon, *Souvenirs sans fin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1956), 2: 232. Although Salmon regarded himself an individualist in retrospect, his contribution to the "public" Cubist exhibition "la Section d'Or" can be gleaned by the appearance of his article in *La Section d'Or magazine*. He also contributed to the first issue of the Dada magazine *Littérature* and a Dada lecture in Paris, 23 January 1920. However, Salmon quickly lost interest in both group efforts. On Dada see: André Salmon, "Dada et moi," in *Souvenirs sans fin* (Paris: Gallimard, 1961), 3: 51-69.

21 After World War I, Salmon did give Braque more credit in his writings, particularly "La Semaine Artistique," *L'Europe nouvelle*, 29 March 1919; *L'Art vivant*, 127; "Les Arts et la Vie," *La Revue de France*, 1 December 1922, p. 618.

22 Salmon, *La Jeune Peinture française*, p. 56.

23 *Ibid.*, pp. 41, 47, 56.

24 Silvia Carandini "Suoni Idee Colori Forme. Il linguaggio delle arti nella prima rappresentazione di *Les mamelles de Tirésias* di G. Apollinaire," *Ricerche di Storia dell'arte*, no. 25, (1985), pp. 39-48; Apollinaire spoke about *l'esprit nouveau* at a conference on 26 November 1917. The presentation was published posthumously by *Mercure de France* on 1 December 1918, and again twenty-eight years later in Guillaume Apollinaire, *L'Esprit nouveau and les poètes* (Paris: Jacques Haumont, 1946).

25 In "Le Salon d'Automne," *Poésie*, Fall 1910, Apollinaire wrote: "Mais le cubisme au Salon D'Automne c'était le geai paré des plumes de paon."

26 Guillaume Apollinaire, "la Jeunesse artistique et les nouvelles disciplines," *L'Intransigeant*, 21 April 1911.

27 Instead he addressed Salmon's accusation that Cubism was little more than an avant-garde Academy ruled by a preordained system. Salmon's accusation appeared in "Le 27e Salon des Indépendants," *Paris-Journal*, 20 April 1911. Apollinaire's essay was published in the

preface to *Catalogue du 8e Salon Annual du Cercle d'Art "Les Indépendants" au Musée Moderne de Bruxelles*, 10 June -3 July 1911.

28 Guillaume Apollinaire, "Les Cubistes," *L'Intransigeant*, 10 October 1911; reproduced in *Chroniques d'art*, pp. 198-200.

29 Guillaume Apollinaire, "la Vie anecdotique," *Mercure de France*, 16 October 1911, p. 892. In Lynn Wissing Gamwell, *Cubist Criticism: 1907-1925* (Ph.D. diss., University of California at Los Angeles, 1977), 44 n. 25., the author states that Apollinaire corrected the 10 October *L'Intransigeant* article with this 16 October *Mercure de France* article. Judging from my own reading of the latter, it seems that Apollinaire was not correcting himself, but simply augmenting his recollection. He still insists that Picasso received Matisse's derisive appellation, but that Braque was the first to show his similar "Cubist" work to the public. This version does not imply that Matisse called Braque's work "Cubist."

30 Guillaume Apollinaire, "Le Cubism," *L'Intermédiaire des chercheurs et des curieux*, 10 October 1912; reproduced in "Notes et commentaires sur le texte," in *Méditations esthétiques: Les peintres cubistes*, p. 142.

31 *Ibid.*; reproduced in *Méditations esthétiques: Les peintres cubistes*, p. 143.

32 Apollinaire, *Méditations esthétiques*, pp. 66, 67-9 (adding that Matisse named the first "cubist" paintings in 1908).

33 Apollinaire, *Méditations esthétiques*, p. 63: "les grands poètes et les grands artistes ont pour fonction sociale de renouveler sans cesse l'apparence que revêt la nature aux yeux des hommes."

34 Scott Bates, *Guillaume Apollinaire* (New York: Twayane, 1967), pp. 133, 144.

35 Patricia Leighten, *Re-ordering the Universe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989), pp. 53-63, cites Apollinaire's political columns published in *Le Festin d'Esope*, a periodical run by Apollinaire, Salmon, and others from 1903-04.

36 Patricia Leighten, "'La Propagande par le rire': Satire and Subversion in Apollinaire, Jarry, and Picasso's Collages," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 112 (October 1988), p. 171, n.9; Leighten, *Re-ordering the Universe*, p. 58; Bates, p. 28.

37 Salmon, *Souvenirs sans fin*, 2:232. Here, Salmon referred to "mon modernisme" as opposed to Apollinaire's.

38 Salmon, "Le 27e Salon des Indépendants," *Paris-Journal*, 20 April 1911; Salmon, "Le Salon d'Automne," *Paris-Journal*, 30 September 1911; Salmon, *L'Art vivant*, p. 116.

39 William Gass, "*The Encyclopedia of the Dead*, by Danilo Kis," *New York Review of Books*, 35, no. 16 (26 October 1989), p. 18.

On Picasso and Pornography*

Joanne B. Waugh

To speak of Picasso and pornography in the same breath is to run the risk of violating widely held and deeply felt beliefs. "Pornography" usually refers to films like *Deep Throat* or *Debbie Does Dallas*; the titles alone create the expectation that one will find little if anything of artistic value in the films. The name "Picasso" is probably more widely recognized than that of any other artist in this century, or, perhaps, any century.[1] Still I think that we may learn something about pornography and something about Picasso by discussing them together.

