



Doc's Kingdom



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Elizabeth A. Povinelli

After the Last Man: Images and Ethics of Becoming Otherwise

Politics and art, like forms of knowledge, construct “fictions,” that is to say *material* rearrangements of signs and images, relationships between what is seen and what is said, between what is done and what can be done ... They draft maps of the visible, trajectories between the visible and the sayable, relationships between modes of being, modes of saying, and modes of doing and making.

—Jacques Rancière, *The Distribution of the Sensible*¹

Huddled within one of the most influential theories of human desire and the destiny of democracy is an image of history and its future. This image is of a horizon. In lectures delivered at the École Pratique des Hautes Études from 1933 to 1939, Alexandre Kojève argued that the horizon of universal human recognition (“democracy”) was already in the nature of human desire but, paradoxically, had to be achieved through concrete struggles that intensified political life. These struggles were dependent on and waged against the background of human finitude. Yet, at the end of these battles, when the horizon had been breached, the world and the humans within it would be a form of the undead.

What *was* the future of this image? And what is its future now? Is it “huddled within,” or is it the architectural framework on which affective and institutional futures were built and now face us? What other imagistic architecture of human being and politics might have made an alternative history and future of political action? Here I extend a set of thoughts first published in a previous essay on a very different image and grammar of social and political life—the bag and embagination.² What would happen if we replaced the transcendental architecture of the horizon with the immanent architecture of embagination? And how is embagination not replacing other images of immanent becoming—the fold and the rhizome—but rather confronting them.

1.

We can begin with the fall of a wall and a set of proclamations that followed. That is, the difference between the fall of the Berlin Wall and claims about the meaning of this

End of History and the Last Man (1992), Fukuyama asserted that the fall of the Berlin Wall demonstrated that “a remarkable consensus concerning the legitimacy of liberal democracy as a system of government had emerged throughout the world over the past few years, as it conquered rival ideologies like hereditary monarchy, fascism, and most recently communism.”³ For Fukuyama, liberal democracy—we might also say “neoliberal capitalism”—constituted the “end point of mankind’s ideological evolution” and the “final form of human government.”⁴ As such, it marked the “end of history” and the emergence of “the last man.”

Fukuyama was a student of Allan Bloom and a disciple of Leo Strauss, two prominent intellectual leaders of the neoconservative movement in the US. But to understand what is at stake in Fukuyama’s proclamation about the “end of history,” we must travel across the Atlantic and back in time. Fukuyama’s reading of this material collapse depends on the philosopher Alexandre Kojève’s reading of Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*.⁵ Interpreting Hegel through Marx, Nietzsche, and Heidegger, Kojève argued that the history of humankind would come to an end when equal recognition had been universalized in the form of liberal democracy. Why? Because the desire for recognition is what differentiates human and nonhuman animals — what defines the human *qua* human—and constitutes the motive force of history.

Much depends on the difference between animal and human desire. The animal—and the animal part of man—becomes aware of itself as it experiences a desire, such as the desire for food, which is the consequence of finding itself in a state of hunger. This state of hunger creates in the animal a sentiment of self, a rudimentary “I” that says, “I am hungry.” In this sense, desire is empty: desire is the experience of lack. This experience of emptiness is, however, a positive force, for it rouses and disquiets being, moving it from passivity into action. In other words, desire creates in human and nonhuman animals a “sentiment of self”: an awareness of the existence of the self as an “I” at the moment when the emptiness of desire asserts itself over being.

But whereas animal desire satisfies itself merely by consuming what is in the world, human desire looks beyond what is already at hand. For Kojève, the differentiating mark of the human—what makes man a *human* animal; his “anthropological machinery,” to paraphrase Agamben—is that his desire doesn’t seek something that already exists in the world but something that doesn’t *yet* exist.⁶ Human desire is doubly empty. It is awakened by the experience of a lack, but the form of satisfaction it seeks goes beyond the given world of things, forms, affects, and so forth. What might this nonexistent object of desire be? According to Kojève, it can only be another human’s desire, equally as empty and as ravenous for satisfaction. This is the atomic kernel of the battle for recognition: the desire is to be the object of another’s desire. I want to be what

you want. What I want is to have you want “me.” And “me” is what I desire to be in the world, my vision of the world. You want me to do the same, and thus there is a battle over whose vision will prevail. It is this duel between the ravenous empty dualities of desire that leads to the intensification of politics and is the motive force of human history.

From this simple diagram of desire and recognition comes the material dialectical unfolding of the world of liberal democracy—or neoliberal capitalism—which begins in the confrontation that produces the master-slave relationship and ends in the universalization of equal recognition. The battle of recognition, which is a battle to be the object of the other’s desire, is what for Kojève intensifies political and social life and thrusts the human being towards the horizon to which human history has always been leading—namely, a form of governance in which recognition is mutual and universal. Most importantly, Kojève did what Kojève theorized. He put his theory into practice through specific bureaucratic battles to institutionally shape the political and economic world of Europe and the US.⁷ Kojève *materialized* a theoretical image (imaginary) by seducing others into thinking his desire was their desire—and that this desire was the truth of the future in the present and not merely one image among many of human being and history.

But if the dominant image of this theory of desire and democracy begins as a horizon, it ends as something very different. If liberal democracy is the *horizon* of desire already inscribed in the fight for recognition (the orientation and end of human becoming, and thus the end of history itself), then when liberal democracy has been universally achieved, human historical becoming collapses into a satisfied human state of being. The horizon then becomes what I will call a *surround*, a form of enclosure without a wall or gate. The surround is without an opening. It is an infinity of homogeneous space and time. It is an “everywhere at the same time” and a “nowhere else.” One can go here or there in the surround but it really makes no difference because there are no meaningful distinctions left to orient oneself—to determine where one goes or what one believes or holds true. To paraphrase Nietzsche, there is no shepherd or herd in the surround. Everyone wants the same because they are the same. Even the hope of the madhouse, as the place where difference is interned, is lost because difference no longer exists.⁸

But when I say “the human in the surround,” I misspeak. When humankind finally reaches the horizon it has been producing through the battle for recognition, the thing that emerges is not the same thing that had created it. What had distinguished humans from nonhuman animals changes. The thing that inhabits the surround is not an animal. But it is also not human. The Last Man is the end of Man. The surround is inhabited by what Agamben calls a “nonhuman human,” something that seems quite similar to the contemporary televisual obsession with the undead—a kind of being which is deceased and yet behaves as if it were alive. Kojève and his students understood this.

