SITE

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CONTENTS

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Claude Lévi-Strauss, Brazil 1935.
Copyright ARTE

Residuals

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Residual spaces always seem to be invested with a romantic and disruptive energy: as flipsides of modernity, crevices opened up in the apparently seemless narrative of technological progress, they radiate a virtual power of thinking differently, of a temporal fabric brushed against the grain. From Walter Benjamin's angelic inversion of time in the "Theses on the Philosophy of History" to Robert Smithson's descent into the time of geology and entropy, the passion of contestation seems to have been on the side of the residual. Art institutions have by no means refrained from exploiting and even instrumentalizing this condition, and the ubiquity of the second machine age industrial space turned exhibition space, with its strategic commodification of memory as spectacle, is a sure sign of this. (The cycle seems to have become even shorter today: industrial ruins need not be more than a decade old to begin to shimmer with retroactive authenticity.)

Residuals and left-overs must of course be understood as more than spatial conditions: printed matter, footage, images, "information" in all possible senses, enter into our archives, consigned to forms of storage that necessarily alter their significance. The essays of Thomas Elsaesser, on Ingmar Bergman, and Volker Pantenburg, on a series of recent exhibitions on "post-cinema," both address such a shift in media infrastructure, where the death of cinema might lead to a different afterlife. Kim West discusses the political dimension of Pedro Costa's *In Vanda's Room*, where the seemingly dilapidated areas of Fontainhas outside of Lisbon are invested with a pride and dignity of their own, whereas the essay of Daniel and Alexandre Costanzo investigates a work by Danielle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub, *Othon*, where the overlay of different temporalities—the classical diction of Corneille's text, the antique setting of Rome, and the present moment—produce the possibility of a "breach," that invests the past with a capacity to shatter the present and open up another future.

Kadier Attia's project deals with reappropriation of architecture as an endless process, and of how the language of modernist architecture was inflected in the Algerian context, and then brought into the French banlieues. These projects create a certain loop in time, and, the artist writes, "seem to have become the laboratories of post-colonization."

Janina Pedan directly addresses the recent Manifesta exhibition, which has been the source of inspiration for this issue, and discusses the re-use of an old aluminum plant by Raqs Media Collective, and, drawing on the theories of Gilbert Simondon, the way in which the history of metal can play a part in artistic creation. Jeff Kinkle discusses another exhibition, After Nature, and asks whether our seeming impossibility to imagine a radically different future otherwise than through the lense of the apocalypse simply produces melancholy and acceptance, or whether it can refocus our perspective on history. Similarly, melancholy is the topic of the recent Torino Biennale, reviewed by Sinziana Ravini, who charts the various possibilities still lodged in this age-old concept.

Claude Lévi-Strauss, who celebrated his 100th birthday on November 28, is the topic of Sven-Olov Wallenstein's essay. From his early melancholy reflections on the disappearance of cultural differences to his structural analyses of myth and kinship, he has done more than anyone else in this century to erase the difference between the "savage" and the "modern" mind, and to prove that the residual and the emergent are looped in a historical becoming without beginning and end, that the logos of mythos and the mythos of logos will always remain intertwined, and that the power of reason always resides in an opening to its outside—which thereby becomes an inside more profound than the simple interiority of any cogito.

The idea of the residual has finally been integrated into the fabric of SITE itself. This issue has been printed on recycled paper, which means that each copy is slightly different, based on a process of random selection decided by the printer, thus affecting the very support of graphic and textual information. •

THE EDITORS

Ingmar Bergman in the Museum? Thresholds, Limits, Conditions of Possibility

Thomas Elsaesser

"Cinema is part of contemporary life; there is no barrier between them. But this dialogue between visual forms of representation, this new relationship between the cinema and the museum, this is a problem for me."

Victor Erice

"The cinema is dead—long live the cinema (in the museum)"

For several decades now, the cinema's demise has been presented as a fact: at first, television took away the family audience, then the video recorder killed off the neighborhood cinemas, and now digitization has broken the indexicality of the photographic image, undermining its "documentary" value by replacing the optico-chemical link to physical reality with numerical code. News of the cinema's death is thus no longer new, and some will say that it is greatly exaggerated: the hegemonic might of Hollywood movies reigns unabated, but young *auteurs* continue to emerge in Asian countries, Latin America and the Middle-East, and a myriad of festivals show new films from all over the world—even from "old" Europe—to crowded venues.

Yet clearly, a certain cinema is no more: the great masters of the European art cinema of the post-war period are either dead or fell silent long ago: Rossellini, Visconti, Fellini; Hitchcock, Welles, Bunuel; Fassbinder, Pasolini, Kieslowski, and now Antonioni and Bergman have passed away. Only in France do Alain Resnais, Eric Rohmer, Jacques Rivette, Jean-Marie Straub and Jean-Luc Godard still occasionally make films, yet they are among the ones most eloquently melancholy about the "death" of cinema.

Should one revive this heroic past, not just at retrospectives in cinematheques and within university film courses? Open the fine arts museums? No contemporary exhibition can do without the moving image, either in the form of video and installation art, or serving as educational-informative support; so why not make museums the permanent home of cinema? Some cinephiles will say that this is how it should be. Cinema, which finally came of age as *the* art form of the 20th century, has earned the right to enter into the traditional temple of the arts. The "death of cinema" actually makes it easier. We now know who the masters are and which are the canonical masterpieces. We can begin to study them afresh, with the eyes of art historians or "image-anthropologists". The archive and the museum can and must take over from the film studio, the distributor and the exhibitor, to save, restore, preserve and *valorize*: as art-works as well as heritage and cultural patrimony. Not unlike in previous periods of civilization, when the (primary economic) use-value of an object is exhausted, a film, after its commercial run has ended, can enter into different cycles of the value chain, moving from "commerce" to "culture" and "art". It can become part of a collection, acquire aesthetic status as a unique artifact, or attain the aura of a personal work, thanks to the *auteur*'s stylistic signature. Others will argue that these very moves constitute an act of betrayal, or even theft. The cinema was made for the people, and belongs to the people; films are products of an industry and their commodity-status is an essential part of their historical meaning. As "public memory, privatized" and as "designs for living", they advertise if not always the moral life, then the good life, for everyone: cinema the democratic art. Let the afterlife of films and filmmakers, if it cannot be the big screen, be television, the Internet, every medium and on any platform, including the ever more readily available DVDs, with their bonuses, extras and other enticements to consumption! Cynics (or realists) will conclude that the mineralization of the cinema suits both parties. It adds cultural capital to the cinematic heritage and redeems its lowly origins in popular entertainment, but it also adds new audiences to the museum, where the video monitor and the moving image—market-research proves it—retain the visitors' attention several seconds longer than the framed painting or the free-standing, static sculpture. And it puts the intellectual and financial resources of a century-old institution (usually supported by the State) behind something as fragile and perishable as celluloid, when the industry is at best prepared to digitally re-master the cult classics, and thus falsifies not only the historic record, but in the rush for returns, obliterates the material traces of an otherwise irrecoverable "time past, stored", more than ever in urgent need to be restored, rather than re-packaged.

So, when the cinema enters the museum, matters are not straightforward. Different actor-agents, power-relations and policy agendas, different competences, egos and sensibilities, different elements of the complex puzzle that is the contemporary art world and its commercial counterpart come into play. Other considerations are also pertinent: for today's practicing artists, photography, film, video, the digital media are the paint, pencil, clay or bronze of their predecessors—in other words, their primary materials and natural tools of the trade. And like artists before them, they consider these predecessors fair game: to appropriate, re-use, parody, plunder, plagiarize or pay homage to. Such is especially the case for the cinematic heritage, which belongs to everyone. If Surrealism, Dada, Pop art and Fluxus have demonstrated how to recycle the materials and commodities of the first industrial age as found objects, ready-mades and junk, to be dis-placed and re-coded as both art and anti-art, then moving images of the first hundred years of cinema, as they enter the museum, are necessarily also found footage, whatever their provenance: anonymous or authored, from a well-known classic or a home movie.

The Film Historian as Curator?

With these considerations in mind, I want to introduce an initiative that a group of scholars and students in Stockholm, Yale and Amsterdam undertook, in order to bring Bergman to the attention of the art world in a new kind of encounter and event. First of all, the teams I assembled, whatever their background or ambitions as filmmakers or installation artists, are working on this project as film historians and media theorists, and despite the fact that both cinema and museum are in flux, the protocols to be observed in each case are no less strict. Thus, one of the important features of the museum today is not so much what it lets in, as the thresholds, limits and conditions of possibility it—(visibly and invisibly—(im)poses. Such an assertion may seem paradoxical, since from Duchamp's urinal, Warhol's soup cans and Carl André's bricks, to Damien Hirst's shark, Tracy Emin's unmade bed and Chris Ofili's elephant dung, it seems that nothing is being excluded from the museum. But this would be to overlook the extent to which the fine arts in the 20th century, and the institutions that serve them, have been relentlessly meta-discursive and self-referential. Faced with the anti-art onslaught of successive avant-gardes, the modern museum has reinvented itself, by marking—in a myriad of subtle ways—its spaces as deceptively open and fiercely bounded, which is to say, as both liminal and territorial: to be crossed and entered only by guarded acts of negotiation and agreed terms of mutual interference. This liminality and what it implies is a valuable gift the museum can make the cinema, in the sense that it forces it to double itself, and in the process, also divest, divide or subtract itself. As a "natural" space of reflexivity and recursiveness, the museum obliges everything that enters, however banal or precious, to be perceived against a double horizon: that of its unique physical presence, and the special significance attached to the fact that its placement (in the here-and-now) is also a dis-placement. Every act and every object is both itself and its own statement, and thus the museum, as it were, for this reason alone, knows the cinema better than the cinema knows itself, or rather: the museum forces the cinema to be itself, by becoming more like itself.

One can summarize these turns or acts of displacement under a more general heading, by claiming that the museum arrests and suspends the moving image—in both senses of these words: with respect to motion and stillness, the moment and motility, and in the legal sense of suspending a license, an agreement, of suspending someone in his functions or even of giving someone a suspended sentence. If the museum rescues the cinema, it does so at the price of taking it, as it were, into protective custody. In short, it is a holding operation and an ambiguous one at that.

What, then, in the case of Bergman's cinema, would be the particular forms of arrest, suspension, and displacement—understood, in a preliminary sense, as synonyms for stripping of context, for abstracting from the commodity-form, and for subtracting from film culture? The move to the museum would, for instance, subtracts from Bergman's cinema not only narrative and anecdote, but also psychology (and thus drama): the very life-blood of his films, one might say. Put differently, Bergman's cinema enters the museum not as a story-telling medium, nor as a collection of personal themes and obsessions (such as childhood and family, the marital couple, religion or art), but as its own double, arresting the medium, its history and specificity, in an extended moment or enduring snapshot, and thereby exposing, once more, the cinema's own archaeology and ontology. Respecting the liminality and conditions of possibility discussed above, the different thresholds to be negotiated could be grouped under the following categories: ready-mades and fragments, reflexivity as archaeology and reflexivity as ontology, minimalist relationality and the dispositifs of mutual interference.

Found Object: Ingmar Bergman, the Great Artist

Feature films, I argued, no less than found footage enter the museum as ready-mades, carrying with them the cultural use-values or junk-status of cinema. Once we decided that Bergman should not (yet) be given the Hitchcock-Pompidou treatment, there still remained the fact that he was and is a "great artist". So in what sense can the great artist be a ready-made? Major tributes to Bergman's fame are the parodies his films have inspired, especially *The Seventh Seal* (by Woody Allen, French & Saunders), *Wild Strawberries* ("The Düve/The Dove"), but also *Persona* and *The Silence*. Bergman was hyper-conscious of the danger of falling into self-parody, and chided both Bunuel and Welles for succumbing to the vice. At the same time, his films are replete with artists: would-be artists and con-artists, tormented artists and sensitive souls, artists as recluses and artists as priapic satyrs, artists as humiliated clowns and pitiful buffoons, artists as prostitutes and artists as pimps, pompous artists and heartless cynics: self-portraits or self-parodies, products of self-loathing or self-idealization? Both, of course, and neither, and therefore constituting the clichés of the post-romantic repertoire of art. And yet: a compilation across some twenty films tracing the artist—from introvert boy or "liar" (*The Silence, Fanny and Alexander*) to the sarcastic, but worldly-wise church painter Albertus Pictor (in *The Seventh Seal*) via the aspiring young dramatist and his burnt-out writer-father (in *Through A Glass Darkly*), the homicidal-suicidal Johan (in *Hour of the Wolf*) and the serene actress Emilie Ekdahl (*Fanny and Alexander*), playing her role as mother and grandmother just as professionally as she once did Hedda Gabler or Ophelia—would both confound any sense of Bergman's artists journeying to eventual "maturity", and confirm that the director's view of the artist never changed. As the ready-mades of bourgeois anti-bourgeois revolt, these "portraits of the artist" hold in suspense and arrest the common trope of Bergman baring his soul, and Bergman as he bares his soul, sharply observing everyone's reaction.

The Work: Fragment and Totality

Bergman has left an oeuvre of such extraordinary depth and epic proportions, so consistent in its recurring motifs and repeated deployment of key actors, yet so diverse in mood, tone, as well as setting, that any ambition other than a complete retrospective would seem a strangely perverse act of homage. Indeed, rather than showing individual films, according to period or genre, preference or popularity, *24-hour Bergman* might be the best way to use the museum's modulated but not strictly segmented time regime, in order to test the fine line between homage and sacrilege. Re-thinking the technical processes of montage, assemblage and collage, we tried to examine their different meanings in the cinema and in modern art. Surprisingly enough, as we looked for extracts and scenes, our renewed attention to moment and instant, to interval and intermittence, to seriality and succession, to random distraction and free association, became of immense value for *looking closer at the films* and for appreciating their many levels of interlacing

◂
Persona
Copyright 1966
AB Svensk Filmindustri

internal architectures. Yet the experience of selecting and putting together these extracts has proved another point, and produced another surprise. Bergman is like an earthworm: wherever you cut him, and into however many pieces he is chopped, each fragment is viable, and in the end, makes itself whole again.

Reflexivity as Ontology

What cinema shares with the fine arts, and in particular with painting, is a common conception of vision, inherited from Renaissance perspective: that a rectangle of color and light, framed against a wall, can connote an "open window on the world". In the face of such an inherently improbable, but deeply held idea (and the sweeping changes that the digital media are rapidly bringing to such assumptions), some of the differences often noted between cinema and museum, such as mobile spectator/fixed image, versus fixed spectator/moving image, diminish in consequence. A compilation that concentrates on Bergman's use of windows—especially when combined with mirrors, frames and doorways—can bring out the painterly composition of many of his scenes, and lead to productive comparisons between theatrical staging in depth, pictorial conventions of multiple planes of action, and cinematic deep space. But it also shows how restrictive and conventional the window as master trope of human vision actually is, and how adversely it can affect human interchange and communication. More generally, the idea of the cinema as a window on the world is also known as the realist ontology, itself one of the key definitions of "what is cinema", and thus an affirmation of its specificity as an art form. That Bergman cites the window so often is a sign of his classicism, and yet—as a montage of similar scenes readily proves—much more happens when one focuses on his half-open or half-closed doors, his full-length or hand-held mirrors, the moments of a character crossing the threshold from one space into another, or when peering into one space through the doorway of another. Repetition here creates a degree of reflexivity, also with regards to spectatorship: it re-asserts the cinema's unique architecture of looks, in rooms that often simulate the domestic interiors of bourgeois life, while threatening at any moment to collapse into a claustrophobic hall of mirrors, doubling up on themselves, and giving the spectator no place from which to retain a firm footing, nor to sustain the illusion that she might be safely on the outside, merely looking in.

Reflexivity as Archaeology

Bending to the time-constraints and spatial arrangements of the museum as white cube rather than black box also produces another kind of reflexivity. The invention of new forms, such as short films, montage-sequences, and above all loops and Moebius strips, allowing for repetition within duration, turns out to be the *re-invention*, as meta-cinema, of early film-forms, from the time of cinema's origins: museum reflexivity becomes media archaeology. Signaled clearly in the title of his autobiography *The Magic Lantern*, Bergman makes frequent allusions in his films to pre- and proto-cinematic devices (*The Magician, Persona, Fanny and Alexander*). They serve several functions: they inscribe him into a genealogy of pioneers and entrepreneurs of spectacle and vision machines, and they want to emphasize the element of craft, the practical skills and sheer technical know-how that goes with being a filmmaker. But they also emphasize what the museum tends to exclude: the white (and occasionally black) magic of entertainment and showmanship, professing Bergman's affinity with the "low arts" practiced by the performers, strolling players, manipulators and tricksters who people his films and whose lives of hard work—despite the ironic or sarcastic tone—he seems to salute for their popular touch, as much as he recognizes their bodily appetites (*The Seventh Seal, Sawdust and Tinsel, The Rite*).

Perhaps the most important function of these magic lanterns, puppet-theatres, mechanical toys and illusionist contraptions, for our present project at least, is that they are a useful reminder of an alternative genealogy for the cinema itself, not dependent on (bourgeois, museum-friendly) Renaissance perspective and the conceit of the window on the world. Instead—while also derived from the *camera obscura*—they lead via 18th century phantasmagorias, "Pepper's Ghost", fog pictures, stereoscopy, apparition photographs and spiritist séances, to the wilder shores of the special effects of today, to 3-D graphics and the immersive spectacles promised by the new media, not bounded by the picture frame, nor predicated on the calibrated parameters of distance and proximity typical of painting and museum display, they instead envelop us in the permanent, ambient ether of fantasy.