Despite claims that "pornography" cannot be defined, or defined to everyone's satisfaction, ordinary usage reflects rather widespread agreement that "pornography" refers to materials that are sexually explicit and sexually arousing.[2] Some feminists have rejected the conventional distinction between works routinely labelled "pornography" and those considered erotic, but not pornographic, on the grounds that structural similarities exist between pornographic works and seemingly non-pornographic ones.[3] Such arguments do not reject ordinary usage so much as they charge that it camouflages sexist structures in representation. In any case, it continues to be true that "pornographic" is ordinarily used to refer to materials that are sexually explicit and sexually arousing to those who produce, view, and purchase these materials. Debates about the meaning of "pornography" are quite often legal debates about censorship, and as such require stricter definitions of terms, e.g., definitions in terms of necessary and sufficient conditions, and stricter rules of evidence than are employed in appeals to ordinary usage.[4] If one were to eliminate the possibility of censorship, I suspect that many of the debates about the definition of "pornography" would come to an end. The feminist critique of pornography would doubtless continue, since their concern is not censorship, but sexism in the structure of representation. A measure of uncertainty would remain about what materials are pornographic, since the fact that English speakers may agree that "pornography" refers to materials that are sexually explicit and sexually arousing, does not entail that they all will consider the same materials pornographic. What is sexually explicit and sexually arousing may vary with time, place, socio-economic class, or gender.[5]

This does not mean, however, that what is considered pornographic need differ widely from individual to individual. Representations, including

pornographic ones, are constructed out of something held in common — languages, symbol systems, images. Representation would not be possible if those doing the representing and those for whom the representation is being done did not share sets of conventions for interpreting actions, expressions, and images, as well as the intention that the representation be a representation of *something*, a kind of object, an entity with properties. The thing represented is recognized as the kind of thing that it is, because representational practices both reflect and construct actual practices. Marks on a page only constitute a text to those who know the language in which the text is written, and the written text can be read, that is, it can be an occasion for constructing a literary or virtual text, if one knows the set of conventions necessary for its interpretation. Similarly, there exist sets of conventions for constructing and "reading" visual symbols; in film, for example, one must consider factors like the angle of the camera, the composition of the picture and how it is framed, the editing style, the relationship between audio and visual images, implied plotline, and sequence.[6] These conventions of interpretation, like the languages of which they are a part, both determine and are determined by the practices or "forms of life" shared by their readers and speakers. Thus there are limits to what we can do and mean by a given expression or image, the indeterminacy of translation notwithstanding. Being underdetermined is not the same as not being determined at all, and in practice the conventional character of linguistic behavior works against the principle that anything goes.

Yet changes in language and in forms of life sometimes are generated by an individual work that transcends the conventions that it employs, the effect of which is to generate new ones. Art is the paradigm for such creative acts. There are, of course, disputes about the definition of "art" to rival those about "pornography," since art, like pornography, is an open concept. Indeed, being an open concept seems to be central to the concept of art: as that which transcends its own conventions, "art" has conditions of application that *must be*, to use Morris Weitz's words, emendable and corrigible.[7]

However open a concept we believe art to be in theory, there are limits to what is considered art in practice. Films like *Deep Throat* are considered paradigms of pornography, not art, despite their being labelled "art" films.[8] Thus the question is: on what basis do we distinguish art from pornography? The question becomes more acute given Picasso's late works which possess "a degree of erotic frankness previously forbidden," and constitute the last entries, as it were, in "a diary of an artist's erotic life, a record of obsessions with particular satisfactions and frustrations and fantasies and partners."[9] Indeed, Picasso himself said "You have to know how to be vulgar. Paint with four letter words," and while he may have been speaking of technique, his remarks are descriptive of the subject matter as well as its treatment in his late works.[10] They are nothing if not sexually explicit; indeed, John Richardson observes that "the physicality with which Picasso endowed his

late works is one of the reasons why they met with such scorn. People were shocked, and as shocked people often do, they take refuge in disdain; Picasso's notion of femininity was infantile, senile, vulgar."[11] Indeed, it was Picasso's desire that his works possess such physical and carnal reality that one would ask of his work what he asked of Braque's, "Is it a woman or a painting — do its armpits smell?"[12]

Richard Wollheim records a disdainful response he witnessed on his second visit to the *Late Picasso* exhibition at the Tate Gallery; "a lady smoothed her skirt and said to her friend 'No dignity — a great pity'."[13] Wollheim's reaction to this scene is worth noting:

> My spirits rose. After many years of mindless acceptance, art has at last regained the power to scandalize. It is interesting that it should have done so through the medium of a form of painting that only recently would have been rejected as *retardataire*. One thing I suspect about these paintings is that they present their subject matter with such perceptual intensity that for many it is only possible to react to these paintings as they would to what the paintings are about. Prudes will find them offensive, the inhibited will find them meaningless. I felt, what a relief.[14]

Whether or not one agrees with the charges of vulgarity, or subscribes to the negative view of the late works, it cannot be disputed that they are unapologetically about sex, sexual beings, and sexual acts, and that the theme of these works is, in Wollheim's words, "an old man's, ultimately a very old man's, dedication to the female body."[15] Thus far nothing has been said about Picasso's late work that could not be said about pornography, save the perceptual intensity with which Picasso presents his subject matter. Pornography has a degree of erotic frankness previously forbidden; it presents a record of obsessions with particular satisfactions, frustrations, fantasies, and partners; it is sexually explicit and very physical; it is certainly vulgar and its notion of femininity is infantile, senile, and vulgar; it lacks dignity; and whereas as man's *dedication* to the female body might be too charitable a description of its theme, certainly it could aptly be described as a preoccupation with the female body. We must look elsewhere for an explanation of how Picasso's late works differ from pornography.

Traditional aesthetics suggests that we distinguish artistic from pornographic representations by considering how and why these representations afford us pleasure. Following Kant, some claim that we take pleasure in artistic representations, not on account of any interest in what is represented, but just because they are instances of representation, that is, occasions on which to exercise our powers to represent. The representation of a particular object serves no purpose, nor holds any interest for us; we are indifferent to the object being represented.[16] What matters is that our powers of represen-

tation be engaged in free play, as it were, rather than be employed in the attainment of some goal. The exercise of the powers of representation is evident not in the sensuous or emotional appeal of what is represented but rather in its form, that is, in the formal structure of the representation. It is thus the form or structure of artistic representations, rather than their content, that engages our powers of representation and in so doing affords us pleasure. Inasmuch as all subjects possess this power to represent, they should all find a similar pleasure in the structure of artistic representations. To the extent that we are indifferent to the object of the representation, the pleasure we take in it is disinterested, that is, not the consequence of their satisfying some personal desire or private interest, and the representation itself contributes nothing to knowledge.