In losing the horizon of desire, man became a kind of post-man. When the wall falls and the horizon collapses, man receives the package he had sent himself when first starting out on his journey. But the recipient is as foreign to the human who sent the package as the human was from the animal.

In debating what was the sensuous and affective nature of the last man left in history's wake, Kojève and his students demonstrated how thoroughly they themselves had become dominated by their own dominant image. Kojève described the affect of the Last Man as satisfaction, which he distinguished absolutely from enjoyment. Raymond Queneau tried to capture the existential state of satisfaction in his novels, and Georges Bataille attempted to find some way of intensifying life in the surround of satisfaction through blood and sacrifice, entrails and excrement. But rather than determining the sensuous affect of this state of being in the surround, Kojève, his bureaucratic colleagues, and his students used theory, literature, and bureaucratic practice to materialize the image as a circuitry connecting institutions, significations, and affects in such a way that they produce hopes and expectations, disappointments and rage—and perhaps most important of all for a critical politics—senses of justice and the good. And lest we think our political imaginaries have transcended this image, we can turn to Lee Edelman's scathing critique of the film *Children of Men*, which assumes that without the future as a horizon of being, figured in the promissory note of the child, all pleasure and drive would collapse like so much air in a punctured balloon.⁹

And here I think we can see how a dominant image of human history, and human *political intensification* in particular, has come to dominate human becoming. It does not matter whether the horizon is out there in a reachable or unreachable form. It does not matter whether the horizon is there before we start our journey or is constituted from the activity of walking. It does not matter whether the horizon is figured as a wall, a frontier, a checkpoint, or a fence. The human production of an image of human becoming and being as a future in which a limit—or condition—has been achieved has led to a reduction of our capacity to imagine alternative images of human becoming.

While we might not agree with Rancière's aesthetic periodizations, his understanding of the politics of aesthetics as the entanglements of power and visibility and of sensuous embodiment, of affects and energies, is right. Images of history have a habituated *feeling* to them.

The habituated affects of the image of a horizon were on full display in two material collapses that occurred decades after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Dominated by the image of the horizon of history, what wonder then that 9/11 and 2008 were *exciting*, not merely *dangerous*, moments? Perhaps history had not ended, perhaps a limit, a front, a back, a horizon, and a border had miraculously appeared in the "clash of civilizations" and the crash of the financial markets, and with them an opening, a gate, a direction, a movement of becoming. Perhaps universal recognition either had not arrived in the form

of Western democracy, or this system had a radical new context in which to unfurl its form, meaning, and legitimacy. Maybe we were not in a *surround* but were instead surrounded by something that could be overcome. Maybe something could still be done. Note how these questions do not disturb the political imaginary of recognition so much as they merely change its clock.

Events since 9/11 and 2008 have not supported this hope. Being remains enclosed, if not by a political form of government (democracy), then by an economic form of compulsion. Celebrations of democratic spring across the Arab world were soon followed by the installation of technocratic rulers in Italy and Greece, with global pundits celebrating the ability to bypass the democratic function. And in China, the supposed inevitable conjoint of liberal market and government remains a receding horizon as the country's economic power seems ceaselessly to expand. Rather than neoliberal finance unveiling its internal limits in a global market, democracy has all but given way throughout Europe and has never seemed to be needed in China. If democracy is the back of history, there seems to be no front to neoliberal being. How do we think about the sources of the political otherwise when being seems trapped in an enclosure rather than having a front or a back? Where are the sensuous modes of becoming within the global circulations of being that have defined modern politics and markets, if not in a *horizon*?

2.

For some time now scholars have been thinking about the concept of circulation in relationship to the making and extinguishing of social worlds. Why do some forms move or get moved along? What are the formal/figurative demands placed on forms as the condition of their circulation in and across social space? What are the materialities of form that emerge from, and brace, these movements, and that make "things" palpable and recognizable inside the contexts into which they are inserted? And finally, how is social space itself the effect of competing forms and formations of circulation?

Given the profound influence of my indigenous colleagues and friends on my thinking, it is no surprise that the dominant image of circulation I have is of a stringbag, or *wargarthi* in Emiyenggel, an indigenous language of the northwest coast of Australia. A stringbag is formed through a reflexive, dense to semi-dense weave. It is capable of dynamic expansion and contraction and has a load-sensitive shaping. The stringbag has a formal mouth but the body is composed of openings that can anchor new weavings or ensnare objects. (The same basic weave and technology is used to make fishnets.) And, depending on their material composition, these bags are likely to decompose in different ways under different conditions. In other words, the stringbag is a mode of circulation insofar as it is a *reflexive form* with *figurative material force* that constitutes and obligates everything in and between it, and yet it is shaped by that which it tries to contain and can be reshaped by tying new strings and anchors into its body. It is the stringbag I

see in Tomas Saraceno's architectural environments and Mark Lombardi's drawings of the social networks that compose modern power.

But bags are only experienced as bags—as something capable of holding something else—when the things that fit into them fit in a more or less compatible way. Thus we might think of the functionality of bags as dependent on the things that will enter them. But what if we thought of embagination as the process by which things themselves come into being and then come to have a residence, a domicile? What if the formations of a specific form of reflexive movement were the conditions in which new life forms emerged and found domicile—though at the price of extinguishing other forms?

In his *Playing and Reality*, the British psychoanalyst Donald W. Winnicott describes the case of a young boy of seven who had “become obsessed with everything to do with string.”¹⁰ Not string per se, but what string seemed to allow him to overcome—the separation of objects due to a diminution of the forces that had previously held them together. Whenever his parents would enter a room, “they were liable to find that he had joined together chairs and tables; and they might find a cushion, for instance, with string joining it to the fireplace.” The parents only became disturbed, rather than simply bemused, when a “new feature” of his tethering practices emerged. “He had recently tied a string around his sister's neck.”¹¹

For Winnicott, these elaborate webs were “transitional objects” that manifested the young boy's denial of maternal separation.¹² His patient used string to reintegrate material that was on the threshold of disintegration and to confine the forces responsible for the disintegration. Thus the string tied around his baby sister, the object that posed the first serious threat to his bond with his mother.¹³

Winnicott first became aware of the psychic side of the boy's obsession during a “squiggle game.” In his work with children, Winnicott would draw a squiggle and ask the child to complete the drawing. In the represented space of Winnicott's notebook, the young boy's creations looked like webs, but in the lived space of the boy's home the webs were more like badly constructed bags. He *embagged* space as he wove together new object forms and dependencies, hoping to save a world he had already lost. In the process he conditioned how things could move in and through this new world; how things—such as himself—could be held in it; and whether things—such as himself or his sister—could exist in it. What resulted was neither what had been nor what currently was. Nothing he did could undo the damage done by the arrival of his sister. But in trying, the boy created new habitations, new ways of being held. He did not mean to do this, but his refusal was a creative act. It provided an environment for alternative possibilities of life. Cushions were no longer able to be manipulated, visibly or tangibly, independent of the fireplace. The fireplace now had the cushions as one of its internal organs. The cushions had the

bricks. Winnicott's job was to normalize these possible trajectories—impose on them the proper image of singularities, difference, and development.