Minimalism as Relational Aesthetics

There would seem to be little that is minimalist about Bergman's work, all on the side of baroque exuberance, or haunted by an equally baroque melancholia and sense of *memento-mori*. Here, too, the limits and constraints of the museum can lead to new discoveries and a re-appraisal. As part of the subtractive turn, the compilation format divests the cinema of narrative *telos*, and generates instead a different kind of linearity, based on repetition, where a concatenation of moments, taken from their context, can be re-inserted into a different scheme: the more obvious and simple the rules, the more enigmatic the content can become. But also: the more minimal the perceptual perturbations, the more demands are made on the spectator to experience a work, in the productive act of giving meaning to perception itself. As gallery artists increasingly rely on works in series, mimetically or intuitively reproducing the *defilé* of cinema, they also impose the severest of self-restrictions: minute variations, almost imperceptible to the untrained eye, challenge the notion of the discrete image, while nonetheless eschewing movement, thereby focusing attention on the rule for generating the work, while highlighting the rule's inability by itself to structure the viewer's experience. What would it mean, we wondered, to have Bergman restrict himself to one tonality, one face, one gesture—the way, say, Jasper Johns in the late 1950s painted only in shades of grey—but to do so, ad infinitum? Ten minutes of Liv Ullmann's face, for instance, from all the films she made with Bergman, or Max von Sydow, looking straight at the camera, from film to film, with minimal variation, but becoming ever more intense. A thought to make one dream, but one that needs a screen as big as a Tintoretto altarpiece, or Holbein's *The Ambassadors*.

Dispositifs of Mutual Interference

Perhaps the most challenging assumption to come under scrutiny, when a filmmaker like Bergman enters the museum, is the cinema's relation to the body, and especially its engagement with the senses other than vision. Traditionally, the cinema has been regarded as the triumph of the disembodied gaze. It arose, a little over a hundred years ago, when there was no aerial transport via planes, no private motorcars, and the only available mechanized means of transportation was the railway. Well into the 20th century, then, cinema was a mobile eye: an organ to see and to explore the world with, an eye no longer tied to the body. It could roam freely, make itself invisible, and penetrate into places that were either forbidden, barred or physically out of reach. The disembodied eye was celebrated as a potent intimation of power and omniscience. Voyeurism, that primary motive of assisted vision, is also intimately connected with a form of disembodiment: who could resist the idea of not having to take responsibility for one's bodily presence in a given space or at a given time, while still enjoying its intimacy? By contrast, visiting the museum, we are inescapably present with our bodies, indeed this is the special pleasure and privilege of being in a museum: sharing the same space with a unique work of art, experiencing the tactility and vibrancy of paint, feeling the urge to touch the curves or surfaces of a sculpture.

Framed within these expectations, Bergman's films are especially responsive. Not only was he a master in teasing out tactile sensations from black-and-white photography, and able to flood the screen with saturated color—just think of the almost unbearably intense reds in *Cries and Whispers*. One of the paradoxical effects of the digital image having become the norm is that film scholars, too, have been paying more attention to embodied forms of vision. They now speak of the skin of the film (the way that Roland Barthes spoke of the grain of the voice), noting a new materiality in video and digital media, which leads to a more haptic mode of perception and reception on the side of the viewer. If compared to the cinema's disembodied look, the gallery's default value is embodied perception, then all manner of aesthetic parameters—I am thinking of relations of size, scale, and detail—call for re-investigation and a deeper understanding.

A further negotiated disruption or transgression is implied by the entry of sound, and of sound-spaces into the museum, traditionally a site of silence and stillness in both senses of the word. Here too, Bergman can be seen to have been at the forefront of developments he may not have intended nor even condoned. His carefully composed sound, usually integrated into narrative and fictional space, can—isolated in the museum and concatenated in the form of a compilation-montage—be appreciated for the special way it affects the spectator bodily, touches the skin, grates on one's (mental) epidermis, or brings on a shiver of pleasure, anticipating the richly musical cadences with which his actors (de)live(r) their lines, to give illusions of familiarity and intimacy, possibly more to non-Swedish ears. We have chosen "Skin and Stone", "Cries and Whispers" (Bergman himself obliges with the title) and "Mind and Brain" to highlight ways in which that heightened awareness of the body in the museum might benefit one's attentiveness to Bergman's special genius as a *filmmaker*.

Threshold, Transgression, Potential Presence

We do not want to minimize the transgressive nature of what we are proposing. A filmmaker has the right to the integrity of his oeuvre, this being usually defined by the autonomy of his individual films as coherent and complete works, to be shown exactly as intended. We have no disagreement with such a position. Our argument is as simple as might appear simple-minded. We do believe that there lie hidden in Bergman's films certain layers of potential (not meaning, but) *presence* that can be actualized and literally brought to the films' sensory surface, when making the dispositifs of cinema and museum less converge with each other, than mutually interfere with each other, as they do in the form of installations and compilations. The encounter becomes an event, precisely to the degree that the tensions can still be felt, and the seemingly incompatible properties of each medium oblige curators to make choices rather than to compromise. Without wishing to claim that somehow this reveals, say, the "optical unconscious" of a director's work, or even assume that we have been able to distil Bergman's *ars poetica*, it does, we believe, teach us something about the cinema—after the death of cinema. For besides giving a new generation the opportunity to learn to look at films closely (that is, with all their senses) by doing the kind of patient, labor-intensive and time-consuming work that such compilations and installations require, this—in every sense, labor of love—in the idiom of today (sampling, compiling, appropriating, re-mixing) constitutes both a new form of cinephilia *and* a new hermeneutics of close reading.

Finally, beyond these pedagogical uses, important though they may be for museums as much as for film scholars, the exercise does allow new questions to emerge and thus helps us ask afresh the question of "what is cinema?", as it enters/when it enters that public space of reflexivity, by which I have defined the museum. Our hope for Ingmar Bergman's 90th birthday is that around his work, the avant-garde, the archive and the academy might collectively and in mutual interdependence—and even mutual interference—preserve and present what we still have every reason to call, without historical qualifications or technical specifications, the cinema. •

Thomas Elsaesser is Emeritus Professor of Film and Television Studies at the University of Amsterdam and since 2005 Visiting Professor at Yale University. His most recent books include *Terror und Trauma* (2007; English edition forthcoming); *Filmtheorie: zur Einführung* (2007, with Malte Hagener; English edition and Italian translation forthcoming) and *Hollywood Heute* (2008).

"Post Cinema?" Movies, Museums, Mutations

Volker Pantenburg

I. Expand / Resist

Two years ago, the independent section of the Berlin Film Festival, Berlinale (International Forum of New Cinema), launched a new initiative called Forum expanded. Updating and terminologically modifying the "expanded cinema" movement of the sixties, Forum Expanded tried to fathom the possibilities of what one of its curators described as "Showing different films differently".[1] Installation work by filmmakers and other cinema-related artworks were to be shown at the KW Institute for Contemporary Art as well as at the Arsenal cinema, which traditionally hosts the Forum. At the same time, a "black box" was installed at the cinema to complement the two existing conventional movie theaters. The aim was an alliance of different spaces and different forms of presentation, a combination of differing concepts of time and space.

This way of adjusting cinema to a specific challenge is one of the various modes of reacting to the contradictory, flexible and yet unclear "battle of the images" that Raymond Bellour has described and analyzed on numerous occasions during the last two decades.[2] Depending on your set of assumptions and on how you understand the rhetoric of "expansion", Forum Expanded can be interpreted as a signal of compromise, a sign of defeat or a straightforward attempt to not let the art world take over discussions and presentation of cutting-edge film practice.

To give an impression of the variety of the field, let me just name some of the artists and filmmakers involved in the Forum Expanded section that has since become an integral part of the Festival: Michael Snow, Harun Farocki, Morgan Fisher, Hollis Frampton, Isabella Rossellini, Yvonne Rainer, Sharon Lockhart, Tony Conrad, Olaf Nicolai, Steven Dwoskin. The list shows how parts of the heritage of experimental cinema that has recently resurfaced in contemporary art spaces try to be "recuperated" by this cinema-based initiative. As luck would have it, Matthew Barney, an emblematic figure for the opposite movement by visual artists who start producing blockbuster art-movies, was a member of the Berlinale-jury that same year and a documentary on his *Drawing Restraint 9* was shown in one of the other sections of the festival.[3]

The year 2006, or, a little more generally, the middle of the present decade, is a good vantage point to inspect the field somewhat clumsily described by the words art and cinema. Even if we consider only its latest stage with DVD or video-based multi-screen projections and "cinematographic installations"[4]—which means: the time since the "narrative turn" of video art—we are looking at a history of nearly two decades that justifies some historiography.[5] Moreover, the last few years have seen several interesting and divergent suggestions as to how to conceptualize the forces at work. Each of these suggestions implies a certain ideology of cinema and art, and each of them is involved in questions of production, distribution and the consumption of movies.

I would like to discuss two opposing approaches to negotiate the differences and deal with the conflicts that appear whenever moving images are exhibited in art spaces, particularly those traditionally connected with the cinema as a mode of presentation. The first is the comprehensive exhibition Le Mouvement des Images, shown throughout the year 2006 at the Centre Pompidou in Paris, curated by Philippe-Alain Michaud.[6] The second proposition was made by Alexander Horwath who was responsible for the cinema program at documenta 12 in Kassel, the world's biggest exhibition of contemporary art that takes place every five years. It is significant that both approaches have been made within art contexts rather than within the discourse of the cinema.

II. Le mouvement des Images, Centre Pompidou, 2006

One way of tracing the tensions and various encounters between cinema and museum would be by attempting a historiography of crucial institutions and individual curators, as well as the rise of the curator as such. During the last fifteen to twenty years, the Centre Pompidou has been paramount in developing strategies to exhibit and theorize the various transfers between different image-systems. More recently, Hitchock et l'art. Coincidences fatales (2001), the Godard-exhibition Voyage(s) en utopie (2006), and the recent Erice/Kiarostami. Correspondances (2007) show that the project of the Centre comprises the adaptation of classic cinema positions, as well as a broader perspective of moving images.

1991's Passages de l'image, curated by Raymond Bellour, Christine Van Assche and Catherine David, is one of the exhibitions that will retrospectively be remembered as a potential starting point for a genealogy of canonical exhibitions. It displayed work by Jeff Wall, Bill Viola, Gary Hill, Thierry Kuntzel, amongst others, and put them into a broader perspective of image transfers. In Bellour's introduction to the catalogue, "The Double Helix," video has the utopian potential of embodying the "betweenness" that characterizes the field of what Bellour baptised "entre-image": the intermedia-mixtures, migrating forms between photography, cinema, visual arts and text.[7]

Fifteen years later, Le mouvement des Images looks like a sequel to Passages de l'Image. Some changes, however, can be grasped from its title: the specific "passage" has become a generalized "movement," the idea of a coherent concept of an "Image" has turned into the plurality of "Images". Yet the argument remains more or less the same, as curator Philippe-Alain Michaud writes in the catalogue: "Nowadays, at the dawn of the 21st century, while we are witnessing a massive migration of images in motion from screening rooms to exhibition spaces, a migration borne along by the digital revolution and prepared by a twofold phenomenon of dematerialization of works plus a return to theatricality of the art scene, it becomes possible, not to say necessary, to redefine the cinema beyond the experimental conditions which governed it in the 20th century—that is to say, no longer from the limited viewpoint of film history, but, at the crossroads of live spectacle and visual art, from a viewpoint expanded to encompass a general history of representations."[8] Michaud's diagnosis is typical: it combines a general reference to the "digital revolution" with the demand for different forms of distribution and presentation. In line with notions of "visual culture" and the academic habit to speak of images rather than of specific image-regimes like cinema, photography or painting, Michaud opts for a general notion of the image. What is at stake is an assimilation of cinema to both Mitchell's "pictorial turn" and the "performative turn" of the visual arts.

Yet the advantage of matching cinematic expression with other forms of image production has its flipside. One of the potential problems revealed itself right from the start when entering the exhibition, which was subdivided into four sections: Unwinding, Projection, Narrative, and Montage. In the Montage section, Len Lye's film *Rhythm* (to be more precise: its DVD-loop-version) was shown face-to-face with Matthias Müller's *Home stories*; Fernand Léger's *Ballet mécanique* provided a bridge between the two.

No doubt that these examples of repetition and alternation allowed for a smooth passage between Montage and Narration. Yet to do this, Len Lye's film (as most of the works displayed) had to remain silent. Its sound (which in this case really makes up the structural backbone) found itself exiled to ridiculously small speakers. Emphasizing the image-part of cinema at the same time means neglecting or ignoring the prominence that sound and sound design have always had, especially as they have become more and more important since the seventies. In a broader perspective, this hints at the problem of "noisebleed" that affects all sorts of sonic installations, with or without moving images.[9] The desire to establish a simultaneous interaction between different artworks and to make the visitor part of that interaction involuntarily means privileging the loudest, or else it forces the curator to reestablish the unloved cinema-principle via the black box.

The second problem was that the choice of works implied a kind of re-canonization of modern experimental and auteur-cinema. Not a trace of high-concept films, comedies, blockbusters, etc., let alone TV-series that have had a major impact on movie aesthetics over the last decade. Even more problematic: the exhibition did not even include one single feature film, which made the *Cahiers du cinéma* speculate that the move from cinema to the museum was only possible at the price of making it disappear.[10]

III. What spectator?

The privileging of short formats was surely a reaction to the exhaustive time-budgets that gallery-goers are often forced to bring to exhibitions showing video and installation art. Yang Fudong's 260 minute-piece at the Venice biennial in 2007,[11] David Claerbout's *Bordeaux Piece* (2004) that evolves and mutates slowly over a period of thirteen hours; Douglas Gordon's appropriation of *The Searchers* that stretches John Ford's classic to the five years that the film narrates: there are countless examples for installation work that deliberately overstrains the capacities of every visitor and thus entangles her in an awkward struggle for attention and concentration.[12] The challenge of being confronted with movies that are far too long to be watched in their entirety can evoke two opposing reactions: you are either annoyed and frustrated to glimpse just a short extract of "the whole thing". No matter when you leave the installation, you will always have the impression that it was the wrong moment. Or else the sheer length of the piece makes you abandon the concept of integrity and you can start to stroll freely without caring too much about the length. This attitude of flexibility and deciding for oneself is often associated with a deliverance from the static and rigid experience of cinema.

One of the backgrounds for this is the tendency to privilege the multiple over the single, the plural over the singular, the in-between over the central, difference over identity. "The method of our time is to use not a single but multiple models for exploration", McLuhan propagated as early as 1967.[13] In a slight but remarkable generalization, the multiplication of screens becomes the multiplication of models and opinions, thus implicitly creating an analogy between multiple screens and the democratic model of an emancipated spectator. A dominant interpretation today, mainly expressed by art curators, takes up this idea and isolates it from its historical context. While the single screen-model of cinema represents an authoritarian model of command and passive reception, the multi-screen model confronts the spectator with "freedom of choice" both in temporal and spatial respect. It is probably the argument most often put forth that the viewer of an installation is not forced to endure the film in its entirety but can enter and leave the black box at his own will. Nor is she constricted to sit still in her seat, as she can wander through the exhibition space and modify her spatial relation to the screen. As Chrissie Iles, curator at the Whitney Museum puts it: "The cinema becomes a cocoon, inside which a crowd of relaxed, idle bodies is fixed, hypnotized by simulations of reality projected onto a single screen. This model is broken apart when the dark space of cinema is folded into the white cube of the gallery."[14] And she goes on to say that "[t]he darkened gallery's space invites participation, movement, the sharing of multiple viewpoints, the dismantling of the single frontal screen, and an analytical, distanced form of viewing. The spectator's attention turns from the illusion on the screen to the surrounding

▲
Spectators of Amie Siegel's installation Berlin Remake

▲
Installation view from Le Mouvement Des Images at Musée National d'art Moderne, 2007. Copyright Centre Pompidou

▲
Installation view from Arsenale, Venice Biennale, 2007. Photo: durga_akv (flickr.com)

▲
The Gloria Kino in Kassel. Venue of the documenta 12 Film programme curated by Alexander Horwat. Photo: VivaUltra (flickr.com)

space, and to the physical mechanisms and properties of the moving image."[15]

On the one hand, this may sound like an accurate account of some of the hopes that made artists and experimental filmmakers leave the movie theater for gallery spaces in the seventies. Cinema and its (mostly male) spectator had been criticized both in theoretical and practical respect as passive and lacking participation. On the other hand, the paradigm of the manipulating and patronizing cinematic apparatus, which had strong polemical force in the theories at that time, tends to survive as an ahistorical given in the art critical debates of the nineties and into the present. This bears several ironies: first of all, it does not take into account that the question of diverging "viewing positions" has been one of the crucial issues of film theory in the last decades. Early cinema studies and new film history, feminist and phenomenological film theory have all helped to elaborate historical and analytical frameworks to adequately describe the complexities of different historical spectator-subjects.[16] Art critical accounts hardly take this into account and often promote a simplistic, monolithic concept of "the specator". Secondly, the concept of "illusion", which was so harshly attacked in critical accounts from the seventies, has recently been reconsidered as a central element of aesthetic experience. Even the most ordinary cinema-going experience depends on a willing suspension of disbelief and implies a reflective knowledge of the fictional status of the world displayed on screen. It is therefore no use opposing "illusion" and "reflection" the way it is often conceptualized in discussions about installation art vs. cinema.[17] In its bluntest version, this ignorance leads to the emphatic model of the gallery space as a free, post-ideological space that has overcome the restraints of cinema. To me, it seems as if just the opposite might hold true: it would be worth testing the thought that the black box is part of an ideological framework similar to the one that Brian O'Doherty has described for the supposedly neutral "White Cube" in the seventies.