Thus the traditional aesthetic retort that those who are disdainful of Picasso's late works because of their subject matter or their view of female sexuality are not responding properly, i.e., aesthetically, to the paintings. The fact that their subject matter is presented by Picasso "with such perceptual intensity that for many it is only possible to react as they would to what the paintings are about" should be counted as evidence for rather than against Picasso's powers of representation; it is the viewers incapable of reacting in a disinterested manner whose powers of representation have failed them. Indeed, initially at least, Picasso's genius was thought to consist in his inventiveness, his versatility and virtuosity in the creation and manipulation of forms; "an artist whose chief quality seems at first to be the discovery of form rather than scrupulous observation."[17] More recently, these same characteristics have been the basis for a negative reevaluation of his work. Donald Kuspit writes of Picasso's:

> cover-ups of his essential mood of ironic indifference in the face of whatever is given... If anything, Picasso's expressivity seems pseudo because it arises more from the imperious determination to achieve an original, unique style than from any real-life necessity. It is an expressivity of the art for art's sake attitude, and it becomes a means of achieving detachment from existentially demanding experiences. The drama of a developing style replaces the drama of life. ... Picasso's fullness is illusory — his is a generativity that masks a lack of any essential reason for creativity, unless the making of art itself be an essential reason. ... In Picasso's work, art loses all redemptive significance — perhaps the idea that beautiful, exciting art is redemptive of ugly, boring life was from the first a fraud — and becomes an end in itself, perhaps finally making life a little more desirable, as Nietzsche put it, and a little less pressing in its familiarity. But this byproduct seems incidental to the persistence — the sheer thrust — of art (artfulness, artifice, finally artiness) in Picasso.[18]

Kuspit's remarks are apropos of Picasso's works if they are viewed under the theory of art and aesthetics dominant since Kant, but there is a certain dissonance between Kuspit's analysis and Picasso's intent that his paintings be so real that one could not tell the difference between his paintings of women and the women who were painted, that one could smell the woman in the painting. Indeed, there can be no denying that art was his subject "over and over again, and in many different ways," but we may be wrong if we infer from this that Picasso believed in art for art's sake.[19] Perhaps we should see Picasso's works not as examples of Kantian purposeful purposelessness, but as Picasso himself regarded them — as his "way of writing fiction."[20] To write about writing or to paint about painting is as much an existentially demanding experience, as writing or painting about something else, perhaps, even more so. Neither author nor audience achieves detachment through this representation, nor takes disinterested pleasure in it. Writing and painting are ways of seeing the world, and writing about writing and painting about painting are ways of seeing how we see the world; seeing is not a detached nor a disinterested act; Picasso's seeing is the very opposite of detachment or disinterest; it is as intense as activity as we can imagine, or as has been represented. Thus Michel Leiris writes:

> Before the painter makes anything — even the least naturalistic representation possible — he *must have seen* with the greatest acuteness, he must have been, in the widest sense of the term, a kind of seer or visionary; not someone prey to hallucinations, but someone who has seized on things that escape others and will work from material amassed in this way... One is therefore, not being too sweeping if one suggests that when an artist treats the subject of the artist and his model — and as Picasso did, under varying forms but always in what one might call rough drafts of the central subject — he is in fact summarizing, in vivid illustrations, the game in which every figurative artist is involved: for at the source of his work there is always a model or models, living beings or objects which offer themselves to his watching eyes in the manner of the professional model, whose job it is to be observed, and whose naked body has formed the subject among subjects over the centuries — the Nude.

this was the stroke of genius.[21]

Picasso's way of seeing is intense, and it is sexual, perhaps because of its intensity; as Leiris observes, "from the look that scrutinizes to the look that desires is only one step."[22] It is not surprising that the perceptual intensity with which Picasso treats his subject matter might drive many, as Wollheim suggests, to react to his paintings or drawings as they would to what they are about. But even if the subject of the painting or drawing is not avowedly or explicitly sex, the work is still sexual. The 4 July 1970 series of drawings

entitled *The Artist and His Model I-VIII* shows how for Picasso art and sex became metaphors for each other. In *I* and *II* the model reclines on her back on a soft couch or bed, and wears the look either of sleep or of pleasure as the painter paints or pokes her and the canvas which is her surrogate and which seems to be joined to her belly. In the series the painter's thumb becomes increasingly phallic as it, and the artist's brushes, which as Richardson notes, are surrogates for the artist's sexual parts, poke through a scotrum-shaped pallette.[23] In *II* and *III* the artist's elbow rests cradled in the space between her thighs, touching her genitals. In *III* and *IV* the model rolls over after having been painted by the artist's brushes and penetrated by his gaze, seemingly exhausted from having been the object of his desire. In *V* and *VI* she raises herself up on one elbow, as the artist nudges her genitals or thighs with his knee. Finally, in *VII* and *VIII* she raises herself up so that she is eye level with the artist and returns the artist's gaze with the same intensity with which he looks at her.

But it is this sexual aspect of the artist's looking, the intensity with which artist and audience penetrate the object represented, that leads some to argue, as does Susanne Kappeler, that it is the structure of representation that gives rise to pornography, and that it is not on the basis of differences either in the mode of representation, or in how and why they afford us pleasure, that one may distinguish artistic from pornographic representations, Kant's claims about disinterestedness and universality notwithstanding.[24] For in representation a subject is not indifferent to the object represented, rather, representation is a way of seeing, *viz.*, seeing an object, even if it is a living being, "whose job it is to be observed, and whose naked body has formed the subject among subjects (or to speak more accurately, the object among objects) over the centuries as the Nude." To speak about the universality and the disinterested nature of the pleasure afforded us by artistic representations is to ignore the fact that one's capacity to engage in acts of representation, and one's role within them, is a function of one's relation to the means and media of representation. The fact that the nude has been the object among objects over the centuries attests to the fact that representation is an historical and cultural practice, and as such is tied to economic, educational, and social practices. The structural form of representation that is held in theory to be independent of social, political, or economic interests, and neutral in regard to one's gender, race or socio-economic class — aesthetic, so to speak — is in practice none of these. Rather, the structures of representation reflect and construct roles of subject and object, author, audience, and object represented, roles that are taken up by beings in a context that is social, political, and economic, a context that is hardly neutral on questions of gender, class, and race. On this view, a representation is a representation of something, offered up to the eyes of the artist and audience that which arouses delight in their powers of seeing. In practice, men, usually white men of property, have been authors, audience, and those in control of the means and media of representa-

tion; women, the object of representation. Thus men have delighted in the power of seeing that is aroused by the object of representation; women have been supposed to delight in their capacity to be seen, to be objects of representation. That such has been both representational and actual practice is confirmed by David Sylvester's remark that "for a woman the horror of aging resides in no longer attracting; for a man, in no longer acting."[25]

At the very least such arguments suggest that conventional ways of speaking and thinking about art and pornography may mislead us, that pornographic representations may differ from artistic ones, not in kind, but only in degree, and that pornography is more obvious about the intent to arouse its audience in its erotically frank representation of objects, nudes, and in its obsessions with particular satisfactions, frustrations, fantasies, and partners. Still there seems to be a difference between Picasso's late works and pornography, and although this may be a distinction generated by cultural, political, and economic forces, there is, perhaps, another explanation.