The thresholds of being and separation that the boy saw and the new thresholds of being he created are the same thresholds that many adults come to forget, repress, or attempt to destroy—or perhaps they give them a clinical diagnostic such as the persistent denial of reality. Adults accept a given assemblage as natural to the world, and experience this assemblage as a pre-existing collection of objects and subjects independent of the embagged space that has created it. As such, it is little wonder that many adults see these object/subjects as the anchor around which other things are tied. But the boy had an intuition, or an irritation, that the cushion and fireplace were not there first, nor the string after, but are themselves effects of a kind of tethering whose conditions he does not understand and whose immanent undoing he is equally at a loss to explain. The boy knows that the world he has inhabited—which has securely held him—will no longer be habitable if the underlying woven pattern takes on a new form. So he uses string as a form of communication in an older sense of *intercourse*—a *reflexive form* with *figurative force* that mutually constitutes and obligates everything in and between it. His sister probably experienced this intercourse as a kind of stranglehold. But the boy finds himself in a bind. From his perspective, her arrival has created a new circuit of care that is suffocating him. He knows it takes force to hold something in place. The boy sees his options as either to strangle or be suffocated.

Winnicott may have thought his young patient was using his strings to slowly reconcile himself to the natural progression of maturation. But the young boy intuited that demanding environments are not held in place by the natural order of things. They are historical arrangements (*agencements*) that depend on a host of historically formed interlocking concepts, materials, and forces that include human and nonhuman agencies and concepts. Because we are merely one mode of being in one location of being, we cannot and will never be able to understand or explain the conditions that make up our world or what causes its immanent undoing. Thus, as we try to secure it—or to remake it—we create and extinguish. And, like this young boy, the reflexive movements shaping space nonetheless have a figurative force. Our spaces sag, impede, irritate, or scare others.

In other words, in trying to secure or disturb a world, we also do two additional things. On the one hand, we mark the itinerary of our desire as an obligation to something rather than a battle for recognition for something, as a composition and decomposition, but without the dominating image of a horizon. On the other hand, we extinguish one world in the very act of trying to keep another world in place, to return to

this place, or to create new places. And this second point is crucial: the topologies we compose to hold and give domicile always have the figure of the sister as their ethical counterpoint.

3.

Since the late 1960s a number of images have challenged the dominance of the dialectical horizon—especially Deleuze’s image of the fold and Guattari’s image of the rhizome. Deleuze saw the image of the fold as combating a model of subjectivity and being that contrasted forms of interiority and exteriority, or placed them in dialectical tension. For Deleuze, the interior of being does not come up to an edge, border, or frontier that defines what is outside itself. Rather, interiority is itself complexly composed of “forces of the outside.” All interiority can be understood as *extimite* (“extimité”), a term Lacan coined in order to describe the intimate exterior.¹⁴ Deleuze extends the concept of the extimite outside human subjectivity, making it a general condition of all entities. In other words, at the heart of an assemblage—the subject-objects that the parents of Winnicott’s patient assumed to preexist their child’s string play, or the subject-objects that will emerge from it—is this folding of the external into the intimate internal. In some way the rhizome simply provides an organic foundation to, and elaboration of, the image of the fold.

Unlike arboreal images, a rhizome can be severed and yet still be productive. But most importantly for Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome represents radical potentiality existing on the plane of pure immanence. “Unlike the graphic arts, drawing, or photography, unlike tracings, the rhizome pertains to a map that must be produced, constructed, a map that is always detachable, connectable, reversible, modifiable, and has multiple entranceways and exits and its own lines of flight.”¹⁵ There is no horizon simultaneously within the rhizome and towards which it inexorably moves.

Insofar as this image conjures the hope for a radical potentiality that exists on the plane of pure immanence, it is in line with Deleuze’s long engagement with Spinoza—more specifically, his reworking of Spinoza’s concepts of *conatus* and *affectus*. Deleuze is not the only one who has reevaluated these key concepts of Spinoza. Weaving together the writings of Deleuze and Irigaray, Rosie Braidotti has noted the “implicit positivity” of the “notion of desire as *conatus*,” and through it a new form of politics.¹⁶ For Deleuze and Guattari, this implicit positivity dwells not merely in all actual things, but also in all potential things—the body with organs and the body-without-organs within every organic arrangement.¹⁷ And in his effort to develop a positive form of biopower, Roberto

Esposito has recently linked Spinoza's notion of *conatus* to his claim in the *Political Treatise* that "every natural thing has as much right from Nature as it has power to exist and to act."¹⁸

It is exactly here that the image of the fold and rhizome have lost their political nerve and we return to our little boy madly tying together various pieces of his domicile in a perhaps desperate attempt to return it to its previous form and in that form find a dwelling. Note that Esposito places the emphasis on "the intrinsic modality that life assumes in the expression of its own unrestrainable power to exist" rather than on what might be a more Nietzschean reading, namely, the relative power that *restrains* the existence and actions of various bioformations in a given field of often opposing striving actors (actants).¹⁹ What if one striving potentiating meets and opposes another? Can progressive politics avoid this question—and thus the problem of extinguishment? How would the sign "progressive" read if it were understood as always actively maintaining, producing, and *extinguishing* worlds? In its refusal of the repressive hypothesis, how has progressive politics avoided the politics of its own practice's extinguishment, and in avoiding these politics, lost its ethical depth?