So rather than opposing museum and gallery presentations to a mythological "standard" cinema-situation, it might be helpful to align them with the commodification that film experience has undergone during the last thirty years. Today, as Anne Friedberg has shown, the "multiple", fragmented way of being confronted with several windows and image frames, is something familiar to us from computers, television and our everyday life. And where else than at home with my DVD-player or computer could I be more in charge of deciding autonomously what to see and for how long?

It was along these lines that last summer's documenta 12 decided to follow a different path and advocate the traditional movie theater as a strong form of presentation.

IV. Documenta 12, 2007

Roger Buergel, the artistic director of documenta 12, has hinted at a possible objection to what I would call "emancipation theories" of the moving image. In an article from 2001, he associated the flexibility of the spectator strolling through the galleries of the museum with the Foucauldian subject internalizing ideas of power and control rather than having to deal with imposed power structures. In his account, the museum is an adequate dispositif for a new form of governmentality: "The ethical concept of redefining individual behaviour follows the ethics of neoliberal politics: individual choice, autonomous acting, governance of your own fate, self-initiative and self-determined living. The museum seems to be designed to provide this framework."[18] When Buergel and his partner Ruth Noack were designated as the directors of documenta 12, parts of this critique were applied to the concept of the exhibition. One of the most obvious—and provocative—gestures was the one dissociating rather than mixing art and cinema. Documenta 11 in 2002 had included a vast number of black boxes, video installations, and multi-screen projections that presented a challenge to the visitors' time management. In clear opposition to this, Alexander Horwath, the curator of the documenta film program, promoted a strong concept of cinema. His approach was based on a premise that looks anachronistic at first sight. Rather than putting forward yet another suggestion to mix and blend moving images and the gallery space, Horwath preferred keeping the two presentational practices separated from one another. To be more precise, he reactualized the historical differences between cinema and museum.[19] Even if there were some installations sporadically spread throughout the exhibition, their number was significantly reduced.

So instead of proposing a curatorial, synchronous "montage" of visual arts and cinematographic practice, Horwath incorporated the whole setting of cinema into the exhibition without adapting or altering its parameters: one screening a day, one specific theater, a little more than fifty programs by ninety four filmmakers/artists. In Horwath's words: "The location of film at documenta 12 is the movie theater. This is a very simple answer to the recent debates on how to adequately present moving images in the context of art." Horwath features cinema as "a strong presentation format and strong social space," adding that "[t]his format and this space are based on the physical and technical characteristics of the medium. They allow film to be perceived on a specific level of intensity to which it owes its historical success."

This is not the place to elaborate Horwaths different arguments that went hand in hand with documenta 12's critique of the art market in proposing cinematic experience as a mode of aesthetic experience that resists commodification. What I want to stress, however, is the emphasis on the specific structure of movies and of cinematic experience. If you think of films as structural artifacts evolving in time and implying a beginning, middle and end, the supposedly rigorous arrangement of fixed starting times and screening schedules may rather trigger a certain concentration. In this respect, Portuguese filmmaker Pedro Costa has recalled a very simple argument: "I'm not a video artist, I am a filmmaker and film is a construction. Pieces are made to fit together, if they don't the whole thing will collapse, or worse, will lack movement and tension. Every shot or scene I do depends on the one that comes before and on the one that will come after."[20]

This insistence on a certain structure and architecture that relies on notions of "before" and "after", and of "beginning" and "end" holds true not only for narrative cinema; it is also crucial to experience films by James Benning, Sharon Lockhart and a whole tradition of structural filmmaking. This brings us back full circle to the early seventies, when a constellation of "mixed media", "expanded cinema" and television was already at stake. Horwath's provocative gesture was to show and stress what he called "normal case of cinema", a term that might echo Raymond Bellour's description of the "other cinema" encountered in the museums and galleries.

It is therefore interesting that Horwath's approach resembles ideas of his predecessor in the Austrian Film Museum, Peter Kubelka. Interestingly, Kubelka promoted and realized his concept of an "invisible cinema" stripped down to its central functions of isolating the senses of seeing and hearing in New York in 1970. His diagnosis is structurally similar to the one Bellour and Michaud make, yet the consequences he draws are the exact opposite: "it is of utmost importance, especially now that television exists and that expanded cinema and mixed media performances flourish, to create the proper conditions for classical, one screen, one sound-cinema presentation. This has to crystallize now if it is going to survive. And this holds true particularly for the conservative film industry. They should throw out the easy chairs and the flambeaux; they should create a decent cinema. In such a movie theater, the situation will change because the sensual pleasure will be raised incredibly, so that people will again start to go to the cinema."[21]

There is no doubt that there are a lot of forms that demand being shown in museums and galleries: loops, multi-projections, image environments or videos projected on objects. These are not the forms that Horwath or Kubelka's critique aims at. Their point is that the supposed "post cinema" condition sensitizes us for the capacities of the "normal case of cinema". So when blending, mixing and difference have become the museum's norm and the strolling spectator its commonplace protagonist, it might be interesting to reconsider the varieties of aesthetic experience within the paradigm of classical cinema. •

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Notes

1. Stefanie Schulte Strathaus: "Showing different films differently. Cinema as a Result of Cinematic Thinking" in *The Moving Image 4.1.* (2004) xii, p. 1–16.
2. Cf. Raymond Bellour: "La querelle des dispositifs / The Battle of the Images" in *Art Press* no 262, Nov. 2000.
3. For an evaluation of Matthew Barneys "Neo-Avant-Garde Blockbusters" see Alexandra Keller and Frazer Ward: "Matthew Barney and the Paradox of the Neo-Avant-Garde Blockbuster" in *Cinema Journal* 45, No. 2, Winter 2006, p. 3–16.
4. This is Juliane Rebentisch's term in her book *Ästhetik der Installation*. Cf. Rebentisch, *Ästhetik der Installation*, Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp 2003, pp. 179–207.
5. Cf. Söke Dinkla "Virtuelle Narrationen. Von der Krise des Erzählens zur neuen Narration als mentales Möglichkeitsfeld" in *medienkunstnetz* (www.medienkunstnetz.de).
6. "Le mouvement des images", Centre Pompidou, Musée national d'art moderne-Centre de création industrielle, April 9, 2006 to January 29, 2007.
7. Published in English in *Electronic Culture: Technology and Visual Representation* , ed. by Timothy Druckrey, New York: Apterture 1996.
8. Philippe Alain Michaud "The Movement of Images" in *Le mouvement des images*, Paris: Éditions du Centre Pompidou 2006, p. 15–29: 16.
9. Cf. Tom Holert: "Noisebleed" in *Texte zur Kunst* 15. Jahrgang Heft 60 (Dezember 2005), p. 146–154.
10. Cf. Antoine Thirion "Le cinéma transforme le musée" in *Cahiers du cinéma* 611 (april 2006), p. 22.
11. Yang Fudong, *Seven Intellectuals in Bamboo Forest*, Parts I to V (2003 to 2007).
12. Cf. Dominique Paini's concept "Le temps exposé".
13. Marshall McLuhan and Quentin Fiore: *The Medium is the Message*, New York: Simon and Schuster 1967, p. 68.
14. Chrissie Iles, "Beween the Still and Moving Image" in *Into the Light: the Projected Image in American Art, 1964–1977*, p. 33.
15. Ibid.
16. Cf. Linda Williams (ed.): *Viewing Positions. Ways of Seeing Film*, New Brunswick: Rutgers UP 1994.
17. Cf. Gertrud Koch/Christiane Voss (eds.): *... kraft der Illusion*, München: Fink 2006.
18. Roger M. Buergel, "Arbeit an den Grenzen des Realen" in *Texte zur Kunst*, 11. Jahrgang, Heft 43 (September 2001), p. 66–75: 68 (my translation, VP).
19. For more context on this see Horwath's position in a panel discussion with Chrissie Iles, Vanessa Joan Müller and Marysia Lewandowska: "Does the Museum Fail? Podium Discussion at the 53rd International Short Film Festival Oberhausen", *Kinomuseum. Towards an Artists' Cinema*, ed. Mike Sperlinger and Ian White (Cologne: Walther König, 2008): 115–155.
20. Jan van Eyck Video Weekend. "From black box to white cube"—Round Table with Pedro Costa, Catherine David, Chris Dercon (moderator), Saturday, 26 May 2007.
21. Peter Kubelka, Interview in the TV-magazine Apropos Film (ORF). Helmuth Dimko/Peter Hajek: Peter Kubelka. Das Unsichtbare Kino (Apropos Film, 13.10.1970).

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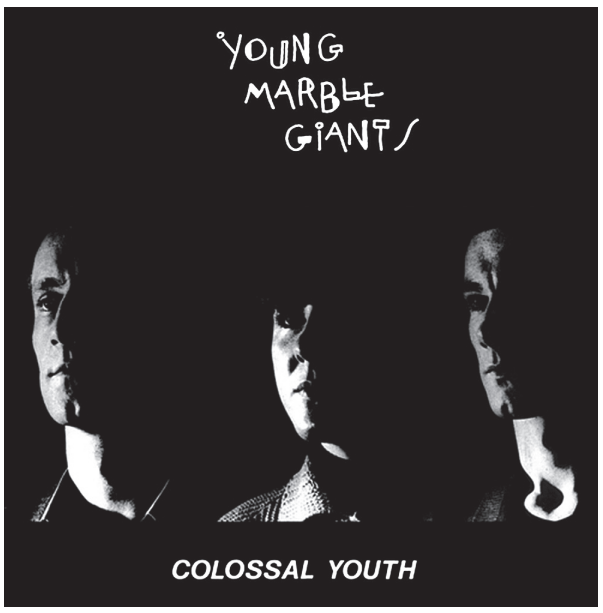
Man with the Mini-DV Camera

Kim West

One of the first sequences in Pedro Costa's 2h 51 min *In Vanda's room* (2000) accounts for a number of the film's characteristic traits. The fixed frame shows people in a run-down, dilapidated room. The light in the room comes from an open door and a window in the wall facing the camera, two bodies are outlined in direct light. The sequence, like the film as a whole, is shot in digital video, and the conditions of light in the space force the technology to reveal its proper qualities and limitations: colors are flat, contrasts are sharp around the sources of the strong light, pixels flicker where the image resolution cannot master the nuances, etc. In the beginning of the sequence two people are located to the left in the room, one man is in the process of showering another with a hose. When the naked man has rubbed himself in the hot water he moves to the other side of the room, but slips and falls to the ground among buckets and trash, then regains his balance in an abrupt and peculiar choreography. The tense body fumes with steam in the direct light. The beauty of the composition is blinding, without being artificial and painterly. It does not aestheticize; it reinforces the impression of the reality—the events, the time, the place—that the image registers: the fragility and the materiality of a body when it is confronted with external elements, when it is showered in heated water, when it hits and braces itself against walls and floor in a tenement in a slum outside of Lisbon.

The sequence also shows something else. The camera registers a reality that takes place before its eye, within its frame. The images are "documentary". However, the sequence is not filmed in one shot. We see the man who is being showered with a hose. At the same time as this man washes himself another man stands by the window to the right in the room manipulating a tool. In the sequence this is demonstrated by a cut to a close-up of the man by the window, followed by a cut to a wider shot of the room, where we see the naked man move, slip, etc. The scene must have been filmed in at least three shots. The "documentary" images, therefore, have been obtained through a recording technique traditionally associated with fictional film, with repetitions and different camera positions and angles. And they are edited analytically, interconnected according to a classical narrative model, established at least since Griffith, where the plot is propelled forward through an interplay between close-ups and long shots. Yet what Costa's film does is not simply disrupt the borders between the "documentary" and the "fictional film". What it does is rather reveal the insufficiency of the distinction between them. In a text about Chris Marker's *The Last Bolshevik*, Jacques Rancière points out that the documentary film and the fictional film are not each other's opposites. On the contrary, he argues, the documentary film represents the highest possibility of the fictional film: its possibility to liberate itself from what one erroneously takes to be its task—the production of illusions—and instead to concentrate properly on its essence: to assemble the images of reality into stories, to "cut a story into sequences", "to connect and to separate voices and bodies, sounds and images, to stretch or to compress time".[1] Costa's film is an example of the richness of possibilities that is to be found in such a conception of "documentary fiction".

The fixed frame; the intimate room with its external sources of light; the fragility, materiality, and resistance of the human body; the acute awareness of the qualities and the limitations of the mechanical camera eye and the thorough exploitation of the technology's possibilities; the way the shooting and the narrative structure undermine the distinction between documentary and fiction; the passionate devotion and attention to a certain place and time, and to the people who inhabit it, live in it: all of these are characteristics which together make *In Vanda's room* a unique work. The film constitutes a portrait of the slum of Fontainhas on the outskirts of Lisbon, of its inhabitants and specifically of the two sisters Vanda and Zita Duarte, who spend most of their time smoking heroin in Vanda's room. Through the intimate filming of these people over a period of two years, Costa creates an image of a world of outcasts and immigrants, of poverty, drugs, misery, and desperation. The dimension of realism and social critique is highly present and active in Costa's film, and he takes his place in a tradition of filmmakers and photographers for whom the image of reality, the image that reveals the conditions of existence of the poor, is a political instrument, from Jacob Riis and Walker Evans to John Grierson and the Groupe Medvedkine. But Costa does not only show *la misère du monde*. Without diminishing the gravity of the social situation, *In Vanda's room* is also the portrait of a group of people, a population that, since it lacks access to riches and reasonable means of life, is forced to design another existence in the margins of the normal world, outside of the social order's securities, rules, responsibilities, laws. It is a portrait of people who should be disconsolate, who should be victims of their miserable life conditions, but who, in their misery, in their drug addiction and dissolution, at the same time defy these conditions and design a different, dignified existence, with a sort of alternative, dark pride.



◂ **Young Marble Giants, *Colossal Youth*, Rough Trade, 1980**

The book—not the booklet, the book—that accompanies the recently published, extraordinary French DVD edition of *In Vanda's room* consists mainly of a long conversation between the director and the editor, the film critic Cyril Neyrat. In the 200-page interview Costa discusses a series of his influences. Among the names that figure one finds apparent predecessors such as Huillet-Straub, whose programmatic idea about the director's absolute responsibility and duty towards a place's visual and sonoric qualities directly informs Costa's work in Fontainhas (although the disciple is unruly and ameliorates the soundtrack in postproduction). The origin of the film, Costa explains, was simply his love for this place and these people, which he got to know during the shooting of his previous film, the more classically shot and edited *Bones* (1997). In this sense *In Vanda's room* is an advanced and serious attempt at creating a cinematography for our historical, ideological and technological situation, an attempt to inscribe a political and social reality onto the support of a contemporary media technology with its specific qualities and limitations. Costa shows that there is a future for the dream of an ambitious film art created with cheap and readily available technology, that the light, mobile, yet aesthetically difficult to master digital video can in fact be used to create a radically different cinema.

Costa also mentions other less apparent but at closer inspection evident references, such as Andy Warhol and Edie Sedgwick. Even though the distance between Fontainhas and the Factory may seem vast, there are clear analogies between Warhol's patient fascination for his protagonist, for how she hangs about, passes time, dwells in a space in a film such as *Kitchen*, and Costa's long, meticulous shots detailing Vanda's destructive existence in her dimly lit bedroom with its green, soiled walls. In all her misery, in her compulsive scraping for leftovers from yesterday's heroin, in her continuous arguing with her sister and her sickly coughing attacks, the hard, long-haired, and androgynous Vanda appears as an almost stoic character, an indomitable figure who is subjected to her conditions yet at the same time can consider them with a distanced, even critical calm. The intimacy of this portrait is also due to the physical tangibility of the images and the sounds of Vanda, of her sister, of their heroin, their lighters, the flame, the tin foil, the inhalation, their room, the very air. The digital camera eye registers Vanda's room with an attention that is, if not inhuman, then beyond the human, more human than human.

"*In Vanda's room* comes a lot from music, that is, from this profound belief in an energy according to which, for me, when I was 20, Sex Pistols and Wire were as important as Straub and Godard, or Ford and Tourneur, the classics."[2] What is perhaps the least evident and the most telling in Costa's discussion about his influences and references in the long interview—and what places him at a safe distance from the "art film" à la Kieslowski, with its obligatory noble soundtrack—is his relation to punk rock, to Wire and The Clash, to John Lydon's Sex Pistols and Public Image Limited (and one can note that the English title of Costa's latest film, from 2006, also shot on digital video in Fontainhas, is borrowed from Young Marble Giants' 1980 debut album, *Colossal Youth*). Costa discusses this in terms of the relation to a place, a room. Punk rock, he says, is energy, adolescence, the outgrown boy's or girl's room and the desire for a destruction of all orders. This unreasonable politics, which despite its naivety and romanticism gives rise to something different, to other forms/forces, is what Costa finds in punk rock and then finds again in Vanda's room, in the form of a self-destructing and all-consuming desire for drugs which is at the same time a refusal, an act of resistance against the dreams and fantasies of established culture. The fundamental tone of Costa's film is a mix of the aggression of punk rock and a melancholic indifference: it shows a world that is almost completely deprived of sexual desires.