The difference may be, after all, one of seeing. Pornographic works do not have anything like the perceptual intensity of late Picasso; in the pornographic representation we see enough to get sexually aroused, but not enough to complete the experience, despite the fact that we see everything, in fact, more than we see when we actually engage in sex. Despite its being sexually explicit, pornography is superficial in its mode of representation; paradoxically enough, close shots of copulation, or genitalia, seem to show only surfaces. It is, perhaps, the superficial nature of pornographic representation, that allows it to be sexually arousing, for one needs to take action to complete the experience: looking is not enough. This is, after all, the point of pornography; it is supposed to make one want to have sex, if only with oneself. But artistic representations, even sexual ones like Picasso's, do not make one seek sexual release, although they may evoke pleasant or powerful notions about sexual activity. One's pleasure in the experience of a work of Picasso is complete; to put it bluntly, the work does not arouse one so that he stops looking at it, and rushes out to have a sexual experience, nor is it likely that one of Picasso's works would be much of a masturbatory aid, whether in the privacy of one's home or in a suitably darkened gallery. I suggest that we respond differently to pornography than we do to Picasso, that there is a difference in how and why they afford us pleasure, because Picasso's way of seeing is so intense, so acute, that it penetrates the surface of the object represented, and reveals it as a subject. Thus we become as absorbed in the subjectivity of the object represented as we are in our own.

The woman in the 1965 *La Pisseuse* (*Woman Pissing*) appears not as an object whose job it is to be observed, but as a goddess. The painting is reminiscent of Aphrodite; it is rigidly geometrical, almost superclassical. In the painting there is a frontal view of a figure, parallel to the picture plane, and on the vertical line eye, head, and vulva are connected so as to suggest a classical column. The white drapery is of course the appropriate garb for a

goddess. The gently swelling curves and angles, the lucid and straightforward colors, and the brushwork in the sky and sea suggest a light touch, a bit of a departure from the aforementioned classical restraint. Picasso restores to physical acts like micturation the sexuality that we have been taught to ignore. The goddess has a divine carelessness about her sexuality that we associate with pagan goddesses; she has Aphrodite's affinity with the sea to which she returns water. She bares her breasts in an unconscious yet proud way, and touches her left nipple in a gesture suggesting pleasure. There is something delightful about her act of urinating in the water; one can feel her pleasure, an innocent pleasure yet a sexual one, as the water runs from her into the sea. One has a sense of the simple but undeniable pleasure of acting in this way. Wollheim remarks that in pictures like this, beauty, even love, have been overtaken. "These figures inhabit a world — some would say a paradise — which is beyond such values.[26] Despite Picasso's notion that one should paint with four letter words, there is nothing vulgar about either the subject or the style of *La Pisseuse*. One need only imagine a pornographic, i.e., sexually arousing, representation of a woman urinating, to illustrate the difference between *La Pisseuse* and pornography.

Woman with a Pillow of 10 July 1969, is a sombre work: it is almost monochromatic, with a little shading and a few ochre highlights. The curving lines forming the woman and the pillow look almost like segments of concentric circles that enclose the woman; the compositional lines lead to what is most often hidden, yet exposed in this painting. The striated lines that represent her genitals give them a dry, bony, brittle look, the very opposite effect of what is intended by the typical pornographic genital shot. Her body is offered up to the artist's gaze, she strikes the pose of the professional model, but she is not open. She is pensive and worried about something; it is so powerful that it crosses her eyes. Her startled, sad look suggests that she does not want the artist to look at her too intensely; it is perhaps this that worries her so. But the artist is sympathetic and seems to understand her anxiety; he keeps his distance.

The Kiss is a violent, almost stark representation of a rather brutish animal-like coupling. The heavy black lines in the hair and facial features of the man and woman contrast sharply with the pale shades of their skin. The man's head seems to push the woman's head down; she, that is her head, is trapped between his head and his hand. The force with which the man's head comes down on the woman seems to be squeezing the life or spirit out of them; their eyes stare out not comprehending. Their faces are practically mashed together but the two people do not meet. The heavy black lines that come to a point against the muddy background look like a tear in a curtain through which an eye, maybe an eye imagined by one of them, or maybe the real eye of some spectator, witnesses their very physical act of kissing. What this painting has in common with pornography is the depiction of a violent carnal act, but the painting is not sexually arousing on that account. To the

contrary, it seems to be a negative comment on a vision of sex that would be the logical consequence of the physicalist view that has loomed so large in this century. The eye interjected into the background, and the uncomprehending look on the part of those physically kissing, suggest that spirit lurks in bodies despite our attempts to dismiss or deny it, attempts that are epitomized by pornographic representation.

The Embrace of 19 November 1969 takes a more positive view of human intercourse. The grey shading on the white figures acts to highlight them against the black background; this combines with the quick, choppy, strokes of green and white surrounding the figures to suggest a brief, but powerful encounter, literally, a roll in the grass in the moonlight. The bodies are intertwined despite the fact that the man and woman seem to have not quite figured out what to do with their limbs, as sometimes happens in sexual intercourse. It is hard to tell, as it sometimes is during intercourse, who is who and which is whose. In this work, as Richard Wollheim observes, "even the toes copulate."[27] The man and woman in this painting, unlike the man and woman in *The Kiss*, seem to be totally absorbed in what they are doing, although one of the man's eyes seems to look out at us. There is in this painting a joy in sex, but it is a joy shared by the couple absorbed in their act, an act that is not done for our benefit or arousal as is the case with pornography. The figures in this painting inhabit the same paradise as the goddess who pisses into the sea, a world that can be captured by a painter, but not by a pornographer.