The problem is especially acute if we do not return to the image of the horizon already within us that nonetheless necessitates a building. This image of the horizon elevates into transcendental truth a kind of affect (a combative desire for the desire of the other), a form of life (universal recognition), and a shape of governance (liberal democracy). All is adjudicated from the perspective of these cardinal measures. The fold and rhizome were meant as a politics and ethics grounded on radical immanence—the becoming community—in which "immanence is no longer immanence to anything other than itself."²⁰ Pure immanence is a life—not to life or the life. All forms of life are immanent in this sense and all life is a form of life. This is what Winnicott's patient intuited and desired: *a* life, not life. But his sister sat to one side. From her side of the room, his attempt to potentiate a life threatened her own, or more precisely, the form of life that was her life at that point. How much more intense might the conflicting embaginations be when the life that is a life is more fully formed, elaborated, self-aware? When the girl is the boy become a man? When the seedling is the plant that becomes the rainforest that my friend dreams of finding amid a growing web of deforestation from multinational mining?

What are the ethical grounds of these conflicting forces of embagination against a background of finitude that is without transcendental value? In my previous essay on routes and worlds I tried to suggest how the material heterogeneity within any one sphere, and passing between any two spheres, allows new worlds to emerge and new networks to be added. This heterogeneity emerges in part because of the excesses and deficits arising from incommensurate and often competing interests within any given social space. But these heterogeneities and their "interests" press materiality toward

different fabricated futures. How can we imagine pure immanence and radical potentiality without becoming blind to the extinguishments of forms of life that every actual world entails?

- 1. Jacques Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: The Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (London and New York: Continuum, 2004), 39.
- 2. See Elizabeth A. Povinelli, "Routes/Worlds," *e-flux journal* 27 (September 2011),
- 3. Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1993), xi.
- 4. *Ibid.*, xi.
- 5. Alexandre Kojève, *An Introduction to a Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. James H. Nichols (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University press, 1980).
- 6. Giorgio Agamben, *The Open: Man and Animal*, trans. Kevin Attell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- 7. After the Second World War, Kojève left his position at the École Pratique des Hautes Études and took up a position in the French Ministry of Economic Affairs, where he was one of the chief ideologues for the European Common Market, the bureaucratic predecessor of the European Union. See Dominique Auffret, *Alexander Kojève, La Philosophie, l'état, la fin de l'Histoire* (Paris: Grasset, 1993).
- 8. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, trans. Adrian Del Caro (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Given Fukuyama's mutual admiration of Kojève and Leo Strauss, it is important to note that these two disagreed about the inherent difference between philosophy and politics and the goal of mutual recognition. See Leo Strauss, *On Tyranny* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000). Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 9. Donald W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (London: Routledge, 1982), 17.
- 10. *Ibid.*
- 11. Donald W. Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena," *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 34 (1953): 89-97.
- 12. *Playing and Reality*, 19.
- 13. In an essay on the extimite, Jacques-Alain Miller describes the intimate as parasitical on the externality of the Other. See Jacques-Alain Miller, "Extimity," *The Symptom* 9 (2008).
- 14. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 21.
- 15. Rosie Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (London: Polity Press, 2006), 150.
- 16. Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Sean Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988).
- 17. Roberto Esposito, *Bios: Biopolitics and Philosophy*, trans. Timothy Campbell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 185.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 185-6.
- 20 Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on A Life*, trans Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 27.

Frederik Jameson

The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System

'Art Naïf' and the Admixture of Worlds

Just as surely as *The Perfumed Nightmare* (1977) is scarcely to be thought of as paradigmatic of Third-World film in general, so also Third-World cinema itself is rarely today defended as a space in which models for alternate cinema are to be sought. Indeed the very term Third World seems to have become an embarrassment in a period in which the realities of the economic have seemed to supplant the possibilities of collective struggle, in which human agency and politics seem to have been dissolved by the global corporate institutions we call late capitalism. The promise of alternate forms in the cinema of that now distant period we call the 60s (but which covered the 70s as well, in chronological retrospect), included the promise of alternate ways of life, alternate collective and communal structures, that were expected to emerge from a variety of struggles against economic, military, and cultural imperialism (and in some cases, those of China, Cuba and Vietnam, for example, this promise overlapped with the Second-World project of the construction of socialism). Meanwhile, for many of us, a degree of fantasy invested the hope, then called Third-Worldism, that precapitalist societies who came to modernization only in relatively recent times would somehow be able to overleap everything crippling for the industrial West in its experience of capitalism and to move into the future with a measure of cultural originality, drawing on the existence of precapitalist and collective social relations for the invention of historically new, non-Western and non-individualistic, postcapitalistic kinds.

The scenario was not a new one, and had already been played through in the nineteenth century. Marx was himself interested in the collective possibilities of the Russian mir, but those who placed their hopes in dialectically uneven development were opposed by the more orthodox Mensheviks, for whom capitalism, and the commodification of labor power, had to be complete before socialism could be considered a practical possibility. Something of the same set of oppositions now seems on the agenda for late capitalism and the new world system, where the autarchy of the socialist countries and the cultural and social possibilities of Third-World or post-colonial areas have seemed to evaporate under the dreary requirements of modernization and the balanced budget (or the Debt). Third-World 'culture', however, in the narrow sense, has been gratefully absorbed by the international entertainment industry, and has seemed to furnish vibrant but politically acceptable images of social pluralism for the late capitalist big city.

Under these circumstances, clearly, Third-World film -technically modified in its evolution out of a militantly 'imperfect cinema' (Garcia Espinosa) - no longer makes the same kinds of symbolic claims on us as its great predecessors in the formal inventiveness

and the political ferment of the 60s, when form was also an extraaesthetic issue, and what you did to movies and movie-making was also expected to have its impact on changing the world. But these were claims that also asked to be validated in terms of the originality of the form itself; and the effort was thus menaced by two kinds of failure. It could be crushed politically, as universally in the Latin America of the 1970s; or the filmic experiment itself could fail to take, or could be reabsorbed and co-opted by an enlarged and more ecumenical mainstream (or classic Hollywood) cinema. It is therefore a symptomatic moment, and something like the symbolic end of an era, when in 1985 David Bordwell and Janet Staiger publicly review the 'alternate modes of film practice' and conclude that none of them have ultimately fulfilled their promise:

apart from the dominant and long-lived Hollywood style, only a few other general modes of film practice have existed. Because of the world-wide imitation of Hollywood's successful mode of production ... oppositional practices have generally not been launched on an industry-wide basis. No absolute, purealternative to Hollywood exists.