The punk aesthetic is also present in *In Vanda's room* in a more concrete, direct fashion. "It's a film made with video cassettes, many packages of cigarettes, and a bouquet of flowers", Costa explains, which is of course an exaggeration, but probably not that far from the truth.[3] During most of the shooting of *In Vanda's room*, the film team consisted of one person: Pedro Costa. With his Panasonic DVX 100 mini-DV camera, it was he himself who took care of the camera work, sound recording, lights (with a found mirror and homemade reflectors, no lamps) and directing. During a later part of the shooting he was aided by a sound engineer and for postproduction he was able to raise money for a professional editor (Dominique Auvray, who worked on a number of Duras' late 70s films: *Le Camion*, *Le Navire Night*, etc), sound mix, etc. But the production costs were minimal—according to the standards of the film world probably even inexistent—and essentially it is a film made by a man with a video camera and a local population of collaborators/actors/protagonists. Costa speaks of this Do-It-Yourself aesthetic as a process of "devalorization" of the artistic work. That is, it was an attempt to liberate himself from the idea of film production and shooting according to which the director shows up from another world with trucks filled with electronics, equipment and an army of technicians, assistants, actors, etc, in order to transform a place into the scene for a film during a short, intensive period. Instead, Costa strove to adjust himself to the rhythm of the place, the neighborhood, attempting to work when others worked, eat when others ate, to spend the amount of time in the place necessary to create an image of its reality. The distance between the seven, ten, or twelve weeks of hysterical expenses and frenetic work of traditional fictional film production, and *In Vanda's room*, where shooting consisted of two years of slow, methodic, laborious attention, is not just a difference in time and money, it is a measure of the radicality of the cinematographic model Costa creates: *In Vanda's room* points out a possible path for a future film art which claims its place in a large film-historical tradition and retains the highest of artistic ambitions, while attaining a significant independence from a heavy and conservative production system.

With all its punk references, its undermining of narrative conventions and genre codes, and its dismissal of traditional models of production, *In Vanda's room* finally remains above all a realistic portrait of a place, a time, certain people; a relentlessly honest depiction of a slum and its everyday life, of a Lisbon suburb and its social, political situation. In the film everything else is secondary to this realistic portrait. *In Vanda's room* tells no clear story, but lets the spectator follow Fontainhas and some of its inhabitants during a specific period of time. The only development which runs through the extension of the film is the gradual destruction of the dilapidated dwellings in Vanda's neighborhood, which by the inhabitants is met, not with protests, but rather with an oblique antipathy, a sort of inert calm: they do not seem to oppose that their homes are being demolished and that they are being relocated, but they persist in trying to save their broken furniture, their shoddy tables, their rubble from the ravishes of the bulldozers, their resignation at the same time conferring value, significance, a certain pride upon that which by all standards should be considered worthless. ●

Pedro Costa, *Dans la chambre de Vanda*
DVD in Portuguese with French subtitles
Book by Pedro Costa, Cyril Neyrat, Andy Rector. Capricci, collection "Que fabriquent les cinéastes", 2008

Notes

1. Cf. Jacques Rancière, "La fiction documentaire: Marker et la fiction de mémoire", in *La Fable cinématographique* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 2001), p. 202.
2. Pedro Costa, *Dans la chambre de Vanda. Conversation avec Pedro Costa* (Nantes: Capricci, 2008), 10f.
3. Ibid, 108.

The Possibility of a World

Alexandre and Daniel Costanzo

One year ago the publication of the DVD edition of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub's collected works began in France, two volumes of which are available today. Everyone who has not had the opportunity to see their remarkable work now has the chance to discover it. It is without a doubt the most overwhelming body of work since the 1960s, within which there has never been renouncement nor betrayal.

A boy refuses to go to school because they only teach him things he does not know, and he himself ascertains how to use power against the establishment: learning through repeating, this will be the principle of his power, his line of flight and his path towards emancipation (*En rachâchant*). A young woman refuses to marry a German during the Prussian occupation of

Lorraine, saying that all she knows is that she cannot become German (*Lothringen!*). A stranger drives the streets of Rome, searching for a banker, among others, and history lessons. Inside of him an anger grows progressively as he gains knowledge about the reality of the world—what he previously did not see—and the streets of Rome therefore trace the contemporary contours and murmurs of one and the same story, that of the class struggle (*Leçons d'Histoire*). A woman defends herself before the Choir of Citizens and the madness of Creon's power, irreconcilable, and gives her life in fidelity to the dead, the justice of the Gods, and a certain idea of man (*Antigone*). Infuriated men scream and, from the bottom of their hole, revolt against the world which humiliates them and against the feeble enchantresses of the present that shatter their ways of life (*Umiliati*).

There is one principle that determines the work of Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub. It can be stated, with Serge Daney, as follows: if there is no revolt, it does not exist. In other words, only that which revolts exists—the places, the gestures, the words, the bodies, the reality of a revolt deciding another relation to the world—and it is this buried or vanished breach, which appears here and there, that they give themselves the task of making visible and audible. A breach which one finds in the encounter between a poem by Stéphane Mallarmé and the distant mumbling of the dead of the Paris Commune (*Toute révolution est un coup de dés*), in a woman who is faithful to her experiences, a boy that refuses and resists the reasonable order of the world, a community that sees its work, its pains and its joys humiliated by the chanting of principles foreign to them... A clenching fist, downcast eyes, a raging gaze, in this interval the injunction of this work is that of power, and there is no other power than that of learning to open one's eyes to see and one's ears to hear, and this makes it possible to assert something like the possibility of a world.

Let us look closer at one film in particular: *Othon* (1969). It is a film that Danièle Huillet said many years ago was particularly close to her heart, assuming a purified violence. The film opens with a view of Rome. After a few moments the camera begins a panoramic movement to the left, allowing housing constructions to appear, soon replaced with trees and ruins. There the camera encounters a vertical in the form of a fractured wall, which enforces a new movement. The camera ascends to follow the upper edge of this obstacle, and we discover a tree on top of a hill. Uniting with the curves of this landscape as it follows its ascension towards the treetop, the camera then descends to its left where one discovers cliffs and the ruins on the hill. Then the camera zooms in towards these cliffs and ruins, finally approaching a hole and disappearing into the darkness, which becomes the paradoxical background for the title: *Les yeux ne veulent pas en tout temps se fermer*, or *Peut-être qu'un jour Rome se permettra de choisir à son tour* ["The eyes do not always want to close" or "Perhaps one day Rome will allow itself to choose in its turn"]. The film replays Corneille's *Othon* on Mount Palatin and in the garden of the villa Doria Pamphili, exhibiting in the plain decadence of Rome after the fall of Nero what is the principle of each government. Between the turnstile of interests and the intestinal passions, we are witness to the beautiful words of the leaders of this world, tearing each other apart over power, far from the people and behind their backs. The power that in its intrigues devours the torments of love is identified with this "comedy": abjection and cowardice join state affairs, just as the small affairs of everyone, finally, and this is what must be swept away with violence. All of this is therefore suspended in a Mallarmean throw of the die for the "maybe" of the revolution: "perhaps one day Rome will allow itself to choose in its turn". This "maybe" signifies that the people must no longer let those who govern them permit or not permit, the people must choose, and choose not only those who will govern, but permit themselves to govern themselves, choose and choose themselves rather than closing their eyes to the grand comedy of power. And this takes place within the vertigo between the "eyes that do not always want to close" and a "maybe": open the eyes and assume the safekeeping of this "maybe"—this is apparently the claim of this work, its ethics and its politics.

Thus Straub and Huillet immerse the piece in an architecture that claims to be contemporaneous with the literary seventeenth century of Corneille, the gardens of the villa Doria Pamphili, and it takes place on the terraces of Mount Palatin, where the remains of the palaces of the ancient Rome they invoke sit. And between the two sites there are the popular habitations, the people—a "people that is missing" we would say with Deleuze, but by which we understand the noise which rises like a mute mumbling. The lines from Corneille and the dressed-up bodies of the protagonists are confronted with the noise of circulating cars and the mumbling of the contemporary city. And these three temporalities are entangled, shattering the order of the representation, against the background of the buzzing of the "here and now". The temporality of the piece itself, the temporality of the ruins in which bodies circulate and speak among an abundance of light and sounds, among the traffic of automobiles, the song of the cicadas and the lapping of the water of a fountain, the sparkles of light and the howling of the wind. In short, the filmed scene holds together all these contradictions as something natural, which produces the affect of a strangeness that can be grasped along Brechtian lines: times coexist in an unresolved unrest and the lines of verse and the bodies are equally confronted with the materiality and the veracity of things, of the ruins, the wind, the light, the noises. What defines the style of the Straubs is this singular temporality that merges with a topic, a temporality marked with patience: the patience of the shot. What was necessary was time, to take time to see, to hear and to feel the things and the world.

Moreover, the alexandrines are pronounced by actors with different accents and the language is itself declined with a rapidity which neutralizes the literality and morphs into a monotonous language, as if the meanings of the words were equally important as the conventional lyricism of the lines, words which are above all the business of the leaders of this world among themselves, words which struggle against all there is: the wind, the light, the cicadas and the noise of the cars. The result is that the struggle is not only the struggle between Roman families for power; it is a struggle between words and noise, a clash between words and things. This growl of industrial society is also something like the inflection of the loud and suppressed accents of a class struggle that rises entangled or confused with the voices. In other words, in the language already troubled by the mechanics of different rhythms that shatter the conventional lyricism, there is something like a division at work. One could say that the "one" of language, the "one divides itself into two". First of all in the words, in the words and the noise: words and noise compose together in a sort of struggle. The "people" is that whose words are muted, overwhelmed or split in two by the mumbling—that which is there, here and now, disrupting the world. It is because the people is something that begins in the ruin between what one hears and what one does not want to hear, between what one sees and does not want to see. What one hears: the parasiting of words, the mumbling that accompanies and tears the meaning, the buzzing of cars here or that of insects there, the lapping of the water, the rustling of the wind. What one sees: the air, the light experiencing the bodies and the landscapes, all that which is outside of the intrigues of men, and yet with which one must compose, an outside constraining the established order of a certain point of view. One divides into two, which means that the people raises and rumbles as a mumbling threatening the space of words: the word is a word which experiences the division, it is *with* the buzzing, tied *and* untied.

In sum, thwarting the sensible space is about awakening meanings and attention. The apparatus Huillet and Straub construct aims, in the sensible operation of an "and" and a "with" the division, to destroy the order of signification in order to hollow out something else inside it. It is quite simply a question of learning to see and hear. To see, for example, the class struggle outlining itself in the meeting between the words from above and the noise of the circulation from below. They destroy the signification on which the order of the world rests. That is to say, they destroy this world in order to render something else sensible, and they tell us something like: begin by seeing and by hearing what there is before your eyes and your ears. Because that which is, is simply the words *and* the things, the words *and* the noises, noises which have as much importance as the meaning of the words. And these noises tell us that there is a suppressed class struggle, which appears as it can—it is there, suspended in a "maybe". These noises tell us above all that there is something else than the din and the intestinal passions of the great and the less great of this world; there is the earth, the wind, insects and light, there is everything that is with us, and this too has been suppressed. And these noises tell us, finally, that emancipation begins there, somewhere with them, in this capacity to see and to hear: to pay attention to what one sees and what one hears, and consequently to what one says and what one wants to say, what one does and wants to do. That is where politics begins, in assuming a point of view and not in understanding too well what one sees and what one does not see, rather in hearing and seeing badly now in order to hear and to see better later.

◂ **Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub, En rachâchant, 1982**

This is how this takes place, starting from the first shots of the film, which opens in the unresolved unrest of noise, of the strangeness of these costumes, of these alexandrines and these voices with foreign accents. The film confronts the lines of Corneille and the costumed bodies with the reality of the ruined places in which the dramaturgy inscribes them, between the old, absent Rome and the contemporary Rome where the wind, the light and the mumbling circulate. In this way there is a great conflict between the bodies, the words, the places and the situation, the disagreements and the distortions of struggles which hold up like a structure. And the consequence of all this is that one enters with difficulty, adjusting as one can one's ears and eyes, carefully, lingering on the draping of a costume, the charm or the sensuality of a body, the plausibility or the implausibility of the scene bathing in a sort of disorder, and one continues by clinging on to the unwinding of the language uttered as a mechanism, to the dramaturgy... With the din of the cars one hears with difficulty what is said, the attention of the ears and the eyes struggles painfully, oscillating and swerving in a sensible unrest. In short one hears badly and one sees badly, the language and the senses begin to limp, and if they limp it is also in order to find the formula for an attention and, why not, a new body, the atrophy of whose senses one would somehow already have begun to treat. A body, in short, the sensibility of whose organs one would have awakened: the word and the gaze. One hears badly and sees badly at first, in order to see and hear better later—that is the "politics" of the work. And what one sees is the Two. The Two of the class struggle buried between the words and the things, the Two of a splitting of the gaze and of hearing, covering themselves in the affect of a strangeness, a Two tied together in division.

However, all of this Jean-Marie Straub himself has formulated in an exemplary fashion:

> But the spoken text, the words, are no more important than the different rhythms and timing of the actors, with their accents [...]; no more important than their particular voices, seized in the instant and which struggle against the noise, the air, the space, the sun and the wind; no more important than their involuntary sighs or than all the other surprises of life registered at the same time, as particular noises which suddenly acquire a meaning; no more important than the effort, the work the actors do, and the risks they run, as tightrope walkers, from one end to the other of long fragments of a difficult text; no more important than the frame in which the actors are enclosed; or than their movements or their positions inside this frame, or than the background in front of which they find themselves; or than the changes and the shifts of light and color; no more important than cuts, image changes, shots. If one keeps one's eyes and ears open for all of this at each instant, one could even find the film captivating, and remark that everything here is information—even the purely sensual reality of the space, which the actors leave empty at the end of each act: how wonderful it would be without the tragedy of cynicism, oppression, imperialism, exploitation—the world; liberate it!

In these few words, these two sentences, Straub summarizes the political, ethical and aesthetic principles of the work, and he proceeds from the litany of a "no more important". "No more important", that would be the formula: the lines from Corneille are no more important than the bodies and the voices of those who speak them, their sighs and their accents, their gestures or even the shots, the space, the places, the light, the air or the insects. "No more important", which means that everything is important, everything there is, in a very concrete fashion: the effort of the actors, the shots, the noises... In other words, it is about paying attention to everything, there is no other power, and this is where emancipation begins: in an attention directed towards the things and life, it begins there and it can continue through the violence of a revolt, starting from the moment when it becomes a question of sweeping away the specters, of liberating an earth from cynicism and oppression—an earth which could then keep its promises. "The world is habitable", that is the idea of the Straubs, of the gaze directed towards the things, and it intervenes in the floating interval of the splitting of the perception that combines with a "maybe", or in this space left for reflection in the patience of the shot.

There is thus something like a breach, a hole between the words and the things where one is borne out by the Two. A hole which sends us back to the cave with which the film opened, at the foot of Mount Palatin where, during the latest war, soldiers of the resistance used to hide their weapons during the day so they could use them during the night. And if there is this chasm experienced in the parasiting of the senses, if there is such a hole or such an interval, it is necessarily in order that something should throw itself into it, and this something is a possibility. Because in the floating of an interval one could discern the Two of the class struggle at the boundaries of the parasitings, one could construct the space of a new attention or one could, in this disorder of the senses, find the sensible equation of a lost or coming body. But this something is first of all the fleeing inscription of a possibility born by the earth and the bodies, the possibility of a world. •

Danièle Huillet and Jean-Marie Straub
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My project for SITE is halfway between a statement and an artwork. As always in my work, I talk about what I know and what I have lived in order to take an analytical look at my experiences. I continue, for several years, to develop a single thought—this reappropriation is an endless cultural process between human beings, because it is rooted in my cultural History. This History is the one that binds as much as it separates the Algerian mountains and the postmodernist concrete buildings of the banlieues.

Reappropriation is an important notion for me, especially when talking about the postcolonialist modernist architectural theories that were first experimented with in Algeria, and then implemented in the French banlieues, before being spread all around the world. Several social modernist architectures created in Algeria by Fernand Pouillon, for example, prefigured the ones built on a massive scale during the 1960s and 1970s in France. There is something premonitory in the energy hurriedly expended before independence to complete these Algerian building sites. These projects, conceived about ten years before independence, seem to have been the laboratories of post-colonization social control via housing. They anticipate the massive constructions of the dormitory towns, intended to gather the streams of economic immigrants from the "future former colonies": a cheap workforce, even easier to exploit than during the colonial period. Indeed, since they are no longer French, they are "not at home anymore", and are thus less particular about their living conditions. All the more so in France, where these people went from shanty towns—like Nanterre or Juvisy—to concrete blocks.

It is an endless story, but in France no one talks about it. Everyone knows the extent to which Algeria is an "official taboo" in French History.

This social architecture of "housing for all" is in fact an instrument of power. It is a tool to control the "natives". By moving them from a rural environment, where they had spaces to exist and to rebel (as in the case of the first significant riots in Sétif in 1945), to a gridded urban environment, where, gathered in blocks and assimilated to an anonymous perimeter—to which they have to adapt (not the contrary)—they become easier to control because they become weaker. By having them pass from "houses" to "housing", modernism pretends to improve their lives, but in reality it makes them weak by dissolving their identity and any desire to exist as individuals, which is diluted in "la masse".