Artworks, no matter how minimal, have a certain richness about them; they take us in, we are perceptually and conceptually absorbed in them. Pornography is not rich. Its objects and its world, if they are situated within one, are impoverished. The objects of pornography do not become subjects in ways that viewers find so perceptually and conceptually absorbing that the interaction with the image itself is pleasure enough. This is not to suggest that art is not sexy or sexually arousing. It is merely to make the utilitarian observation that the purpose of pornography is to arouse the viewer so that he will seek release in sex, a release *not* found in the pornographic work. The purpose of pornography is not to get us to see things, objects, subjects, activities, and most of all — ourselves — in a new way; this is the point of art, at least it is the point of Picasso's paintings

Notes

1 See, for example, John Berger's claim that Picasso is the most famous artist ever in *The Success and Failure of Picasso* (London: Penguin, 1965), p. 5.

2 Most writers on pornography are also agreed on this point; for example, Bernard Williams, Hilda Hein, Abraham Kaplan, Alan Soble, Anne Garry, and Fred Berger.

3 See, for example, Susanne Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

4 Of course, it is disingenuous to claim in a philosophy paper or in a court of law that one is unclear about the meaning of a term that one uses easily enough in other contexts, and it is dishonest to dispute whether materials are pornogrpahic in court, while outside of court implying or stating that they are pornographic in order to increase their saleability.

5 However, it is difficult to imagine anyone denying that materials labelled "hardcore" are sexually explicit.

6 See Sara Diamond, "Pornography: Image and Reality," *Women Against Censorship*, ed. Varda Burstyn (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1985), p. 126.

7 Weitz argued in his now classic article "The Role of Theory in Aesthetics," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 15 (1956), pp. 27-35, that art is an open concept insofar as "its conditions of application are emendable and corigible; i.e., ... a situation or case can be imagined or secured which would call for some sort of *decision* on our part to extend the use of the concept to cover this, or to close the concept and invent a new one to deal with the new case and its new property [italics original]."

There is a sense, then, in which the institutional theory of art is the only definition of "art" possible. But from the fact that art is what or when the artworld says it is, it is not clear that it follows that members of the artworld do not have reasons, including aesthetic reasons, for designating an event or an object an artwork. Surely the fact that a work or event is a creative act of expression would count as a good reason, since "art" as commonly used is applied to just such creative acts.

8 In response to claims that "pornography" cannot be defined, I.C. Jarvie propses that "we cut the casuistical cackle and provide ostensive definitions: pornography is like x." Jarvie's candidate for x is *Deep Throat* because it is the most widely known of any pornographic representation. Using Jarvie's proposal, "anything less explicit that it [*Deep Throat*] is not, anything that adds y is x and y;" for example, adding sado-masochism yields sado-masochistic pornography, and similarly for homosexual pornography, child pornography and so on; I.C. Jarvie. "The Sociology of the Pornography Debat," *The Philosophy of the Social Sciences* 17 (1987), p. 260.

9 David Sylvester, "End Game" *Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints 1953-72* (London: Tate Gallery Publications, 1988), p. 137.

10 Marie-Laure Bernadac cites these remarks in "Picasso 1953-72: Painting as Model" in *Late Picasso*, p. 88; her source is P. Cabanne, *Le Siècle de Picasso* 2 (Paris: Denoil, 1975), p. 347.

11 John Richardson, "L'Epoque Jacqueline," in *Late Picasso*, p. 41. Jean Sutherland Boggs observes that "it has become conventional to deprecate Picasso's works of the last thirty years;" "The Last Thirty Years" *Picasso in Retrospect* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1973), p. 239.

12 Picasso's remark about Braque is quoted in H. Pamelin, *Voyage en Picasso* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1980), pp. 82-83. John Richardson tells us Picasso formulated other more intimate questions about the physical characteristics and behavior of the women in his works, "L'Epoque Jacqueline," *Late Picasso*, p. 41

13 Richard Wollheim, "Commentary on *Late Picasso: Paintings, Sculpture, Drawings, Prints 1953-1972*," Tate Gallery, 23 June - 18 September, 1988, *The Times Literary Supplement*, 15-21 July, 1988, p. 783.

14 *Ibid.*

15 *Ibid.*

16 What matters according to Kant, is "whether the mere representation of the object is accompanied in me by pleasure," that is, "what I make of its representation in myself." Immanuel Kant, *Analytic of the Beautiful*, trans. Walter Cert (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1963), p. 5.

17 Michel Leiris, "The Artist and His Model," in *Picasso in Retrospect*, p. 250.

18 Donald B. Kuspit, in "Picasso: A Symposium" *Art in America* (New York, special issue *Picasso*, 1981), pp. 19, 185.

19 Michel Leiris, "The Artist and His Model," *Picasso in Retrospect*, p. 243. Leiris claims here that "Picasso never believed in the barren doctrine of art for art's sake."

20 Picasso told Roberto Otero that "I spend hour after hour while I draw observing my creatures and thinking about the mad things they're up to; basically it's my way of writing fiction." *Forever Picasso, an Intimate Look at His Last Years* (New York: Abrams, 1973), quoted by Richardson, "L'Epoque Jacqueline" in *Late Picasso*, p. 29.

21 Michel Leiris, "Artist and Model," *Picasso in Retrospect*, p. 250.

22 Quoted by Marie-Laure Bernadac, "Picasso 1953-1972," *Late Picasso*, p. 74. John Richardson in "L'Epoque Jacqueline, pp. 30-31, connects the sexual nature of Picasso's perceptual intensity with his Andalusian roots, citing David Gilmore's discussion of the Andalusian *mirada fuerte* in *Aggression and Community, Paradoxes of Andalusian Culture* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

23 Richardson, "L'Epoque Jacqueline," p. 30.

24 Kappeler, *The Pornography of Representation.*

25 Sylveter, "EndGame," *Late Picasso*, p. 137.

26 Wollheim, "Commentary on *Late Picasso*," *TLS*, p. 783.

27 *Ibid.*

Avant-Garde: Re-ThinkingArchitecture

Gevork Hartoonian

> Hegel remarks somewhere that all great, world historical facts and personages occur, as it were, twice. He has forgotten to add: the first time as tragedy, the second as farce.
>
> — Karl Marx[1]

> If an artist today signs a stove pipe and exhibits it, that artist certainly does not denounce the art market but adapts to it. Such adaptation does not eradicate the idea of individual creativity, it affirms it, and the reason is the failure of the avant-gardist intent to sublate art.
>
> — Peter Bürger[2]

The idea of writing this piece arose in response to re-reading Peter Bürger's illuminative work on the *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Prior to Bürger, most works on the subject framed their problematics around concepts such as "aestheticism," "anti-tradition," and "futurism."[3] These themes have made it difficult if not impossible to discern some tendencies within the modern movement from those of the historical avant-garde. For Bürger, the historical avant-garde's discourse comprises, first, an attack on art as an institution, and second, the idea of reintegrating art into life praxis. This second point makes it clear that unlike the modernist's negative outlook on history, the historical avant-garde did not negate "an earlier form of art(style), but an unassociated concept of it."[4] Bürger's discourse opens up a new horizon for re-interpreting certain concepts critical to architectural theories. At the heart of the matter rests the dialectical relationship between modern architecture and the project of the historical avant-garde. Following Bürger, I would suggest that the failure of the project of the historical avant-garde, coupled with the nihilism of technology, has problematized current theories of architecture. My conclusion will examine certain aspects of existing architectural discourses in light of what I like to term "re-thinking architecture."