The argument is richly detailed and persuasive; but as a political or historical symptom, it is of a piece with current market rhetoric in which, also, alternatives to Western economy are pronounced flawed, contradictory, failures or non-existent. Ultimately, what is at stake in both these (properly postmodern) positions is a feeling about daily life or the life world itself: that after all is said and done, this particular life world is somehow natural, that efforts to live in other ways are misguided (or occasions for a properly Utopian violence); that our social values demand a 'representational realism' (of the Hollywood or market type) which is a disabused acknowledgment of the perennity of the status quo. (Equivalents to these aesthetic, economic and social positions can meanwhile be found on all the other levels of contemporary social life, such as the psychic and the sexual, or the penal, or the institutional.) The so-called crisis of Marxism turns out rather to have involved the death of anarchism and its Utopian spirit. It is not revived, of course, by complaints, or by the taking of a thought; the preceding remarks rather attempt to characterize features of the intellectual atmosphere in which we all live today, with a view towards determining our 'current situation'.

That is the situation, indeed, in which we need to invent some new questions to ask of Third-World cinema, and of the Third World generally, as the last surviving social space from which alternatives to corporate capitalist daily life and social relations are to be sought. The fear is, to be sure, that the West will have been so successful in destroying radical political movements in the Third World as to leave only the sterile passions of nationalism and religious fundamentalism (and this is the sense in which, as I've argued elsewhere, these last may also ironically be counted among the current forms of the post-modern). 'Otherness', meanwhile, is a peculiarly booby-trapped and self-defeating concept; and the slogan of 'difference', while politically impeccable in all the obvious

senses, is formalistic and empty of concrete social and historical specification - where it does not, indeed, relax and lend itself to the usual late capitalist celebration of multicultural pluralism. (It has, in short, all the ambiguity of an essentially liberal, rather than radical, value.)

My own feeling is that new forms of political art - if not a postmodern political art, then at least a political art within postmodernity are so far to be felt dimly stirring in the general area of the didactic. By weakening the older forms of aesthetic autonomy, by breaking down the barriers, not merely between high and low culture, but also between literary language and other kinds of discourse, by dissolving the fictional into a whole immense world of representations and image-spectacles which are henceforth as real as any referent, the postmodern situation has, perhaps unwittingly, released new possibilities, and in particular enabled new and different uses of the art object, owing to the heterogeneity of its contents - some 'intrinsic' in the older aestheticizing sense, some 'extrinsic' in ways that go well beyond the older conceptions of collage, montage, cinefrite or newspaper novel. As an astute observer noted, we are not averse to learning things (facts, recipes, history) out of postmodern books and even out of postmodern novels, in a readerly impurity hitherto taboo and excluded from the practice of the high modernist classics. Reading having been redrawn in contemporary theory, perhaps it is now time to restructure our conception of learning itself. If fantasy is epistemological, as Deleuze has argued in the *Anti-Oedipus*, indeed if narrative is itself a form of cognition, then an obvious next step lies in the systematic harnessing of the energies of those hitherto irrational activities for cognitive purposes. The conception of cognitive mapping I have proposed elsewhere was intended to include that possibility as well, and to be prescriptive as well as descriptive. The idea has, at least on my view, the advantage of involving concrete content (imperialism, the world system, subalternity, dependency and hegemony), while necessarily involving a program of formal analysis of a new kind (since it is centrally defined by the dilemma of representation itself). Even as an exclusively retrospective and analytical instrument - critical and historical rather than speculative and productive - 'cognitive mapping' in this sense can be judged on its results and findings. But since it has been affirmed as an activity of individual and collective subjects in general (I have tried to associate it closely with Althusser's classic redefinition of ideology), it is obviously encouraging to find the concept of mapping validated by conscious artistic production, and to come upon this or that new work, which, like a straw in the wind, independently seems to have conceived of the vocation of art itself as that of inventing new geotopical cartographies.

Such is therefore the interest of *The Perfumed Nightmare* (which subsumes its many other varied and rich interests): that cartography and circumnavigation have a special meaning for this film-maker is documented by his most recent project (as far as I know, unfinished at present writing), which takes as its theme the very fact and invention of circumnavigation itself. *Magellan's Slave* (alternately entitled *Memories of Overdevelopment*, a title that as we shall see would hold good equally well for all of

Kidlat's films) is reconstructed from the hypothesis of contemporary historians that the slave, whom Magellan purchased in Seville but who was captured in the Indonesian archipelago, seems to have spoken a language not unrelated to present-day Tagalog; if so, presumably he originated in what are today the Philippines. But since Magellan died on Mactan island in the Archipelago, his slave was the first human being to circumnavigate the globe. Needless to say, he is played by Kidlat himself.

Tahimik is first and foremost a clown: something rare enough, which marks his filmic kinship with Chaplin or with Jacques Tati, and underscores his essential distance from all contemporary filmmaking, whether Third World or Hollywood alike. Philippine cinema has a vibrant tradition of social realism; the late Lino Brocka was only the most well-known of any number of film-makers who can draw on the unique resources of this national situation, in which a quintessential urban agglomeration finds itself internally and externally related to an idyllic tropical countryside in which older forms of village life persist. Their production is then subtended by a long and durable tradition of revolt and guerrilla warfare. Whatever its overt politics and its specific messages, the co-existence of artistic production and political struggle cannot but be stimulating and fertile for the former (and perhaps for the latter as well).

In *The Perfumed Nightmare*, Kidlat plays a jeepney driver - jeepnies being rebuilt and brightly painted jeeps that serve as buses, and in this case as the transport linking the village to the metropolis -who, in his enthusiasm for the US moon landing, has organized a Werner von Braun fan club among the village children. When he eventually wins a trip to Paris to see modernization for himself, he finds older markets being supplanted and destroyed by hideous concrete supermarkets, not without a certain resemblance to atomic power-stations. At length, he renounces his enthusiasm for Western technology, and returning home, rememorates the martyrdom of his father, who was killed by American soldiers during their occupation of the Philippines. But this account endows a series of episodes and gags (reminiscent of Eisenstein's original conception of the 'montage of attractions') with a misleading semblance of narrative unity.