What I am talking about here is History's cynicism. In addition to the pictures of Pouillon's buildings I have taken on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea, I have done research into what influenced them. Anyone that takes a closer look at Le Corbusier's life will soon see the importance of his trip in Algeria in the early 1930s, and particularly the shock he felt when discovering the Mzab architectures of Ghardaia in the middle of the Algerian desert. The principles of the Mzab houses strongly influenced his "Athens Charter". Some elements of the rules of this charter—like the "terrace roof" or the "free facade"—are indeed already present in these 11th century architectures.

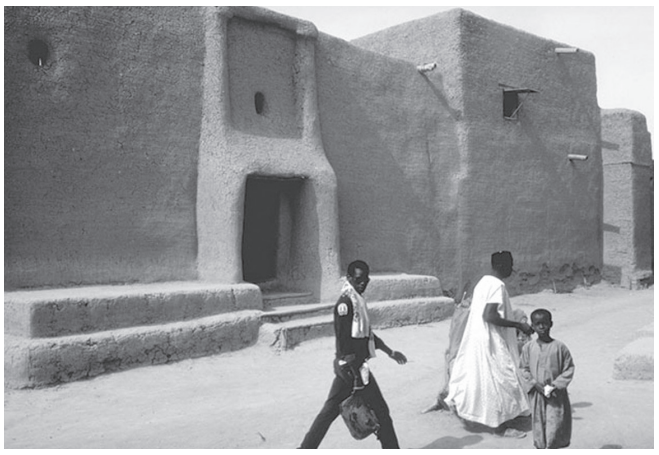
The big issue for me is to know whether, beyond these historical facts, the artists who work within the space between these perimeters of modernist culture—between their origins and the notion of "order rather than emotions"—interpret these influences, interrogate their time, and reappropriate their space.

In several of my works, I seek to show the natural instinct of people to readapt to their environment. They reappropriate it through found materials, which are not products of their culture but brought from the outside (corrugated steel, plastic cans and bags, etc.). This has always existed (for example, the strange heads which support some columns in the Istanbul cistern site or the objects in Africa that have been repaired with found material).

I speak of the necessity of reappropriation because I am thinking of the people who have been dispossessed by the Occidental mind. The Mzab aesthetic has been strongly dispossessed by the Genius of Le Corbusier and quickly readapted and spread through the world. Let's remember that between 1933 and 1936, Le Corbusier met the Mexican architect Luis Barragán in Paris. He will be the purest reproducer of the first modernist houses in Latin America, exporting an aesthetic that is nine centuries old from the desert to the hacienda environment. In fact it follows the colonialist Spanish architecture culture in this country, which is strongly influenced by the designs of the Arabian-Andalusian houses, with the importance of the interior garden courtyard, with a fountain in the center of the patio surrounded by arcades.

A year ago I met an Arab philosopher who told me that Islam could not have been founded and developed outside of the desert; Islam is a religion of the desert. I think that coming from the desert, with a natural fascination with elements like Earth, Air, Fire, and Water, Muslims have invented a modern way of thinking in-between Asia and the Occident. But whereas the Occident has always seen them as Iconoclastic, they were actually practicing a modern language of visual art. As Edward Said used to say in his theses on Orientalism, the Occident has orientalized the Orient to synthesize and control it.

Kader Attia



▲
Vernacular M'zab Architectur,
city of Ghardaia, Algeria
Ronchamp Cathedrale, France
Djenne, Mali

◂
Cité Pouillon, Algiers 2008

Traces of Metal

Janina Pedan

"Thought is born more from metal than from stone."
Deleuze

The European biennial Manifesta is unique among biennials in that each year it takes place at a different European location, but just like any other major art event, it becomes an attractor for transnational flows that brings with them a certain capacity for regeneration. For the seventh edition of Manifesta, some of this capacity has been used to transform a series of disused industrial buildings into exhibition venues scattered across the Trentino-South Tyrol region in northern Italy. The happy marriage between derelict industrial architecture and art is well known by now, but unlike the several other ex-industrial-buildings that have been remade to host the biennial, the curators for the show in the town of Bolzano/Bozen chose to concentrate on this kind of takeover more specifically. Instead of turning the factory into another blank art-space, the media collective Raqs (Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta) developed their curatorial outline around the metaphors that could be drawn from the industrial history of the building—a former aluminium factory—and its subsequent abandonment.

By working with the residual character of the place and the kind of melancholia that envelops such locations, Raqs hoped to confront "Europe's unwillingness to come to terms with its own difficult path into, and through, the 20th century". Declaring the factory a "monument to its residue", they say that the vacated building becomes a provocation for considering what is "left behind when value is extracted from life, time and labour." The factory serves as an excellent platform for the convergence of Raqs' longstanding interest in the web of relations and networks that constitutes the postindustrial society, with the interest in the vestiges of the industrial era. For the show, which is called The Rest of Now, Raqs invited artists and various other cultural practitioners to deal with these questions.

In principle any kind of disused industrial building would have sufficed to ask questions about production, residue and postindustrial life, but the interesting thing about this building in particular is how the material that was produced in the factory is related to the history of the 20th century. Since aluminium has only been commercially available for the past one hundred and fifty years, its history is coextensive in many ways with that of modernity. As a product of modern science it was invested with all sorts of symbolical meanings and expectations, something that Raqs do not neglect to engage with in their curatorial work.

Deleuze and Guattari give metal a unique role among materials for its ability to reveal something about the production-process that is otherwise easily overlooked or ignored: "It is as if metal and metallurgy imposed upon and raised to consciousness something that is only hidden or buried in other matters and operations."[1] Drawing on the ideas of Gilbert Simondon, they explain how metal brings to sensible intuition the insufficiency of the hylomorphic model. The model is not only a basic way of conceiving of production, but also has political significance in that it "reflects a social representation of labor" according to Simondon. More specifically, this way of thinking about production relates to the kind of political, cultural and economical transitions that Raqs address in the Rest of Now show. The hylomorphic model is a schema that defines the relation between matter and form in the production process where the form (*morphe*) is imprinted upon matter (*hyle*). Simondon criticizes this model because it presupposes matter as inert, passively receiving the command of the form, and thus ignoring the self-ordering capabilities of materials. It separates the technological operation into two halves where the middle, the energy exchange between form and matter, remains hidden. Ignoring the mutual dependence, we conceive matter as just passing between successive thresholds that have a given order. Deleuze explains that "we can proceed a bit as if each operation is determinable between two thresholds: an infra-threshold which defines the matter prepared for this operation, and a supra-threshold which is defined by the form that you're going to communicate to this prepared matter." [2]

What is unique with metal is that it does not easily fit into this ordering. The relation between form and matter has to be constantly negotiated in a way that works across the thresholds. The primary matter itself has to pass through a series of states before it can receive any form, but even after it has received its form it has to pass through stages that exceed the thresholds in, for example, the alloying, forging and quenching of the metal. Simondon explains: "[W]e cannot strictly distinguish the taking of form from the quantitative transformation. The forging and the quenching of steel are respectively prior to and posterior to what could be termed the taking of form proper. Forging and quenching are nevertheless constitutions of objects."[3] It would be more proper to describe the process as one of modulation: molding and re-molding in a continuous manner.

Since experimentation with aluminium started relatively recently (compared to other common metals like steel or copper), it had to go through a phase where it was constantly balancing between the unfolding of its true material possibilities and a utopian investment that it did not always manage to live up to. When aluminium could first be produced in small amounts, it was more valuable than gold and was at once glorified as the "metal of the future". Even though it is the most abundant metal in the earth's crust, it is never found in pure form and has to be extracted from a reddish clay-like mineral called bauxite through a process that requires enormous amounts of electricity. This was only possible with the rise of industrialization and it was not until the period between the two World Wars that it really became available on a mass-scale. It was during this time that the factory in Bolzano/Bozen was built by a fascist regime that hailed aluminium as the metal that would accompany Italy in its leap towards a new modern society. Mussolini's brother Arnaldo remarked that "just like the nineteenth century was the century of iron, heavy metals, and carbon, so the twentieth century should be the century of light metals, electricity, and petroleum."[4] This kind of utopian rhetoric and aluminium's wide application in the booming aero and automobile industry was also one of the reasons why the metal was a favorite of the Italian Futurists. Their founding manifesto, written ninety-nine years ago by F.T Marinetti, expresses the intoxication they felt in the face of the rapid technological developments. They wanted to distance themselves from Italy's agricultural past and its graveyard of cultural antiques in favor of cars, airplanes, machines and violence of a new technological age: "We affirm that the world's magnificence has been enriched by a new beauty: the beauty of speed." Airplanes and cars would uproot the body from a fixed location, from a space of confinement, whether it was cultural or geographical.

This utopian belief in aluminium as a sign of progress and its close symbolic interlace with modernity and physical movement is also clearly visible in a work in Bolzano/Bozen that is not actually a part of the Rest of Now show, but can be found at Bolzano's newly reopened Museion. Angela Ferreira's work *Maison Tropicale* (2007), which showed at the Peripheral Vision and Collective Bodies exhibition, centers on the work of the modernist French architect Jean Prouvé. Like the Futurists, Prouvé was fascinated and excited by cars and airplanes and the possibilities of machines to change the modern way of life, but he was less interested in the symbolical meaning of aluminium than in its actual material possibilities. Originally trained as a blacksmith, Prouvé was inspired by the application of aluminium in the car and aero-industry and so opened up his own workshop 1931 where he experimented with this new metal using the latest technology. He thought that it would be possible to construct houses and furniture in much the same way that cars are mass-produced at assembly lines. Since the military demand for aluminium had faded after the World War II and the civilian consumption of the material was still insignificant, the industry made great attempts to find new uses and markets for the metal. In 1949 Prouvé was commissioned by Studal, the French national aluminum company, to design pre-fabricated mobile metal houses whose parts could be produced in France and then shipped to the colonies. Although Prouvé was commissioned to make thousands of units of the "Tropical House", in the end only three prototypes were built and installed. The production-process proved too expensive and the unique design of the houses was too cutting-edge for the French bureaucrats.

Ferreira deals with what happened when the houses fell into oblivion for fifty years and then got rediscovered recently and "extracted" as valuable design objects by Western art-dealers. The work consists of both documentary photographs of the original installation locations of the houses in Congo and Niger and a sculptural rendering of the house itself in its transportable "flat pack mode". Of course Ferreira deals to a great extent with colonialism and its legacy, but it is also a work about the failure of the modernist dream: not only did Prouvé's hopes for the industrially produced home remain unrealized, in the end he also lost control over his factory to the aluminium company that once supported his experiments —crushing for Prouvé since he always advocated an integrated production-process. In line with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the hylomorphic model, he refused to see materials as just blank matter to be formed according to the will of the designer and so it was necessary for him to be able to follow the objects throughout the whole line of production in order to bring out the potentialities of the materials he was working with. Although Prouvé's ideas did not catch on much during his time, the unique application of sheeted metal did make him a pioneer in the construction of nomadic architecture. It is these qualities of mobility that are emphasized in Ferreira's sculpture, which is presented as something that is stuck in a kind of intermediary mode between a house and a transportable unit, evoking a permanent state of transit.

Graham Harwood also plays with aluminium's link to the utopian dream of modernism in his *Alumino-Manifesto* (2008), which was made for The Rest of Now. The book is a parody of the Futurist manifesto of sorts, mocking the blind belief in technological progress that obsessed the avant garde group. It was made by using an algorithmic sequence and consists of image cells that are derived from promotional films made by the aluminium industry during the 1960s. The images, which instead of showing individual frames, record the blurry transition between them, are accompanied by captions assembled out of sentences that contain the word "aluminium". These were collected from the Internet by an issue crawl program and ordered according to the algorithm. Instead of the intensity of a physical movement and speed that provided the sugar rush for the Futurists, the parodic *Alumino-Manifesto* suggests a different sort of agitation: "A great sweep of madness brought us sharply back to ourselves and drove us on through issue crawlers, webpages, audio patches and deep technical details of network surveillance." The sort of movement that is implied is not the movement of bodies in cars or airplanes, but the movement of an issue crawler across the free space of Internet. It is less aluminium's material singularity of lightness compared to its tensile strength that is invoked, but rather its conductivity.

It is actually this aspect of metal that Simondon is drawn to the most. He only mentions metallurgy in a few lines, but as Deleuze confirms "what will really interest him is the point where operations of modulation, of continuous variation are going to become not only obvious, but are going to become the *nomos* itself, the normal state of matter, namely electronics."[5] Modulation is essentially the possibility of converting information into signals that can be successfully sent through a medium. The shift from mold (homogenized matter submitted to the mold) to modulation (matter as in continuous movement) is not only lurking in the materiality of aluminium, but Deleuze also uses it to describe a general shift in society. In "Postscript on Control Societies" he sees the factory as a mold, a site of confinement aimed at production where "man produced energy in discreet amounts", while the present day modulating man of our control societies constantly "undulates, moving among a continuous range of different orbits". Deleuze knew that this mutation of capitalism is widely recognized and can be summed up as no longer being directed towards production but towards meta-production. The takeover of an old industrial building by an international, nomadic biennale comfortably fits into this picture, but it would be erroneous to just let the relation fall into the old dichotomy of material/immaterial labor. When Raqs state that "Manifesta 7 enters the building in this moment of pause, stealing in between the downtime of industrial abandonment in the core of Europe and the overture of global capitals next move", it is maybe more correct to say that Manifesta is already a part of capital's next move. But it has to be recognized that this appropriation is no less material than the industrial power that once inhabited the factory. It is worth remembering that what Simondon tried to do was to add to the *matter-form* duality the forgotten middle: *energy*. To be more precise, while it was once the power-hungry aluminium plants that placed themselves near hydroelectric sources, it is now companies that process supposedly "immaterial" information like Google that do so in order to acquire the enormous amount of electricity they need to run and cool down their servers. The movement of electrons through an aluminium capacitor in a wireless computer is just as physical as the heat that turns red clay into a silvery metal. •

1. Deleuze & Guattari, A *Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (UK: Continuum, 2004), p. 453.
2. Deleuze, "Cours Vincennes: 27/02/1979, Metal, metallurgy, music, Husserl, Simondon" (www.webdeleuze.com/php/sommaire.html)
3. Cited in ibid.
4. Jeffrey T Schnapp, "The Romance of Caffeine and Aluminum," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 28, No. 1, Things (Autumn, 2001), pp. 244–269
5. Deleuze, "Cours Vincennes".

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Pawel Althamer, *Pawel and Monika 2002*. Straw, hemp fiber, animal intestine, wax and hair. Collection of Tony and Daniel Holtz. Photo by Benoit Pailley

The Desire Called Apocalypse

Jeff Kinkle

"No one is waiting any more for the revolution, only the accident, the breakdown, that will reduce this unbearable chatter to silence."

Paul Virilio, *Art and Fear*

There is an oft-cited observation by Fredric Jameson that in the present period it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism. This comment was made as a series of apocalyptic blockbusters were streaming out of Hollywood—*Independence Day* (1996), *Armageddon* (1998), *Deep Impact* (1998), etc.—and coincided with fears about the approaching millennium generated by the prospect of everything from a looming computing meltdown to the Rapture. These films by and large created a scenario in which an external threat—often literally from outside of this solar system: aliens, asteroids—forces humanity, nations, families, or romantic couples to unite to overcome the challenge to their very existence and/or realize an important lesson about life before being vaporized by aliens or engulfed by a gigantic tidal wave.[1] Recently, a second series of end-of-the-world films has emerged: *The Day After Tomorrow*, *The Happening*, *The Mist*, *Children of Men*, *I am Legend*, *Cloverfield*, *War of the Worlds*, *WALL•E*, etc. Without really going into any schematic depth we can say that while similar to the disaster films from the nineties in some respects, they are clearly colored by either the events of 9.11 and their aftermath or the growing consciousness of the climate crisis, often both.[2] Rather than positing some external, otherworldly threat to which humanity can respond heroically, the threat is often man-made,[3] and following events like the American state's abject failure before, during, and following Hurricane Katrina, little hope is offered in our ability to emerge victorious. Even when the ending in these films is arguably "happy"—the hero makes it out alive—it is only after a tremendous amount of suffering has occurred and the world has been destroyed to such an extent that normality cannot possibly return.

This ubiquitous cultural vision of impending doom was the focus, or perhaps one should say was *in* focus, this past summer at After Nature, a show curated by Massimiliano Gioni at the New Museum in New York and featuring twenty-six artists over the museum's three main floors. While the majority of the works came from contemporary artists, there were also works from August Strindberg, some early films from Nancy Graves, and so-called outsider artists Eugene Von Bruenchenhein and Reverend Howard Finster. In the introductory text the curator, together with assistant Jarrett Gregory, describes the show as "a cabinet of curiosities that pieces together a fragmented encyclopedia." After Nature takes its title from the three part, book-length, prose poem by W.G. Sebald of the same name, and the exhibition catalogue is actually nothing but the Modern Library edition of the book with a new dust jacket and postcards of some of the works inserted between the pages like bookmarks. I found this disappointing at first when I picked it up in the bookshop, but when one conceives of the show as a fragmented encyclopedia one of its most rewarding elements is the way that it opened up onto a larger body of cultural works, including the aforementioned films. Even many of the prints inserted between the pages of the book are of works not even included in the show and in the space, many works were complimented by a small text under their label: for example, a paragraph under Diego Perrone's photo series of holes is the opening paragraph of Henry David Thoreau's essay "Walking".[4] These quotes are not attributed however and contribute to the feeling that the show is tapping into a much larger body of work: Cormac McCarthey's novel *The Road* is also quoted on a label and mentioned as an inspiration for example. The huge amounts of texts, films, and artworks dealing with the themes of the end of the world, disaster, and dystopia looms behind the show, but their mass does not so much as overshadow the works on display as much as it vitalizes them. The works stick to the general theme just enough, and even the works that do not necessarily make sense to me in relation to the theme of the show—like Tino Seghal's living sculptures writhing around in slow motion on the floor or Roberto Coughi's maps of so-called rogue states—are compelling.