The esteem for historical forms in the architecture of the last two decades and its exaltation by advocates of post-modern architecture championing the

end of modernity is a farce. Drawing from Marx's insight, one might argue that the beginning of the end of modernity can be traced back to the socio-cultural space opened up by the failure of the 1874 Paris Commune.[5] This proposition rescues the idea of modernity from the political and cultural content of humanism. It also fosters the idea of modernity as possessing a critical discourse; the latter puts the work of art beyond the vicissitudes of its autonomy and the current interest in periodization. In this context, the idea of modernity designates the socio-cultural aspirations of that brief period of time, around the 1870s, when the artistic avant-garde was in alliance with the political.[6] Nevertheless, since the victorious advent of the resurgent bourgeosie, the road towards concrete realization of autonomous art has not been interrupted. It is my belief that before its socio-economic foundation, the idea of autonomous art had already blossomed in the eighteenth century epistem.

Michel Foucault, in *The Order of Things*, suggest that the two notions of "character" and "structure" were instrumental in causing a break with the classical discourse of representation. Foucault argues that in the eighteenth century, "The general knowledge is no longer that of identities and differences, that of non-quantitative orders ... but an area made of organic structures, that is, of internal relations between elements whose totality perform a function."[7] The concept of organic structure was not totally a new them. But its novelty, according to Foucault, resides in the fact that for the first time the idea of organic structure began to function as a method of characterization. Paralleling Foucault, one might claim that by conceiving of geometry as the internal structure of architecture, Étienne-Louis Boullée took a significant step towards overcoming the classical discourse of architecture. In so doing, her went farther than Claude Perrault. In order for architecture to crumble from the weight of "ressemblance," it had to do more than indulge in the problematic positive and arbitrary beauties.[8] Perraualt's revolt from a "classical doctrine" still remins in the realm of ideas: The space was not yet constructed where Perrault could see arbitrary and positive beauties without the so-called classical language of architecture.[9]

In this paradox of formal expression and conceptual representation, Boullée's discourse maintains a unique place. The geometry so dominant in his architectrue touches terrains different from that of the renaissance. In classical architecture, geometry sustains the similitude between everyday life and the divine order. For Boullée, on the other hand, geometry is an expressive means. The arrangement of a volume "should be such that we can absorb at a glance the multiplicity of the separate elements that constitutes the whole." The result is an architectural object whose "character" can be effectively received by an observer.[10] Anthony Vidler understands this aspect of Boullée's architecture to be a major advance in the trasngression of classical wisdom. Independent of its classical "garment," "the traditional sense of a building that embodied beauty in its proportions and in its three-

dimensional geometries was gradually subordinated to the idea of a geometrical order that followed the dictates of social or environmental needs."[11]

In Boullée's design for Newton's cenotaph, the sphere is displaced from its realm of platonic ideas and moved into the concrete domain of cultural discourse. This formal transgression blends with a discourse on the theme of death, identical to Jacques Louis David's paintings. *The Dead Marat* illustrates the self-sacrifice and patriotism of the body for a revolutionary soul. For David the grievance and tragedy of death dissolves in the lightness of the soul. The dialogue between body and soul attains its archtectonic langauge in Boullée's work. In Newton's cenotaph, the sacred is removed from the body of death; its weight evaporates in the lightness of geometry. One might wonder if Boullée knew that "in Newton's theories," noted by Italo Calvino, "what most strikes the literary imagination is not the conditioning of everything and everyone by the inevitability of its own weight, but rather the balance of forces that enables heavenly bodies to float in space."[12] Does not the floating aspect of Boullée's architecture distinguish his geometry from that of the classicists? Furthermore, isn't his discourse postulating that form, in its totality, is the subject of an autonomous architecture?

Certain aspects of Boullée's architecture offer positive affirmations to these questions. In Newton's cenotaph, the relationship between inside and outside is not problematized within the discourse of anthropomorphism; rather, it is enframed in the emblem of the sublime. "The idea of classical architecture, which had never seen itself as a language, but only as a system of building confronting to laws of beauty, was not definitely superceded by an idea of architecture as expression." Vidler continues: "The role of architecture to constuct was gradually reconstructed to that of to speak."[13] This reconstruction retained another quality; that is, the dichotomy between construction and ornament. The criticality of ornament in classical representation was articulated by Leon Battista Alberti. Dividing architecture into two components of building and design, Alberti assigns a particular function for ornament; that is, that ornament must elevate building into a phenomenon.[14] Boullée, on the other hand, closes the gap between design and building and unfolds a space for the expressive aspect of his geometrical constructs.

Such an act of dissociation from "tradition" creates a critical situation for artistic production. It is true that eighteenth century discourse breaks from the classical language of architecture; yet, it stopped one step short of either integrating art with politics or moving towards a concrete realization of an autonomous architecture.[15] This threshold of in-between-ness comprises a state of anxiety pathologically nullifed in the repression of the Paris Commune. One might speculate that Francisco Goya's *Saturn Devouring His Children* anticipated the tragic event. The fall of the Paris Commune may have shattered the utopia depicted by Saint Simon or Fourier for the first — and, in view of our current cultural practice, one could say — for the last time.