As for politics, the film, assembled almost a decade before the collapse of the dictatorship, contains only a handful of tactful and discreet allusions to state power, in the shape of police or army uniforms at the outskirts of the image. Indeed, I will want to argue shortly that the relevance of Tahimik's production for the contemporary (or post-contemporary) situation lies precisely in the way in which he eschews the political for the economic, and the thematics of power for that of reification. Nonetheless, there remains in this film a fundamental substitute and 'place-holder' (*tenant-lieu*) for the absent dictator and his regime; something like the ultimate reference itself, which, in a peculiar allegorical reversal, is now called upon to stand in for the signifier and, by taking its place, somehow to represent a phenomenon which was its own effect and secondary expression (indeed, we have argued elsewhere in this book, particularly in Part One, that the force of allegory seems to depend on just such indirection and systematic displacement from

one level to another). In the present instance, the allegorical 'substitute' is in fact American imperialism (itself the cause and origin of the Marcos regime), inscribed mythically, as I will show later on, in the person of the murdered father. But this peculiarly involuted and self-referential allegorical reversal enables the film's crucial move from imperialism as outright political domination and gunboat power to imperialism as cultural domination in a far more contemporary media sense. What is significant about this move is that it makes a link - or 'bridge', to use the film's own symbolic language (see below) - between power and culture without assimilating either to the other in the ontological fashion of First-World theory, which somehow always feels compelled to 'decide' which comes first and where the fundamental or dominant instance is to be located. In Tahimik's episodic rhythms, these two realities remain autonomous, and are simply juxtaposed, side by side or in sequence, without any particular priority being assigned by the form itself or suggested by narrative or causal perspectives.

As for Kidlat's more basic political credentials, they are secured, or so one would have thought, by his second film, *Turumba* (1983), which offers a virtual textbook demonstration of the penetration of capital into a traditional village, and the transformation of collective relations by the market and money relationships. It is a process symbolized by the impact of the 'cash nexus' on the religious ritual designated by the title, and turns on the change visited by production for the market on the musician-performer traditionally responsible for this annual event. It is a festival in which what are separated in modern societies as culture and religion have not yet been dissociated, and whose beauty the tourist-spectators who are this film's Western public can still distantly glimpse and reconstruct from behind the interposed medium of the camera and its travelogue language. Here already, therefore, formal elements that we will find more ambitiously deployed and developed in *The Perfumed Nightmare* can be enumerated: a secondary symbolism marked as such, and the co-optation of co-optation involved in admitting and ostentatiously foregrounding the inauthenticity of the Western spectator and of the travelogue spectacle. Here handicraft is the vehicle for what never changes and is yet changed irrevocably, beyond all recognition. A German touristbusinesswoman likes some of the decorations used in the festival and orders more. Family and then village itself must be enlisted in the gradual mass-production of these items, which eventually destroy the cyclical or ritual time of the village and prevent the organizer from wasting any more of it on the festival which was the source of the objects in question in the first place. Even the crudeness of the final irony -as their reward the manufacturer and his son are given a trip to Europe, to the Munich Olympics of 1972, the Third World visiting the First at the very moment in which the latter is about to be violently impacted by the former - is consistent with Kidlat's aesthetic, in which a gesture toward language and representation (which must therefore designate itself as such) is preferable to the thing seemingly achieved and thereby mistaken for the real.

What remains real in the later film is the historic fact of the destructive effects of a new money economy. It is a fact that more 'modern' societies have once lived, long ago,

and have now forgotten, save in the form of empty slogans ('the penetration of capital') that stereotype themselves by living on without experiential meaning. But Turumba does not try to reinvent that, or to put us as subjects imaginatively back into a concrete situation of otherness in which we might fleetingly recapture this historically unique event. It does not even make an appeal to historical pathos; nor is its essential gaiety a frivolous or restorative matter either, but the face of an essential indifference, the icy disdain of farce for the fates of individual subjects, the joyous mask that covers a stoic refusal of complicity with the ego's life and death. What Turumba does, therefore, is not to commemorate the ancient catastrophe in any Benjaminian or historicist way, nor to represent it with the immediacy of the historical novel, but rather merely to designate its simple existence as a fact: you forgot it, you don't remember what it was like, or even that it happened, but it is still here, somewhere, still happening in one form or another, whether you remember it or not! This peculiar deixis -here is a phenomenon, in the richest philosophic sense of the word; it doesn't matter what you think of it, it is simply here -proves to have unusual pedagogical or didactic potentialities of what we may perhaps term a post-Brechtian kind. And it includes a paradoxical relationship to the public and the spectator by virtue of its very indifference to them.

The incisiveness and simplicity of Turumba's demonstration, however, preclude the richness of *The Perfumed Nightmare*, in which we not only get to Europe, but wander through the Third-World metropolis itself. Significantly, *Kidlat* is absent from his second, more completely rural film, something which must have disappointed viewers of the first, in which the epistemological properties of the clown were fully mobilized and put to work in the appropriate environment. As a film of this kind makes clear, the setting in motion of that objectworld demands a certain resistance; its tactile exteriors lend themselves to exploration and articulation by way of the elasticity of the clown's body. Chaplin's big city, and even more dramatically the virtually already postmodern Paris, the *societe-de-consommation* Gaullist Paris of Tati's *Playtime* (1967), in which the ungainliness of the protagonist elicits, like two surfaces slowly beginning to lean towards each other, the inhuman unloveliness of the glass walls and decor - these already begin to suggest the elective affinities between the modern clown and urban modernization itself: *Kidlat*'s machines, and above all his jeepney, but also the modernizing Europe of NATO and the Common Market -urbanizations spreading from Manila out into the villages, but also from the former European nation states out over new multinational customs unions and trade zones. That particular story, one feels like saying, no European or First-World writer or film-maker could tell, because it too fatally resembles the modernizing stories of an earlier and now old-fashioned era, the commodifications clumsily detected by the naturalist libidinal apparatus, the consumers' goods, the peasants, the prostitutes shifted back and forth through the narratives of Dreiser or Zola. Polls, sociological treatises, documentaries and economic forecasts are the genre in which such materials are now transmitted. Elegant representations of the more expensive television kind would fatally transform such examples into the

expectation of a thesis whose second shoe waits to drop, thereby unsettling an already uncomfortable viewing public. Only a mode of representation which is not uncomfortable with clumsiness could accommodate such social developments. Kidlat's home-made movies handle them very well indeed, as a bonus or by-product allowing us to reflect on our own generic discomfort much as Brecht thought his audience should spend some time mulling over the meaning of the actions represented in the play.