The show, the curator reveals, is inspired by Werner Herzog's film from 1992, *Lessons of Darkness*. The film features Herzog's poetic narration over footage of workers attempting to douse the hundreds of burning oil wells the Iraqi army ignited throughout Kuwait during their retreat during the first Gulf War. In the wake of Saddam's scorched-earth petrodollar potlatch, we see lakes of oil, the rusting shells of heavy machinery, and plumes of smoke darkening the cloudless sky. The landscape should be immediately familiar, especially as we are still in the midst of the second Gulf War, but Herzog's poetic narration, detached from the war's geopolitical reality and without mention of the ongoing human suffering, helps give the landscape an other-worldly feel, heightened by the sublime horror of the footage and the fact that all the oil workers are wearing masks.

The show's first floor is the most densely packed with works. Both times I visited a particularly bombastic bit of Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, part of the soundtrack to Herzog's film, was playing as the elevator doors opened. The main space is dominated by Pawel Althamer's sculptural portraits and various artifacts. The pale, relatively gaunt bodies appear chiseled by a combination of food scarcity and hard labor, and one can imagine them slowly wandering the ash-covered highways in McCarthey's novel. On this floor we are also introduced to two prevalent themes in apocalyptic narratives: desertification and junglefication. In *Lessons of Darkness* or *The Road* humans unleash their destructive capabilities to block the sun, barren the landscape, destroy life.[5] In the opposing narrative—present to varying degrees in films like *The Happening*, *I am Legend*, *12 Monkeys*—nature reclaims the surface of the planet, thriving as our presence is minimized. Vegetation pokes through the asphalt and animals graze in the streets. The desertification of the American landscape from *The Road*, quoted on a label beside Bill Morris' photo of New Orleans post-Katrina, is opposed by the photographs of William Christenberry that depict junglefication as kudzu overtakes derelict buildings. The plant, which can grow at the rate of thirty cm, a day, has spread exponentially in the US south since having been introduced from Japan in the late 19th century and is nicknamed "the vine that ate the south".

The most prominent piece on the third floor is Robert Kusmirowski's replica of Ted Kaczynski's cabin. Better known by the moniker "The Unabomber", Kaczynski carried out a series of bombings, primarily via the mail, for a period of seventeen years before being turned in by his brother. His actual cabin is currently on display at the Newseum (Museum of News, not to be confused with the New Museum), in Washington, D.C. and Kaczynski has bizarrely sent a letter to the US Court of Appeals claiming that the publicity the exhibition is likely to create shows a lack of sensitivity towards his victims' families. Berlinde De Bruyckere's sculpture, housed in a casket-like glass case on a plinth, looks like the fossilized remains of the shape-shifting alien in John Carpenter's *The Thing* (1982).[6] Eugene Von Bruenchenhein's finger paintings of nuclear Armageddon from the 1950s both remind us that the fear of apocalypse is not unique to the present and lead one to think about a huge body of work inspired by the fear of nuclear weapons. While it was once geopolitical maneuvering and international conflict that was going to bring about the Armageddon, now it is humanity's inability to collectively find a way of living that doesn't destroy the earth. Von Bruenchenhein's *Gold Tower*, thought to have been made during the seventies, reminds one of a cross between Tatlin's Tower and the Tower of Babylon done in gold-painted chicken and turkey bones. Natalie Djurberg's *My Name is Mud*, in which an anthropomorphic mud whose 'appetite knows no bounds' engulphs a village, felt particularly relevant as what was left of the same tropical storm that caused lethal mudslides in Haiti was hitting New York while I was at the exhibition.

The fourth floor is the sparsest and this amplifies the effect of Zoe Leonard's dead tree, held up by steel cables and wooden crutches, and Maurizio Cattelan's horse hanging several meters in the air with its head seemingly buried in the wall. Strindberg's *Celestographs* present perhaps the most literal attempt to make an image after nature in the entire show. Strindberg left photographic paper under the stars at night, hoping to perfectly capture the night sky. The results were impressive and Strindberg apparently sent documentation of his discovery to the leading astronomers of his time only to later discover that the patterns, which do actually look like images of outer space, were actually formed by dust and drops of dew.[7]

Of the show the curator Gioni writes: "The exhibition can be read as a visual novel, a story of nature after a trauma, a retelling colored by mythology, religion, and distress. Temporally detached from any point of orientation, the exhibition emerges as a study of the present from a place in the future: a feverish examination of an extinct world that seems to be our own." In his "Theses on the Philosophy of History", Walter Benjamin argues that the Social Democrats' adoption of a teleological conception of history that focuses on a progressively better world—an ideology that "thought fit to assign to the working class the role of the redeemer of future generations"—"made the working class forget both its hatred and its spirit of sacrifice, for both are nourished by the image of enslaved ancestors rather than that of liberated grandchildren."[8] This temporal prism is also in opposition to a work that I immediately thought of while at After Nature, Gerald Byrne's captivating video work *1984 and Beyond* (2005–7), a re-enactment of a series of conversations between a group of sci-fi writers that took place in 1963. The writers, including Arthur C. Clark, Isaac Asminov, Ray Bradbury, and Theodore Sturegeon, discuss and speculate on the future of the space race, lunar colonization, and the Cold War in a manner that feels unimaginable today. Their discussion is so obviously taking place within a discourse of development that sees history moving relatively linearly with steady historical and technological progress. There seems to be a common assumption that humanity will respond ingeniously and admirably to any and all challenges, whether it be in space exploration or feeding the world. In After Nature we are faced with a reverse scenario to the one diagnosed by Benjamin, in which we imagine ourselves enslaved, or at least miserable, oppressed, or constrained, in the future, looking back upon our present, liberated existence. Despite the curator's intentions, this ambitious, perhaps impossible, aim of casting a backwards glance upon the present is precisely what the show is unable to accomplish—to its benefit. In the past, a dystopian scenario was often set so far in the future that the work could serve as a warning of what could happen if humanity did not change its ways. What is striking about the current crop of works is that the collapse has either already begun or is imminent and inevitable. It is the palpable inability of everyone involved—artists, curator, spectator—to even imagine a future, let alone reflect back on the present from this imaginary space, that gives the show its power and relevance.

The inability to think the future seems intimately tied to an inability to understand the present. To paraphrase Guy Debord, all usurpers do everything in their power to make us forget that they have just arrived. But it seems trite to point out that capitalism, and particularly its present hegemonic form, is not going to be with us forever, that there have been and will be other economic systems and forms of government in the future. As Fredric Jameson has pointed out, "Most of human history has unfolded in situations of general impotence and powerlessness, when this or that system of state power is firmly in place, and no revolts seem even conceivable, let alone possible or imminent. Those stretches of human history are for the most part passed in utterly non-utopian conditions, in which none of the images of the future or of radical difference peculiar to utopias ever reach the surface."[9] John Gray has argued that the re-emergence of the belief in imminent apocalypse in contemporary culture is connected to the death of these utopian visions.[10] The consequences of this re-emergence are greater than just the dominance of a moribund outlook as religious Millenialists have emerged as an active force in American

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Zoe Leonard, *Tree*, 1997. Wood, steel, and steel cables. Courtesy the artist and Galerie Gisela Capitain, Cologne. Installation view, Paula Cooper Gallery, New York

politics, influencing America's stance on the Israel-Palestine conflict, the war on terror, and even climate change.[11] As Gray makes clear, apocalypse here is not simply opposed to utopia: "In common speech 'apocalyptic' denotes a catastrophic event, but in biblical terms it derives from the Greek word for unveiling—an apocalypse is a revelation in which mysteries that are written in heaven are revealed at the end of time, and for the Elect this means not catastrophe but salvation." In this sense apocalyptic fantasies are more utopian than they might first appear.

According to the curator, "After Nature surveys a landscape of wilderness and ruins, darkened by uncertain catastrophe. It is a story of abandonment, regression, and rapture—an epic of humanity and nature coming apart under the pressure of obscure forces and not-so-distant environmental disasters." In Rosa Luxembourg's famous Janius pamphlet, written in 1915, there is only one hope for humanity: socialism. It is class struggle and the socialist movement that can save the world from barbarism, from the horrors provoked by the domination of capital and its crises. The enemy was clearly established and the remedy, while arguably vague, could be envisioned. In May, 1843 Marx famously wrote to Arnold Ruge, "You won't say that I hold the present time in too much esteem; and yet if I don't despair of it, it's on account of its own desperate situation, which fills me with hope". It is precisely this feeling that things are getting so bad that a positive change must be imminent which is exactly what seems to be missing from the contemporary imagination. It seems as though in "the degraded utopia of the present", a moment when the choice of socialism or barbarism has already been made, with utopia impossible, the contemporary culture has difficulty imagining anything other than oblivion. Jameson has said that this is to be expected in a period in which a given power structure is firmly in place, but what is strange about the present mood is that our times are in fact relatively tumultuous. The "end of history" thesis has been passé for well over a decade, and I am writing this during the greatest financial crisis since 1929. If this crisis is not likely to destroy capitalism (or Integrated World Capitalism, or Empire), it could potentially be the final death knell of its neo-liberal variant and signal the death of the current hegemony of the world system, as Immanuel Wallerstein has argued.[12]

Returning to After Nature, the question of course is whether or not the forces that are making humanity and nature come apart are indeed obscure. While the causes behind capitalism's latest crisis are undoubtedly complex, the situation is not inexplicable. And even if there are people like Sarah Palin who refuse to acknowledge the sources of climate change, the rest of us do not find it particularly mysterious. What is additionally relevant about the current crisis is that, despite its severity, no one is really demanding systematic change. The only people that seem to think this means the end of capitalism are rightwing libertarians who see the semi-nationalization of banks, buying up of mortgages, and the election of Obama as the first steps towards communism. Viewed most cynically, there seems to be a danger that the ubiquity of apocalyptic fantasies acts as a replacement for any serious engagement with the problems of the present and the possibilities for real change, which would likely involve a tremendous amount of work, or that they allow the post-historical subject to maintain a degree of excitement following the end of history, a period—as Fukuyama originally claimed—that is "a very sad time". After all, the end of the world would probably be considered by most to be the biggest event since the start of the world. To end on a more optimistic note however, and one closer to the feeling I actually had at After Nature, the current mood is not dominated by resignation, but a melancholic acceptance of the world we have inherited and are still creating. The damage that has already been done and the dangers faced are palpable, but a fascination remains. Like the giddy octopus dancing in the polluted waters of Marseille referenced by Felix Guattari, there is a need to immerse oneself in this degraded utopia.[13] "Men resemble their times more than their fathers" as the proverb has it, and just as the octopus shriveled up and died within seconds of being placed in a tank of clean seawater, any attempt to return to a less despoiled perspective by artists, activists, or theorists would be pathetic. By focusing on our enthrallment with the end, shows like After Nature allow us to start to think about what might come next. •

After Nature
Organized by Massimiliano Gioni
New Museum, New York
17.7.2008–5.10.2008

Notes

1. Zizek's observation that in the majority of Hollywood disaster film's the disaster serves to unite a family or romantic couple is relatively trite, perhaps with the exception of *Deep Impact*, where that romantic couple is a father/daughter. That being said there is something odd, both incestuous and homoerotic, about the Ben Affleck, Bruce Willis, Liv Tyler triangle in *Armageddon*, which during the same lecture was said to be one of Alain Badiou's favorite films. Zizek Masterclass, Birkbeck College, London, Feb. 20th, 2008.
2. In the underrated *The Happening* (2008), what is initially suspected to be a terror attack turns out to have actually been perpetrated by nature itself.
3. Even when it is alien (*Cloverfield*, *War of the Worlds*), it stands for fears created by decidedly planetary antagonisms.
4. The quote is unattributed. I was interested in where it came from so I googled it afterwards.
5. For more on desertification, particularly in relation to Jihad, see Reza Negarestani, "Petrodicy: A Petropunk Dialogue", *SITE* 20. 2007.
6. *The Thing* is first film in Carpenter's Apocalypse Trilogy.
7. See Douglas Feuk, "The Celestographs of August Strindberg," *Cabinet*, 3, 2001.
8. Benjamin, "Theses on the Philosophy of History", *Illuminations* (Schocken, 1969), p. 260.
9. Fredric Jameson, "The Politics of Utopia", *New Left Review*. 25. 2004, p. 45.
10. John Gray, *Black Mass: Apocalyptic Religion and the Death of Utopia*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.
11. See Gray, pp. 107–45.
12. Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Depression: A Long-Term View". (www.binghamton.edu/fbc/243en.htm) See also Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Decline of American Power* (WW Norton & Company, 2003).
13. Felix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (Continuum, 2008), p. 28–9.

The 50 Moons of Saturn: the Second Torino Triennale

Sinziana Ravini

The tragedy of Western thought can possibly be reduced to one single moment—Faust gazing at the diagram of macrocosm and realizing that he cannot penetrate into the mysteries of the universe, that his metaphysical speculations are in vain. The more Faust wants to know, the more his melancholy intensifies. He has sacrificed a lifetime in exchange for nothing—for knowing that he cannot know. Faust sees no other exit out of this *docta ignorantia* than suicide. But before it's too late, Mephisto arrives and gives him an offer he can't refuse: the knowledge of the world through the senses, youth, love, and unlimited pleasure. The alchemical drama begins and Faust passes all the spheres of human existence—from the darkest to the lightest—in a rite of initiation in the mysteries of human life. The only thing he has to fear is satisfaction. The moment he will feel like saying to the passing moment, "stay a while, you are so beautiful", will be the moment he will have to surrender his soul to the devil. The desire for the suspension of time becomes thus the greatest sin of all, something that the devil, the symbol of progress and dissatisfaction, cannot handle.

The suspension of time, introspection, melancholia, the desire for knowledge, as well as the desire for desire, are all central elements in the Torino Triennale curated by Daniel Birnbaum and entitled The 50 Moons of Saturn. The exhibition is assembling artists that are under the cosmic influence of Saturn, the star of melancholy. But as Birnbaum declares in the catalogue text the saturnine mind is not only gloomy and depressed but also rebellious and highly productive, giving the feeling that "a radical transformation is possible despite everything. It is the state of mind of inspiration." In this sense, Birnbaum has created a show in a Neoplatonic sense that sees the saturnine, dark forces of the mind as something entirely positive, as the very condition of artistic activity. The show can also be seen as a *coincidentia oppositoria* of Birnbaum's latest books: *Chronology* and *As a Weasel Sucks Eggs: An Essay on Melancholy and Cannibalism*, written with the Swedish literary historian Anders Olsson. The links between curiosity, hunger, desire, insanity, and melancholy are elegantly woven since they all deal with the loss of the mean—with the malicious, slippery object of desire, whether it's a time, a place, a human being, an object, or a memory. The exhibition is organized as the landscape of a labyrinthine mind, with long curtains, grayish walls, shortcuts, passages, and long corridors, displaying forms that have broken both with time and rationality, thus offering glimpses of a both comfortable and uncomfortable *Weltschmerz*.

Saturnalia and saturation

The planet Saturn has a large number of moons that are difficult to descern, since it's almost impossible to draw a distinction between a large ring particle and a tiny moon. The moons thus come "to life" through the act of name-giving—a perfect allegory of the curator and fifty identified artists turning around his orbit. Traditionally, most of Saturn's moons have been named after the Titans of Greek mythology, which fits very well with the romantic notion of the artist as a demiurge, a genius who both negates the creation of God by creating out of nothing, who is refusing mimesis, and continues the divine creation by adding to it, ameliorating, revolutionizing its old structures. When it comes to Saturn—the Roman God of Agriculture, equated by the God Uranus that devoured his children in an act of despair and was later toppled by Zeus—we are dealing with a revolutionary figure. In the roman Saturnalias, during the celebrations in the temple of Saturn, the order of things were reversed for a day, during which the slaves were served by the masters. As a result the slaves could criticize their masters for being enslaved by their passions, pretending thus that they would give away some of their most precious possessions. Saturn functioned in other words as the incitement to generosity, fearlessness, and forces of reversal. The saturnine aspects of Birnbaum's show have everything to do with those aspects, with generosity of means, with cultural cannibalization and myth dissemination. One has only to look at Benjamin Saurer's carnivalesque paintings of hermetic rituals of sadism and cannibalism. For Freud, the melancholic is orally obsessed—a cannibal who tries to symbolically devour the lost object to the extent of identifying with it. Anna Galtaross' remote controlled belly dancing mountain or Pascale Marthine Tayou's cultural reconstructivism play both on the strings of identification and cultural assimilation. Also Gert & Uwe Tobias' synthetization of Romanian folklore and Russian constructivism, naivism and futurism, has a reconstructivist touch to it. This cannibalization of cultural fetishes, which wrenches items from their cultural origin and casts them into a post-cultural limbo of forms, a wrenching that is both a dismantling and leveling of cultural hierarchies, is nevertheless a saturnine reversal of the social order of aesthetics forms. What they all have in common is the production of saturated images, heavily

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Guido van der Werve, *I don't want to be a part of this*, videostill, 2005

loaded with signs and symbols, eating and shitting forms at the same time, like Rabelais' gargantuan bodies.