The eighteenth century artistic experience and the future socio-political development has provided a significant background for the Western intelligentsia. Though nurtured by this historical development, modern art took an ambivalent position against its social context. However, according to Bürger, "Since the middle of the nineteenth century, that is, subsequent to the consolidation of political rule by bourgeoisie, this development has taken a particular turn: the form-content dialectic of artistic structures has increasingly shifted in favor of form."[16] Bürger bases his argument mainly on the experience of the literary and visual arts. However, his observations can be applied to architectural discourse as well. As I have discussed elsewhere,[17] from Le Corbusier's dom-ino to current postmodern and deconstructivist architecture, form has emerged as the sole content of the architect's analytics. While Boullée's architecture could still speak for certain aspects of its social and natural environment, modernist work stressed form as a practical domain for the subjective intentionalities of its author.[18] Kenneth Frampton has observed that it was left to the Dadaists and the Surrealists in art and the Productivists, in architecture, to speculate on the integration of art into the practice of life.[19] The major exponent of modernity took the socio-cultural structure of the status-quo for granted, and intended to design its physical environment. Peter Behren's "will to form" and the Bauhaus plan for the "total design" were justified as reflections of the Zeitgeist. What discerns modernist work from that of the avant-garde is the latter's "attempt to organize a new life praxis from a basis in art."[20] While the Italian Futurists and the Dutch Neo-Plasticists founded their ideas on the physical and perceptual horizons offered by new technologies, the Productivists "sought to develop a new rooted culture based on the everyday production of the people themselves and on the fulfullment of their immediate informational needs."[21] From the experience of the Russian and European avant-garde, we might agree with Theodor Adorno that the historical avant-garde's project should be interpreted as a critical discourse against an on-going drive for autonomous art.[22] Nevertheless, the dialectics of the avant-garde and the modern movement came to an end after art was perceived as an institution, a term coined by Bürger. There followed a significant change in the "enframing" of technology discussed by Martin Heidegger.[23] This turning point opened a space allowing modern architecture to be criticized from within for the first time. Andreas Huyssens's observation is apt:

> The revolt of the 1960s was never a rejection of modernism per se, but rather a revolt against that version of modernism which had been domesticated in the 1950s. ... It no longer opposed a dominant class and its world view, nor had it maintained its programmatic purity from contamination by the culture industry.[24]

After Heidegger, one could not do justice to a discussion of the avant-garde

and the modern movement without referring to the development of technology. Mechanization not only opened a new peceptual horizon, but it also transformed economic and cultural domains respectively. In the nineteenth century, technology was an economic entity; the influence of scientific discoveries was more visible in the sphere of production and machinery. The "organism of production" of different cultural artifiacts became subject to technological change. The depth of this technological infusion depended upon the topological place of an artifact in the pyramid of the overall organization of production. One can recall the importance of transportation in the years following the industrial revolution and its impact on the formal conceptual aspects of the design of bridges. In more recent times, we can observe the relationship between the historical coincidence of the scarcity of housing after the Second World War and the infusion of the theme of prefabrication in architectural discourse. However, long before the practical application of technology to architecture took place, Le Corbusier was attracted by the precision of the machine, the beauty of engineering, and the creation of industrial buildings. For him, these works resulted from "the eyes which do see!" Yes, his dreams came true when the line demarcating the cultural from the technical was blurred by technology. "Technology in fact has come to occupy a destinal horizon, since it no longer represents a variable of economic development but is established as the destiny, both congenital and irremidiable, of the Western metaphysical discourse."[25] Only in this context does the "postmodern condition" attain a critical dimension. Jean Baudrillard articulates the transformation:

> We must remember this: The aim of art was once precisely to posit the power of illusion against reality. There was a time when art was trying to make reality play a game which was different to the game that art itself was playing. ... But today this is no longer the great game that art is playing. All the art forms are now playing the game at the level of the simulation of reality — and whether the particular art form be painting or architecture makes no difference whatsoever.[26]

The technique by which art makes an illusion of reality has turned out to be technology itself.

The above picture of the relationship between art and reality is probematized by Manfredo Tafuri's discourse on "the historical project." Tafuri holds that the experience of the modern movement after the eighteenth century is interrupted by "the very gap that exists between avant-garde ideology and the translation into technique of that ideology."[27] Tafuri suggests that this gap should be turned "into the material of concrete and widespread knowledge." Thus the idea of "history as a project of crisis" becomes the motto for re-writing the history of architecture,[28] and also the critical tool for reading

current architectural practices. Tafuri's premise is problematized when he maintains that "the thematic of the boundary interior to forms, of the limits of language, is an integral part of a historically determined crisis beyond which (but within the signpost that it has imposed upon us) we are today obliged to situate ourselves."[29] Tafuri's re-thinking leaves no room for us to consider present architectural practice but as of hysterical reactions. Ironically, his ideas recall Burger's conclusions, noted by Jochen Schulte-Sasse:[30] Are we parallyzed before the objective laws of historical determinism independent of human subjectivity? Or, should we accept hibernation as the only bastion of art for bad times? Again one thinks of the power of institutionalized "art" and the simulation of reality by art.

Heidegger offers a different response to the question of the relationship between technology, power, and art. He postulates that a decisive confrontation of the nihilism of techology "must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology, on the other, fundamentally different from it."[31] For him, that realm is art.

In conclusion, I would suggest that the idea of art as the last bastion of resistance against the weight of the stones of history and the power of the culture industry is crucial to Kenneth Frampton's oeuvre. Recognizing the negative aspects of the modern movement, Frampton unfolds a critical re-thinking of the project of the historical avant-garde. Emphasizing the tectonic of space-making as the "linguistic character" — a phrase coined by Adorno, Frampton advocates an associative understanding of architecture. His discourse is not formalized within the limits of contextualism. Nor does he establish a kinship with the universality of the instrumental reason. Tectonic designates an aesthetic thinking residing between construction and signification.[32] Frampton's "architecture of resistance" problematizes the incision forced into the locality of a culture by the very process of modernization. Caught up in a Heideggerian rift between the "yes" and "no" positon concerning technology, Frampton presents a different reading of the "void" left by the failure of the project of the historical avant-garde. Is not this explicit in his concluding remarks on the subject of the avant-garde, when he states that:

> In this oscillation between doubt and faith, the idea of modernity, along with the process of modernization, has been beset by cyclical crisis, among which the emergence of the so-called post-modern period is hopefully not the last. At the same time the storm of progress condemns us to wander through the ruins of history like Benjamin's angel, not only the history of the Classic and Gothic, the history of the lost vernacular, but also the history of the historical avant-garde and the history of those colonized once enchanted civilizations that are now subject to the modernizng law; those others of which as Ricoeur reminds us, we are but one more other.[33]

Notes

1 Robert C. Tucker, *The Marx-Engels Reader* (New York: Norton & Co. Inc., 1972), p. 436.

2 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

3 See, Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), pp. 95-148. In this revised text, Calinescu dismisses Bürger's argument. Following Renato Poggioli, Calinescu represents the avant-garde as the radical wing of the modern movement: "There is probably no single trait of the avant-garde in any of its historical metamorphoses that is not implied or even prefigured in the broader scope of modernity. There are, however, significant differences between the two movements. The avant-garde is in every respect more radical than modernity. Less flexible … naturally more dogmatic — both in the sense of self-assertion and, conversely, in the sense of self-destruction."