The same is true for the conceptual or philosophical content of this work, which one could imagine 'resolved' in very different ways from this, according to the respective aesthetic. 'Mediation', for example, is here symbolically designated by the picture of a bridge, and specifically of the little hump-backed stone bridges of the village, over which real and toy vehicles laboriously pass. As a 'concept', it has something to do with the relationship between cultural stages (Third and First Worlds); between the 'levels' of social life itself, not excluding the episodic heterogeneity of this film, which passes abruptly from technology to work, art to politics, anthropology to gentrification without smoothing over the traces or making the 'transitions' (the bridges) any less bumpy; between the past and the future, as well, and between confinement and freedom. In a representational work, all these awkward transitions would have to be concealed by a plausibly constructed plot along with mesmerizingly naturalized camerawork. In Eisenstein, their intersections, rebaptized montage in all of its senses, would be transformed, by violence and by fiat, into powerful slogans and statements, concrete relationships prestidigitated into 'dialectical' models. In Godard, meanwhile, who will here and throughout serve as the most enlightening First-World co-ordinate for rethinking Kidlat, the specific mediation would be projected onto the screen as an open problem - image and text side by side and incommensurable, unresolvable, but also irrepressible, and the pretext for nagging returns to antinomies which, repeated often enough, seem to turn into 'themes' of an old-fashioned literary type.

But Tahimik's 'bridges' also look like themes in the more oldfashioned sense of symbols (rather than the theoretical motifs that stud Godard's essay-films). The very archaic nature of these figures is in fact what saves them, for here, as in naif art generally, the gap between the image and the intended meaning lies open as innocently as in a child's or a schizophrenic drawing. This kind of symbol is therefore so pre-representational as to rejoin all of the most postmodern and poststructural strictures on the arbitrariness of the sign and the essentially allegorical nature of the symbol, the ineradicable gap between figuration and meaning, the impossibility of achieved representation, the generation of more and more text out of the unsynchronizable syncopation between the signifier and its signified. Here then the picture postcard of the bridge leads us further on into sheer space: the space of the village, and then the space of the bridge or transport between the village and Manila - figured by the jeepney that conveys passengers back and forth. At length, in a larger opening, this is not merely the bridge between the earth and the moon (along with the Werner von Braun fan clubs that celebrate it), but that more tangible bridge which the protagonist will at length cross

leading from Asia to Europe, from Third World to First and back, from Manila to Paris (and from Paris to the Rhine), and from a Philippino present to a traditional Parisian past itself in the process of being obliterated by its own Common Market future. All of these spaces are then in constant decomposition and modernization, including each other heterogeneously, in such a way that narrative progression becomes unthinkable, except as a bus ride, and we learn to substitute for it the discontinuous series of spatial exhibits that might be offered by a collection of snapshots, or by the old variety show implicit in the form of the clown's gags - that vaudeville 'montage of attractions' from which, as I've already mentioned, Eisenstein's own theory and practice ultimately derived in its own very different and distinctive way. There is, I think, a fable buried in this particular collection of episodes: it is the movement of disillusion that leads from the first enthusiasm for Western technologies -the conquest of the moon, the fan clubs - to their ultimate renunciation, after the experience of the real First World itself. But the meaning of this renunciation is ambiguous, as I will argue in a moment.

Yet the heterogeneous form of the sequence is itself as different from that celebrated by First-World radical cinema as Latin American magic realism is from its European surrealist predecessor: and for the same reason, namely, that here heterogeneity is inscribed ahead of time in the very content itself. In First-World cinema (in Godard, for instance) it was programmed to happen to the form, not merely by way of transformation of realities into their own representations, so that we are no longer looking at a Bazinian person but rather at a photograph or image of that person; but also very much by way of that incommensurability between the different representations or texts which the West always seems to live in terms of this or that crisis of relativism. But Western relativisms - however internally jarring and contradictory - have always seemed to take place within some essential class homogeneity: the most dramatic eruptions of otherness - as in race or gender - always ultimately seeming to fold back into conflicts on the inside of a sphere whose true other or exterior eluded representation altogether. And that virtually by definition, since in the very moment in which a thought or impulse from that unrepresentable Outside enters the field of thought or discourse, it will already have been represented, and, henceforth belonging to 'us', can no longer be truly other or noumenal.

It is a dilemma that all consequent First-World artists must face in their own unique and distinctive ways, but which Godard's Maoism can serve at least to dramatize in a consequent manner, which has the advantage of including the formal plane within itself. For his obsession with the opposition between images and words is surely itself already, if not a replay, then at least a pre-play of the dialectic of inside and outside that Maoism will at least for a time be invoked to resolve. 'Juste une image': the famous reversal, accompanied by an oddly defensive insistence on the unlikely proposition that images cannot lie, suggests at the very least a multiple strategy, in which a nostalgia for a solid visual world cleansed of the ambiguities of language can co-exist with the possibility of interrupting the visual and its illusions with multiple languages external to it

that ceaselessly problematize its messages and symbolically re-enact an outside threatening at every point to penetrate the security of the visual monad.

Godard's 'method' is then to stage his heterogeneities statically -within the image, rather than, as in *Kidlat*, between the narrative segments -in such a way as to pry the auditory image away from the iconic ones. This is alone, not in order to reveal some more 'natural' reality behind those formal planes, which is the strategy of eighteenth-century bourgeois revolution; nor even to transform their incommensurability into a new kind of history lesson, as in Brecht; but rather in order to exacerbate a kind of negative dialectic, an intensified and frustrated consciousness of the simulacra within which we find ourselves immobilized and bewitched. 'Maoism' cannot be the same kind of answer to this dilemma, nor can it generate the same kind of dialectical lesson, as the Great Method of Me-ti which enables the provisional pause, the provisional ending, for Brecht's didactic plays. The moment Maoism appears as such in Godard (in *La Chinoise* [1967]) it is immediately degraded to the status of a new kind of image in its own right and releases a new flood of degenerate iconographies. As for the larger global horizon it once promised and designated within the First World, this bourgeoisie reverting to barbarism and cannibalism scarcely has the leisure to hear its distant accents, save in those moments in which an inner Third World appears in flesh and blood in the person of migrant workers -as with the famous African garbage collectors of *Weekend*, who recite Lenin and Fanon to the bemused white middle-class refugees from a world on its way to Apocalypse.

Kidlat's grotesque Europeans are apparently all Filipinos in disguise, acting out American imperialists or German businesswomen with comic gusto: something surely more cathartic for them than for Godard's Africans or Palestinians. For the fundamental lesson of this comparison must surely lie in the radical dissymmetry between these two situations, which are not mere inversions of one another. What the First World thinks and dreams about the Third can have nothing whatsoever in common, formally or epistemologically, with what the Third World has to know every day about the First. Subalternity carries the possibility of knowledge with it, domination that of forgetfulness and repression - but knowledge is not just the opposite of forgetfulness, nor is domination the opposite of oppression.