Lamentation and desire

Another theme in the show is the sometimes ironic, sometimes sincere lamentation over lost times that manifests itself through an anachronistic play with old formats and ideas, personal and collective memories. As Victor Hugo once said, melancholia is the happiness of being sad. This light form of melancholia can be found in Ragnar Kjartansson's dashing song *Sorrow conquers happiness* that shows the artist in a suit, surrounded by an orchestra and pink velvet curtains, looking as if he was coming straight from a studio set from the fifties, battling with sorrow. His repetition of the same words during an hour that feels like an eternity, strikes a cord with the orthodox liturgical ceremonies that are supposed to abolish time and reunite the community with the holy domains they once lost. Repetition becomes thus not only an abolition of time, but also a way to seduce and hypnotize the audience.

The seduction of the audience is also something that Guido van der Werve masters in his exotism of the romantic artist, clinging to his piano. *I don't want to be a part of this*, where Werve is playing piano on a raft in a lake, has affinities with both romantic conceptualism and micro-macro theories of German idealism where the man is confronted with his great minitude in front of the devouring magnitude of the world. The only difference between his and Caspar David Friedrich's lonesome wanderers is the humoristic touch.

Also Jordan Wolfson's *Untitled false document* showing an attractive and enigmatic woman standing on a small boat, casting images of fruits in the wind like Bob Dylan in his *Subterranean Homesick Blues*, has a touch of poetic sadness. The conceptual narcissism, the incapacity of grasping the object of desire, and the robot-like stream of consciousness voiceover that recites a poem on loss, on lies transformed to truths and truths to objects, turns the video into a invigorating ride on the old French new waves.

As Arto Lindsay claims in one of the catalogue texts, "Melancholy is not sorrow but thinking of sorrow—It's the sate of insight over the vast abyss that divides ideals and reality." Hölderlin captured this abyss very elegantly by saying: "Man is a god when he dreams and a beggar when he thinks." Meris Angioletti is recreating Hölderlin's paranoiac visions and mental nomadisms, filming from the same town where Hölderlin spent several decades and structuring the entire film as a neural constellation of the poet's mind, of his dreams and fears. Here there is no glimpse of irony, just a beautiful reenactment of a state of mind. The desire for desire is perhaps best captured in Karen Cytter's video *The Devil's Drivel*, which unifies contemplation and masturbation. Here the merging with the other is explored in a somehow funny and bittersweet narcissism *à deux*.

Contemplation

Another theme in the show is the contemplation of the relation between micro and macro, of both seen and alluded to objects, a time that has turned on itself, curtains that hide, and faces that look away. Annika von Hausswolf and Ulla von Brandenburg are pivotal artists here, the former dealing with an aesthetics of withdrawal and the reification of the human being, the latter with an aesthetics of anticipation with her red curtain that functions like a reversible *rite de passage*, enabling fluctuations both ways. Whereas Lara Favaretto's dervish-like sculptures that spin in seemingly endless loops look like self-devouring objects that want both to vanish and to persist. Also Giuseppe Pietroniro creates an abyss of reflection with his *mise en abyme* of theatrical décors. Not to mention Tatiana Trouvé's alienating architecture of bureaucracy that metaphysically alludes to a world beyond, creating an infinite illusion of repetition. Contemplation turns here into a loss of physical and conceptual parameters.

But there are also less discomfiting contemplative works. Olafur Eliasson's cosmologic visions inspired by Buckminster Fuller's architectural philosophy, the man that transformed his depression into a restless Faustian will to change the world, offers the ultimate sight—the look at the universe from a godlike point of view. The scenery of spheres rotating around a central light source are not only reconciling the alchemic division between micro and macro, man and universe, but also the huge still existing one—namely between art and science. While Eliasson in some ways recreates a cosmic time, Paul Chan tries to abolish the linear time of history, inspired by Charles Fourier's socialist utopias, but turning them into different kind of dystopias. In his latest work—*Untitled (after Lacan's laugh)* the language of pornography is revealed as the Esperanto of our time, as an utterly globalized and demystified phenomenon where there are no more boundaries to transgress. According to Chan we already live in the 120 days of Sodom. If Eliasson offers a contemplation of the external cosmic laws of the universe, Chan offers a contemplation of the internal laws of society. It is micro versus macro from both sides: from both sides of the same coin, one could even go as far as saying the same world, but that wouldn't be right. If there is something that the show manifests, it is the plurality of inhabitable worlds, both real and unreal ones, desired and non-desired.

The melancholic turn

How then is this melancholic turn to be conceived in a broader sense? For Benjamin Buchloch it is showing the importance of being obsolete: the melancholic might seem introverted but it is only her way to say no to the simplistic notion of progress. Melancholy is in other words a form of resistance. Can it lead to any social change? As Anatole France puts it: "All changes, even the most longed for, have their melancholy; for what we leave behind us is a part of ourselves; we must die to one life before we can enter another." One should therefore skip the language of community-based art and collaborative art practices that see social change as a special affect and instead talk about the mental change that an artwork can produce. The mental change can never be observed nor analyzed. As André Breton said, you cannot make a social revolution without making a mental revolution. The melancholic turn can perhaps lead to that mental change that the surrealists and Dadaists where so keen to realize.

But melancholia is and remains double-bound: it generates a desire for desire as well as a desire for the non-fulfillment of desire. According to Susan Stewart, nostalgia is the melancholia of time, not so much a mourning of a loved object as it is the case in the classic accounts of melancholia, but the mourning of a loss of an epoch. Is there a risk that nostalgic and melancholic artistic attitudes fall in regression, that the object of art becomes retrogardistic attempt to restore a lost time? For Svetlana Boym nostalgia can also mean the insight in the impossibility of a regressive return and the exodus of a history recycling postmodernism, in other words a "reflective nostalgia" that opposes itself to a "restorative nostalgia" that doesn't recognize itself as nostalgia but rather as truth and tradition. One could make an analogy to Schillers differentiation of the naive and the sentimental artist. The naive artist thinks that he can be one with nature. The sentimental artist knows that his bound to nature is forever lost or that the bound has never existed, that nature is only a part of a play that he has produced. The same can be said about contemporary artist's relation to time. Some are time-essentialists and other time-deconstructivists. So if there is such a thing as a turn in contemporary art, it is not so much a historical as a temporal turn, where artists navigate through different temporalities and narrations instead of geographical areas. But even here there are illusionists of time, those that give the illusion that an exodus out of modernity—not to *pre-* or *postmodern* but to *a-*modern times is possible.

The big question remains—how can one make a distinction between regressive and progressive nostalgia? Does irony and mimicry secure the necessary distance that a progressive nostalgia presupposes? Or is it more progressive to be entirely regressive, to look back instead of forward, when everything else is accelerating, when everyone thinks that cultural roots are to be cut in favor of a cosmopolitan ubiquity? Nostalgia literally means homesickness—composed out of *nostos* (return home) and *algos* (pain). For Novalis philosophy as such is a form of homesickness, it is an urge to be at home everywhere. Seen from that point of view nostalgia is a exceedingly visionary and explorative practice. It's the ultimate negation of the given and the affirmation of the possible. As Tennyson's Ulysses says to his sailor comrades: "It's never to late to seek a newer world".

Another question is how these nostalgic or melancholic practices are to be understood in relation to the postmodern deconstruction of the notion of history and the so-called "unified subject"? Perhaps as a commentary on postmodern microutopias, a shift in scale from the micro-utopia of communities and neighborhoods, to the utopia of the self? An egotopia—the autonomous artistic space *par excellence*. •

Second Torino Triennale
Curator: Daniel Birnbaum
Various venues
6.11.2008–1.2.2009

Sinziana Ravini is an art critic, lecturer and curator.

The Insides and Outsides of Reason: Lévi-Strauss at 100

Sven-Olov Wallenstein

I. Beginnings and trajectories

Today Claude Lévi-Strauss celebrates his 100th birthday, and even though the secondary literature on his work could fill a small library, any definitive assessment of his position within modern culture would be premature. Ranging from technical issues in anthropology and the analysis of myth to philosophical speculations on the human mind and the universal structure of culture, from detailed analyses of kinship systems to comments on Wagner's music, painting, and literature, his polymorphous oeuvre maps out many of the essential shifts and tendencies within the intellectual life of the second half of the 20th century, on the level of both personal biography and theoretical substance. From the Surrealism of André Breton to the linguistic theories of Roman Jakobson, from the study of indigenous cultures of Brazil to the academic milieus of New York and Paris, Lévi-Strauss's path traverses geographical as well as philosophical continents, although always on the basis of a certain sense of *dépaysement*, an estrangement from a contemporary world the deep underlying structures of which he nevertheless has spent his entire life unraveling. The gaze he has directed onto the world has always come from afar, to paraphrase the title of one of his books, *Le regard éloigné* (1983)—a gaze that looks at humanity from a certain distance, and discerns crystalline structures, logical permutations, and inversions that underlie the intentions and conscious projects of the agent themselves. The general phenomenon "structuralism" was obviously itself highly composite, ranging from technical research in linguistics, kinship analysis, and even the foundations of mathematics, as in the case of the Bourbaki group, to the kind of popular cultural phenomenon out of which cartoons can be made, such as the famous "breakfast of the structuralists," by Maurice Henry in *La Quinzaine Litteraire*, 1966, and one should be wary of any simplistic formulas, which are normally proposed simply to foreclose historical understanding. And even though the structuralist vogue in its more shallow aspects, as it became publicly visible in the early 1960s, with its heavy dependence on certain idealized models of language, may have been a passing fashion, the perspective it opened in establishing a space for dialog between cultures and between layers within a singular culture—a certain desubstantialization of received cultural values, an attentiveness to the constitutive play of oppositions in work within identity—remains valid and relevant, even though the scientist fantasies of the 1960s have been happily dispelled. With respect to Lévi-Strauss himself, one could cite Marcel Hénaff, the author of one of the most lucid recent syntheses of his work: the page may have been turned with respect to the specific claims of structuralism, but is has not been torn out of the book of our recent intellectual history.[1]

Born in 1908 to a cultivated Jewish family (his father was an artist, his grandfather a rabbi), Lévi-Strauss began his academic training studying law and philosophy without much enthusiasm, and eventually refrained from entering the career path of the *grands écoles*. In 1934 he was uprooted from the tranquility of his teaching post in a provincial *lycée* by the call of Célestin Bouglé, the director of École Normale Supérieure, who invited him to become part of teaching team that was to build up the recently founded university in São Paolo. It was here, in his first physical *dépaysement*, that Lévi-Strauss developed his intellectual passion for ethnography, and during the Brazilian period he made a series of summer excursions to the Mato Grosso region and the Amazon Rainforest, where he started amassing empirical material on local customs and languages (later he would come back for a year-long trip: these two were in fact the only fieldwork that he ever undertook). In 1939 he returned to France, but a year later, due to the Second World War and the French capitulation, he once again found himself in exile, this time in New York, where the encounter with the anthropology of Franz Boas, but above all Roman Jakobson and structural linguistics, were decisive events that provided the aspiring ethnologist with a set of conceptual tools with which he could organize his earlier youthful and "spontaneous structuralism," as he would later call it. After returning to France at the end of the war, he had one more interlude in the USA as a cultural attaché in Washington, but then finally settled down in France and began teaching at the École Pratique des Hautes Études, where he eventually succeeded Marcel Mauss as the director of the section of comparative religion. A string of publications would follow, and in 1959 he was elected to the Collège de France (a position he held until his retirement in 1982). Shortly after his election he initiated the Laboratory for Social Anthropology with the intent of laying the institutional foundations the new discipline, and in 1961 he founded the journal, *l'Homme*, which was to become an intellectual venue for scholarly publications in the field. More publications would follow, but in a certain sense his aim was now set, and the ensuing work can be seen as gradual fulfillment of the initial promise: to create a science of Man, in the most universal sense of the word, that would neither succumb to the abstract necessities of philosophy nor the empirical contingencies of history, but integrate both in a new type of analysis, although one whose name, "anthropology," in fact would become a fundamental questioning of the inherited definitions of man.

II. From kinship to myth

Lévi-Strauss' public career began in 1948, when he published his primary thesis, defended at the Sorbonne the year before, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, together with the more empirical and descriptive secondary thesis, *The Family and Social Life of the Nambikwara Indians,* which gained him international scientific recognition. The analysis of kinship, which forms the nucleus of Lévi-Strauss's early work, proposes that family ties are organized by linguistic and logical structures rather than by any natural physical content, and that they always involved a question of alliance between families produced by marriage, i.e., a question of exchange, organized according to a linguistic analogy. The application of Saussure's idea of linguistic "value" (that which gives units their substance is differences and interrelations) allowed him to open up the nuclear family towards what had been previously considered as a secondary space of relations, and to show that kinship is a system that allows for the simplification of empirical data into variations of underlying systems. The basic unit of kinship, Lévi-Strauss proposes, is a set of four relations—brother, sister, father, son—that all relate back to the incest taboo (which here functions as a kind of transcendental condition of possibility, as we will see), i.e., the requirement that marriages must occur outside of the family, but also makes it possible for families to establish a peaceful relation by exchanging women. (Whether this is a sexist position or simply a description of a state of affairs that could and ought to be changed —what is exchanged is indeed women reduced to the state of "signifiers"—has remained an open question. Simone de Beauvoir famously took the second position in her review of the work in *Les Temps Modernes*; others have been less conciliatory.)

In 1955 these two works were followed by *Tristes tropiques*, a literary account of his travels and intellectual development during the pre-war period, but which also branches out into a general philosophy of culture in a somewhat melancholy key, and that made his fame in the general intellectual world.[2] The opening of the book, one of the most famous postwar texts on voyages and explorers, has become famous: *Je hais les voyages et les explorateurs*, "I hate traveling and explorers." Georges Bataille, in some respects close to Lévi-Strauss, although the latter always found his musings on anthropology and his poetic use of ethnographic material appallingly amateurish, captured something of the tone of the book in his review: "The newness of the book stands opposed to any form of brooding, it corresponds to a need for more encompassing and poetic values, such as horror and tenderness on the level of history and of the universe, it tears us away from the poverty of our streets and our apartment houses."[3] For Lévi-Strauss, the disappearance of cultural differences is the great tragedy of modernity, and the project of ethnographic reason is indeed, just as unwillingly as unavoidably, an accomplice: the project of rescuing the residual cannot but inscribe it into the discourse of a science within which it will survive as an object of Western theory.

The work that was to launch the idea of "structuralism," *Structural Anthropology*, followed in 1958, bringing together articles and scattered essays from the preceding decade. Here we find the first sketches for a structural analysis of myth (the first famous analysis of the Oedipus myth, dates from 1955), as well as an outline of a theory of society that breaks with earlier "functionalist" as well as "historicist" explanations of customs and institutions. Similar institutions and practices exist in different cultures, Lévi-Strauss notes, and yet they perform completely different tasks, which means that the functional explanation, either on the collective or the individual level, in fact says nothing. In many ways he continues a line from Durkheim, where the totality of society transcends the point of view of the individuals themselves, which demands that the sociologist should adopt a distance, a "*regard éloigné*," with respect to the consciousness of his objects of study. On the other hand Lévi-Strauss rejected the Durkheimian idea of social facts as "things" and the concomitant organicist idea of society, and his first thesis on the elementary kinship structures is a fundamental revision of Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*. For Durkheim the "socialization of affectivity" that occurs in primitive societies was the step out of nature; for Lévi-Strauss, who draws on Marcel Mauss, it is *intelligence* rather than affectivity that characterizes these societies, an intelligence that above all transpires in their classificatory activities. For Mauss these are based on the need to overcome social divisions and conflicts, and his classic 1925 essay *The Gift* analyzes one way of solving this, by establishing structures of reciprocity; for Lévi-Strauss this was still to much of a concession to a thing-like idea of the social. Rather than seeing a continuity between the natural and the social, Lévi-Strauss stresses the autonomy of the social as a signifying order with respect to the given physical world, which for him is a consequence of its fundamentally linguistic nature.

But at the same time this linguistic structuring should be seen as an *unconscious* activity, which is exerted on the level of a "mind" inaccessible to individuals, and Lévi-Strauss sometimes sees this as analogous to psychoanalysis—which, together with geology and Marxism, was one of his three early "mistresses," as he says in *Tristes Tropiques*, since the both lead us away from the visible towards that which conditions it. This analogy

▲
Foucault, Lacan, Lévi-Strauss, Barthes. Cartoon by Maurice Henry, published in *La Quinzaine Litteraire*, 1 July 1967

with Freud must be said to remain at a superficial level in Lévi-Strauss' own comments (which does not preclude, as we will see later on, another type of encounter that takes place via the theory of the Symbolic in Lacan, who, like Lévi-Strauss, took his cues from the linguistics of Saussure and Jakobson). Something similar may be said about his positive references to Marx: the linguistic structuring of the world in Lévi-Strauss is not an "ideology" that would somehow veil or distort a "real" infrastructure, and consciousness as understood in structural anthropology cannot be taken as "false" in the sense of the famous *camera obscura* analogy. Conditioned as they may be by the intellectual conjunctures of the French 1950s and 1960s, these generous remarks in fact seem to disfigure Lévi-Strauss's theories (which does not mean that they cannot be developed in another direction, as is shown for instance in the work of Maurice Godelier).