See, also, Poggioli, The *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968). His idea of the "two avant-gardes" is instrumental in understanding the socio-political roots of the avant-garde in the twentieth century. On this subject and the relationships between the avant-garde and the modern movement, see Manfredo Tafuri, *Architecture and Utopia* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1977), pp. 50-103. Tafuri's conclusive remarks on the dilemma of the avant-garde in facing two tendencies has its merits. According to Tafuri, the avant-garde did not have many choices: "Either the self-recognition of intellectual work as essentially work pure and simple, and therefore not something able to serve a revolutionary movement." Or, "an intellectual work that negates itself as such, claiming a position of pure ideology… Its objective, however, is always to get out of productive work and stand before it as its critical conscience." p. 66.

4 Berger, p. 49.

5 Kenneth Frampton has already made this point without explicitly identifying it as belonging to the end of modernity. In reference to the Fourierist artist G.D. Laverdent, Frampton concludes: "This initial avant-gardist thrust, unity in exuberant movement, both art and social protest, ceased to prevail as a phenomenon after the mid-1870s." See Frampton, "Avant-Garde and Countinuity," *Architectural Design* 7-8 (1982), p. 21.

6 For Poggioli the coincidence of the two avant-gardes resides in the character of Rimbaud and Verlaine. *Op. cit.*, p. 11. It is worthwhile to mention here that Theodor Adorno rejected the chronological interpretation of modern art in favor of the one which "answers to Rimbaud's postulate that, in relation to its own time, art be the most advanced consciousness where sophisticated technical procedures and equally sophisticated subjective experiences interpenetrate." See *Aesthetic Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), p. 49.

7 Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1970), p.

8 See Joseph Rykwert, *The First Moderns* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1980).

9 I have in mind Michel Foucault's discourse on the relationship between constructed space and knowledge: "spaces were designed to make things seeable, and seeable in a specific way." See John Rajchman, "Foucault's Art of Seeing," *October* (Spring 1988), pp. 89-117.

10 Étienne-Louis Boullée, "Architecture, Essay on Art," *Boullée and Visionary Architecture* (New York: Harmony Books,), p. 89.

11 Anthony Vidler, *The Writing of the Walls* (New Jersey: Princeton Architectural Press, 1987), p. 3.

12 Italo Calvino, *Six Memos for the Next Millenium* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), p. 23.

13 Anthony Vidler, "Notes on the Sublime: From Neo-classicism to Postmodernism," *Canon* 3 (1988).

14 Joseph Rykwert, "Inheritance or Tradition," *Architectural Design Profile* vol. 49, nos. 5-6,

pp. 2-6.

15 In Kenneth Frampton's distinction between art and architecture, he claims that "what was true of art and literature was always less true in the case of architecture, for where architecture was restrained by power and material production from being fully liberating or liberative in its expression, it was at the same time resistant to the separation of art and politics suffered by the other arts, for architecture was suffused with power." *Op. cit.*, 1982.

16 Bürger, p. 19.

17 Gevork Hartoonian, "Dom-ino and its Trajectory: Metamorphosis Deconstructed," *Art Criticism* vol. 5, no. 2 (1989), pp. 41-48.

18 In saving Mies van der Rohe from the mainstream of modern experience, Massimo Cacciari asserts that, "Whether one makes pure form one's purpose, or whether the goal is to achieve a perfect conformity between the work and technical and economic form of the contemporary social relations, the theoretical propositions are identical. Both operations presume that the purpose is the simple result of the agent's intentionality, that the work is nothing but the product of this intentionality, that the object — insofar as it is a purpose/telos to be attained — must depend exclusively on the subject that produces it." See Massimo Cacciari, "Mies's classics," *Res* 16 (Autumn 1988), pp. 9-16.

19 Kenneth Frampton, op. cit., 1982.

20 Bürger, p. 49. Dismissing Bürger's last point, Giogio Grassi charges "all artistic avant-gardes" with the process of borrowing slogans, or inventing their own forms regardless of the specific charcter of architecture and the history of that specificity. However, one cannot disagree with his critical assessment of the existing cultural "super-structure" and the need for architecture to emphasize "collective meanings." See "Avant-Garde and Continuity," *Oppositions* 21 (Summer 1980), pp. 25-33.

21 Frampton.

22 See Martin Jay, *Adorno* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1984), p. 65.

23 Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1977), p. 35.

24 Andreas Huyssens, "Mapping the Postmodern," *New German Critic* 33 (Fall 1984), p. 18.

25 Giovanna Borradori, *Recoding Metaphysics*, ed. G. Borradori (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1988), p. 17.

26 Jean Baudrillard, *Evil Demon of images* (Sidney: The Power Institute of Fine Arts, 1987), p. 49.

27 Manfredo Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1987), pp. 1-21.

28 Manfredo Tafuri, *Humanism, Technical Knowledge and Rhetoric: The Debate in Renaissance Venice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986). Tafuri reflects on the physical transformation of Venice in light of technical developments, and the role it played in the crisis of the unity of knowledge conceived in the figure of "universal man." In conclusion, he argues that Palladio's architecture remained on the outskirts of the Venetian context because of his new form of rationality, "which projects its own theories beyond the contigent historical time."

29 Tafuri, *The Sphere and the Labyrinth*, p. 6.

30 See his forward to Bürger, op. cit., 1984.

31 Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, p. 35.

32 I am drawing an analogy to Heidegger's reflections on the intimacy between the world and the thing, not as a fusion but as a "difference;" According to Heidegger, "The difference carries out world in its worlding, carries out things in their thinging." See Martin Heidegger, *Poetry, Language, Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 202.

33 Kenneth Frampton, from an unpublished manuscript.

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