In 1962 he published two more theoretically seminal works, *Totemism* and *The Savage Mind*. In the first he expanded the analyses of kinship to encompass a whole set of systems of classification, and showed that a phenomenon like "totemism" did not imply any kind of mystic connection to nature, once more rebutting the idea that the "primitive mind" would somehow be too engaged in survival to attain the distance to the physical surroundings necessary for the abstraction of science; in fact, Lévi-Strauss argued, totemism is just abstract and remote from the natural environment as any modern classificatory system. Classifying is a profound and universal need, although the principles for doing it do differ: what has been understood as the "primitive" or "pre-logical" mind (to use the term of Lévy-Bruhl) is in fact a method of classifying that makes use of concrete and sensible characteristics, which survives in our modern art, and the human mind is fundamentally the same. *The Savage Mind* proposes that we should see a continuity, rather than a qualitative break

Something similar holds of what is perhaps the most famous distinctions elaborated by Lévi-Strauss, i.e., the difference between "bricoleur" and "engineer" developed in *The Savage Mind*. The bricoleur is someone who uses whatever comes handy, who develops an improvised craft on the basis of already existing things, whereas the engineer works on the basis of a comprehensive plan. In this sense, the bricoleur is like the "savage," whose world is closed and finite, whereas the engineer is the outcome of modern science, and has the capacity to conceive of entirely new things. However, Lévi-Strauss adds, the difference between them is one of degree rather than one of kind, and we should not understand this pair as simply a metaphor for the pair primitive-modern, but more as two universally co-existing tendencies in the human mind.

Partly due to the polemic against Sartre's views of historical agency that concludes *The Savage Mind*, Lévi-Strauss found himself to be the founding father of a new movement called "structuralism," a position from which he however immediately retreated in order to immerse himself into the major work that was to occupy him for the following decade, *Mythologiques* (published in four volumes between 1964 and 1971). Basing himself on a single myth from South America, whose transformations he then follows throughout all of the Americas up to Arctic circle, he details a vast transformational scheme that is supposed to underlie the actual narrative content of particular myths, and in this way the thousands of pages of these four volumes constitute the actual working out of the theoretical program outlined in *The Savage Mind*. The particular myths are simply instances of mythic speech, a "parole" behind which a "langue" can be formulated, and eventually all types of myths can be reduced to such a universal language of all languages. The singular myths are made up of small buildings blocks, the "mythemes" (which should be seen as analogous to the phonemes in language) that can be combined or "bundled" into larger compounds. In this sense, there is no original or privileged version of the story, and the reference myth chosen at the outset of the first volume of *Mythologiques* is only a technical convenience to get the permutational logic going.

But notwithstanding their varying content, and all the possible permutations, myths in general share a fundamental feature that Lévi-Strauss believed to have discovered early on in his celebrated analyses of the Oedipus story, which is that they work with binary oppositions in an attempt to resolve them into fictitious unity by associating irreconcilable oppositions with more easily manageable ones, or by finding mediating terms (for instance the "trickster," as in the case of the raven or coyote, who through a complex scheme that passes through the positions of agriculture and hunting, herbivore and predator, come to act as a bridge between life and death in many Native American myths). In this sense, it is the mythical structure, endowed with a certain necessity, which thinks behind our back in the different and seemingly fantastic and erratic stories we tell, and at the beginning of *The Raw and the Cooked* Lévi-Strauss speaks of his attempt to reduce this seeming profusion of motifs in order to "attain a level at which a kind of necessity becomes apparent, underlying the illusions of liberty."

In this work Lévi-Strauss's proposes a grand vision of a "mythologics" that has both a universal theoretic ambition and a highly limited empirical scope, which in fact seems to be a recurrent motif in his work: to generalize and build vast conceptual structures on the basis of selective material, which translates into his desire to grasp nothing less than the universal structures of the human mind, while still insisting that his research is highly specialized and only makes sense in a technical context. On the one hand, Lévi-Strauss always claims that his work had *nothing to do* with philosophy, on the other hand that his project is to *displace* philosophy. The responses to such claims could not fail to come, and in the following I will look at two, both of which claim to prolong and radicalize Lévi-Strauss's insights, and in this they undoubtedly step outside of the sphere of legitimacy claimed by the discourse of anthropology—in fact, both of them claim to diagnose the age of anthropology as finite, although the conclusions they draw from this will be opposed.

III. The outside and the inside

Stepping outside—has this not been the secret desire of philosophy ever since Kant, in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, claimed to have attained "the sure path of science," or even since Descartes in his *Discourse on Method* proposed to nullify the entire tradition and finally establish the unshakable foundation of knowledge? And yet, what such an outside amounts to is far from clear: is it *no longer* philosophy but something else, or *finally* philosophy, a discourse that could cease to be in love with wisdom since it is in possession of it? Or is it more like the dispelling of a dream, the farewell to the dream of rigorous science—a farewell that Husserl surely never proclaimed in his last work, *The Crisis of the Human Sciences*, but still saw as imminent threat, emanating both from the successes of the mathematical sciences and the corresponding rejection of them from the recent philosophies of life, with their emphasis on finite cultural totalities, within which he may or may not have included the Heidegger who had just published *Being and Time*?

Such a vision of a radical break is what we find in Foucault's *The Order of Things* (*Les mots et les choses*, 1966),[4] which undertakes the project of writing an "archeology of the human sciences," i.e., of unearthing those rules of formation that have made it possible to speak of life, language, and labor in a particular way that is centered around the concept of "Man." Foucault constructs a grand historical narrative that links together—or rather disjoints, since he proposes that we should see them as fundamentally discontinuous—a series of epistemic formations, the Renaissance, the Classical Age, Modernity, and finally a formation that appears as a glittering promise beyond the confines of the present. Even though much of the focus of his investigations lie on the classical age, of whose systems of grammar, natural history, and exchange of wealth he provides a detailed account, the provocative thrust of the book lies in the final part, where Foucault investigates the emergence of man as a fold of finitude, whose structure gradually appears in the new discourses of biology, political economy, and philology, and whose philosophical underpinnings lie in the Copernican revolution of Kant, in which the question "What is man?" displaces the question of Rationalism, "What is God?"[5] Through the new understanding of finitude that emerges in Kant, where it is no longer a limitation on our knowledge, but its very condition of possibility, Man emerges in a constant relation to a series of doubles: he is both and empirical being and a transcendental source of the empirical, both a cogito and a sphere of the unthought against which the cogito must attempt to retrieve itself, both an origin of historical practices and someone who is subjected to a history he has not made, an origin that retreats and returns. The human sciences, in Foucault's reading, are constructed on the basis of these "doubles," and the fact that we today can begin to identify the formative rules of the game means that it is nearing its end, and that the figure of Man will soon be erased.

In this dramatic narrative, psychoanalysis and ethnology (Foucault's extremely dense text provide no names or explicit references, but it is fairly obvious that Lacan and Lévi-Strauss are intended) occupy a privileged limit position, not because they finally would have attained the status of true human science, but precisely because they form "counter-sciences" that point to the limit of the modernist-humanist idea of Man, and function as "criticism and contestation" (373) within the episteme of modernity. Psychoanalysis advances toward that fundamental region that the other human sciences only approach indirectly, not in order to render it explicit, but to encounter it as a "text closed in upon itself" (374). This, Foucault suggests, is the primordial articulation of finitude that transcends the dimension of representation, and where we find the three figures of Death, Desire, and the Law. For philosophy this appears a kind of mythology, but in Foucault's reading these limit-figures had to appear, and their mythological status is in fact due to the fact that they circumscribe, from the outside, the representational space of the human sciences. And, Foucault continues, ethnology undertakes the same transition in the sphere of historicity (and here we can see Lévi-Strauss's polemic against Sartre in the background), and it does so on the basis of an "absolutely singular event" (376), i.e., the end of the colonial phase and the questioning of the Western ratio, the acknowledgement of "finitude," that this inevitably brought about. This shift brings the human sciences back to their constitution on the archeological level, to their roots in the modern

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episteme, not in the sense that they would finally pierce the enigma of man, but that they would uncover the stratum from out of which the idea of man emerges as something fundamentally contingent. In this ethnology and psychoanalysis prepare us for a thinking beyond the space of humanism, and for a thinking of language (to which contemporary linguistics is still a prelude, Foucault says) that would dispel the mirage of man. Ethnology is the limit of humanism, it both belongs to and does not belong to the modern episteme, depending on how we choose to read the "event."

1966, the same year as the publication of *The Order of Things*, Jacques Derrida delivered the lecture "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" at a conference at Johns Hopkins University, "Critical Languages and the Sciences of Man."[6] At first, Derrida's response in 1966 to the claims made by Lévi-Strauss appears similar to Foucault's, in that he *historicizes* the "event" for which structural anthropology is one particular name. The advent of structuralism must for Derrida be inserted within a history, although unlike in Foucault, this history does not follow the rhythm of sharp epistemological breaks, but it is "as old as the *episteme*—that is to say, as old as Western science and Western philosophy" (278). On the other hand, it is indeed a break, in the sense that brings the idea of structure *as such* to the fore, and particularly the idea of a center that at once opens and limits the "play" of elements, and where the chain of substitutions comes to an end. This center Derrida understands, following Heidegger, as the determination of being as presence, which has received a long chain of names within the history of metaphysics: *eidos*, *arche*, *telos*, *energeia*, *ousia* (essence, existence, substance, subject), *aletheia*, transcendentality, consciousness, God, man etc. The "invasion" of language into this problematic and the ensuing transformation of everything into "discourse" was the moment when the center began to appear as a moment within a chain of such substitutions, and when the absence of a "transcendental signified extends the domain and the play of signification infinitely" (280). But even though this "event" is undoubtedly as old as philosophy, it has reached an acute stage in the present, which Derrida circumscribes by citing the displacements operated by Freud, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. All of them are however caught in a necessary circle, which is neither dialectical nor hermeneutic, but points to the strategic and economic necessity of belonging to the tradition that one wants to dismantle, to the effect that any "step outside" (284) can only occur by a more rigorous understanding of the inside.

It is here that Lévi-Strauss surfaces in Derrida's lecture, first as one example of many: when the anthropologist, in the preface to *The Raw and the Cooked*, where the project of his "mythologics" is outlined, says that he has "sought to transcend the opposition between the sensible and the intelligible by operating from the outset at the level of the sign," Derrida reminds us that the concept of sign belongs wholly to metaphysics, and cannot be used to escape its founding oppositions. In this way, the critical operation can neither accept nor simply dispense with this concept—any questioning of the system to which it belongs must already presuppose it, and this extends to "all the concepts and sentences of metaphysics" (281). But, Derrida continues, with respect to the human sciences, ethnology indeed has a particular privilege, since it could only be born after a "decentering," at the moment when "European culture—and, in consequence, the history of metaphysics and of its concepts—had been dislocated, driven from its locus, and forced to stop considering itself as the culture of reference" (282). The critique of ethnocentrism is in this sense connected to the critique of metaphysics, above all in the form developed by Heidegger, and it shares the same paradox, i.e., that all the conceptual tools it can mobilize belong to the very discourse that is being challenged—a necessity that no one can escape, although not all ways of giving in to it are equal, as Derrida underlines, and this double-bind becomes particularly critical in the case of Lévi-Strauss.

Derrida takes his cues from the opposition between nature and culture, which Lévi-Strauss posits at the opening of his book on the structures of kinship as at once universal (relating to spontaneity and nature) and contingent (related to a particular norm), and thus something that is not "far removed from a scandal."[7] On the one hand, given the opposition of nature and culture, it is indeed a scandal, but on the other hand, as the passage into and very condition of possibility of the opposition between *physis* and its opposites (*nomos*, *techne*, history), the incest prohibition is the basis of "the whole of philosophical conceptualization," and thus precisely that which it is "designed to leave in the domain of unthinkable" (283f). Now Lévi-Strauss does not question the value of his own tools, he does not produce a genealogy of his concepts, instead he proceeds in a piecemeal fashion, in fact very much in the sense of the *bricolage* he had analyzed in *The Savage Mind*—and, Derrida notes, this corresponds precisely to the necessity of advancing from the inside towards a possible outside. In this sense, the Engineer, who would construct his discourse solely out of himself, the pure Cartesian beginner, is a myth fabricated by the *bricoleur*, the myth of pure reason or a theological idea. And indeed, when Lévi-Strauss himself on several occasions point to the "mythopoetic" quality of *bricolage*, does he not, as Derrida suggests, describe his own "mythologic," neither a mythology or a science of myths, but a discourse which is itself mythomorphic, in its lack of center, its affirmation of the "anaclastic" condition of all discourse?

The two readings by Derrida and Foucault, in their very different tonalities and aims—Foucault's being limited to a few pages at the end of a long book, whereas Derrida would continue his reading in a much more patient way in *Of Grammatology*, where Lévi-Strauss's theories of writing, violence, and the origin of sociality are resituated in what is now called "the age of Rousseau"—are undoubtedly made possible by an profound and constitutive ambivalence inside Lévi-Strauss own work: the project of retrieving that which is about to be lost in modern culture, and the acknowledgment that the "primitive" is only an ethnocentric illusion; the desire to constitute a science of myth, and the acknowledgment that our sciences of man do not break with mythopoetics and mythologics, but perhaps bring the intertwining of mythos and logos to its fulfillment. Derrida summarizes: "Turned toward the lost or impossible presence of the absent origin, this structuralist thematic of broken immediacy is therefore the saddened, negative, nostalgic, guilty, Rousseauian side of the thinking of play whose other side would be Nietzschean affirmation, that is the joyous affirmation of the play of the world and of the innocence of becoming, the affirmation of a world of signs without fault, without truth, and without origin which is offered to an active interpretation" (292). The final lines of *The Order of Things*, where Foucault speculates on the possible undoing of the modern episteme, appear to locate themselves squarely within this alternative (although Foucault would soon move on to other positions): "If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do more than sense the possibility—without knowing either what its form will be or what it promises—were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought once did, at the end of the eighteenth century, then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn at the edge of the sea" (387). As Derrida notes, it cannot simply be a question of choosing between these two options, between Rousseau and Nietzsche, and the rest of his philosophical trajectory was in one sense dedicated to the uncovering of the root of this problem in the abyssal condition of metaphysics, whereas Foucault would turn toward a genealogical historicizing of all such attitudes, including his own. This brief moment, in 1966, their respective trajectories came close, although the proximity was perhaps an illusion from the start.

No matter how we finally come to judge both of these stances and all those who would follow from them, no matter how contradictory, hesitant, and inconclusive they may be, they are however both inscribed in an interminable dialog with the "event" of structural anthropology and cannot be understood without it. This is why this page may indeed be turned, but never torn out of the book of modern philosophy. •

The above text is an edited version of a talk given at Södertörn University, November 28, 2008, on the occasion of Claude Lévi-Strauss's 100th birthday.

Notes

1. Marcel Hénaff, *Claude Lévi-Strauss and the Making of Structural Anthropology*, trans. Mary Baker (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). For a recent overview of the entire structuralist movement, see François Dosse, *History of Structuralism*, trans. Deborah Glassman (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).
2. This melancholy tone and the nostalgia for the past that permeates Lévi-Strauss's work has been studied in great detail in a recent doctoral thesis at Gothenburg University, Christina Schmift, *Nostalgisk längtan och iskallt förnuft* (Institutionen för idéhistoria och vetenskapsteori, 2007).
3. Georges Bataille, "Un livre humain, un grand livre," *Critique*, nr. 105, February 1956.
4. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of Human Sciences*, trans. anonymous (New York: Random House, 1970). All further citations with pagination from this edition.
5. The true source of T*he Order of Things* is in fact Foucault's translation of Kant's *Anthropology*, and the long preface to the translation that remained unpublished for a long time, but which now has been released both in French and English. For a discussion, see my "Governance and Rebellion: Foucault as Reader of Kant and the Greeks," *SITE* 22–23, 2008.
6. The text was subsequently published in *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), trans. by Alan Bass as *Writing and Difference* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978). All further page references are to this edition. It could be argued that this particular text is what more than anything else produced a strange philosophical mirage entitled "poststructuralism," which in its turn has led many to understand the work of thinkers as diverse and in many respects completely opposed as Derrida, Foucault, Lyotard, and Deleuze, as if they were simply a series of "anti-scientific" responses to the scientist claims of early structuralism. The truth of the matter is of course that their respective trajectories originated long before the quarrel of the mid '60s: Derrida as well as Lyotard begin in the early 1950's as readers of Husserl, although they read him very differently, whereas Deleuze starts of with Hume and British empiricism, and Foucault with psychopathology and existential psychoanalysis. From the point of view of philosophical substance, it would make much more sense to locate them all in within a complex dialog with phenomenology. It is indeed also true that their paths in different ways later would intersect with "structuralism," but only in order to subsequently continue in their own tangential directions, and the imposition of a false unity through the rubric "poststructuralism" cannot but produce complete confusion (not to speak of the strange epithet "neo-structuralism," which makes even less sense).
7. *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, trans. James Bell, John von Sturmer, and Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), 8.