In the same way, the village, as it extends outwards to include Manila, and then Paris and Europe itself, is a very different kind of space from that- exactly coterminous and identically superimposable on the same map - which stretches out from Paris and Europe to envelop the Philippines, Manila and ultimately the village itself. Alejo Carpentier implied as much in his fundamental definition of the 'real maravilloso' (magic realism) years ago, when he observed that surrealism expressed a First-World subjective craving for heterogeneity and de-reification, whereas that superficially similar trend in Latin American literature called magic realism sprang from the objective fact of uneven development in the post-colonial object-world itself. In the latter, the co-existence of layers of social time, from the most modernized to the most ancient peasant customs and thought modes, all persist side by side within the Latin

American present, their chaotic juxtaposition at once detectable on the recording surfaces, where uncommodified experience spills out more richly than the twice commodified data of a more completely standardized and uniform late capitalist reality - which has already been processed in daily life before being processed a second time by the media that control its representations.

Meanwhile, both these kinds of social reality have their absent other in what it may be abusive to name with the same word, that is, 'the body,' since even this pole of the organization of experience is radically different in the two economies and the two cultures. In both, to be sure, the body is what guarantees individual experience as its most apparently concrete form, a ballast of the social imaginary, that ultimate individuality that nails in place the layers of the general and the abstract, the universal or the collective. But in the West, the corporate impoverishment of experience determines a kind of frenzy and desperation in which the promises of the last bodily layer are sought after with a well-nigh pathological single-mindedness. It is what can be called the reduction to the body and observed in its more symptomatic forms in pornography and violence porn, provided these are not greeted with a simple-minded moralizing but rather acknowledged historically as deeper truths of our social experience, and as primordially characteristic of our socially specific relationship to Being. Godard's pointless explosions of violence and scandal -from the dentings and bashings of cars all the way to the cannibalism of *Weekend*, and in the seemingly gratuitous incidence of prostitution throughout, which, in the fashion of Baudelaire, Simmel and Karl Kraus, he systematically links up with art, acting and exhibitionism, and the infinite thirst for financial backers - these attempt, if not to master, then at least to inscribe this function of the bodily substratum.

Whether or not Third-World culture is in general more reticent about bodily experience -perhaps it would be better to say that it does not seem to put the same premium on the consumption of simulacra of the corporeal and the physiological -it is certain that *The Perfumed Nightmare*, having concentrated this kind of libidinal investment in the figure of the clown himself, is not concerned in the same obsessive way with surfaces and textures, and with the microrepresentation of the pores of being. It is therefore all the more significant to locate the body's inscription here in a very different place, namely, that of ritual. How else indeed to account for the gratuitous and scandalous irruption of the two shocking episodes of circumcision and of childbirth that oddly and arbitrarily punctuate this otherwise humorous text with all the jarring incoherence of Stendhal's pistol shots at a concert? But in Stendhal (and in the very period of Napoleon's dictum that politics is destiny) those were the incursions of the political into the realm of the social and of what was apparently private life: these mark a similar intersection, where the collective, however, invests the great biological rhythms as they cut across individual lives.

It does not, indeed, seem to be an accident that what is widely considered to be the first African novel in French, the *Batouala* of the Caribbean writer Rene Maran, which

won the Prix Goncourt in 1921, also turns centrally on a gruesome ritual of circumcision. Clearly, Kidlat Tahimik cannot have the same justification of a kind of realism and the representation of social customs still extant, nor can his fantasy circumcision even be thought to reflect elements of the style of some indigenous culture on the point of eclipse. This nonexistential bodily violence may be thought to be something like the mask both works turn with a certain ironic resentment towards the voyeuristic public of the First World, of the Prix Goncourt or of the film festivals, as it avidly receives these presumably authentic specimens of geotopic otherness.

That is a reading which is not inconsistent with another one, however: namely, the sense that in otherness of this kind - in the styles that conjure up ethnicity, that nourish stereotypes and quicken the various racisms fully as much as the various celebrations of collective identity - it is somehow the fantasy of religious otherness that is the ultimately determining instance. Religion on this view is grasped as little more than some central point of otherness in the collective relations - the mirages and optical illusions - between the various groups. Religion then, here deeper than the individual body itself, is what is unclean in the other ethnies; but as a fantasmatic property or essence it can only be grasped by way of their outlandish practices and rituals. At some deepest unconscious level then, all foreign cultures are somehow fantasized as so many religions, as specific types of abomination and superstition. Yet by the same token, when I come to attempt to reaffirm my own imaginary cultural identity, only the rags and trappings of 'religion' are available, trappings which it takes a certain fanaticism to talk myself into for any extended period of time.

These features of *The Perfumed Nightmare* are, to be sure, divested of their more alarming implications by the episodic structure of the narrative. But they nonetheless ultimately connect, however weakly, with that interpretive temptation of a kind of cultural nationalism which we will evaluate in conclusion. Otherwise, these two gratuitous episodes of bodily pain merely serve to anchor or ground the sequence of gags, which, as in all classical farce, since it ultimately concerns the body itself, must insist in passing on the thump of the fall, the stab of the gouty toe, the biting of the trained fleas, or the smarting of the paddle.

It is time, therefore, to look more closely at the form itself and the contents that determine it: something that can initially best be approached negatively. For all generic law is as much concerned with warding off the wrong or inappropriate reactions, questions, readings, and receptive attitudes, as it is to produce the 'right' ones. In the present instance, it seems clear that *The Perfumed Nightmare* faces at least one fundamental generic dilemma: that is, how its segments are to be prevented from degenerating into that travelogue which is just as surely its other generic pole and the content of its form. For the film is our travelogue on the Philippines and includes Kidlat's travelogue on Europe; and in order for the images not simply to fold back into their own stereotypes, and for them to affirm themselves as realities, a gap must be kept open between the contents and what displays them. This last must ceaselessly be designated as

an arbitrary form in its own right, must point to itself, and the fact of the travelogue as form must itself become part of the film's content, included in the subject-matter.

Meanwhile, if the decline into travelogue menaces this work from one end, its disintegration into outright farce and comic gags await it at the other. The persona of the clown, and the concomitant vaudeville structure of discontinuous numbers, motivate the willed and necessarily episodic structure of the film, but this motivation must remain weak. Tati's project (in *Playtime*) can accommodate an infinite series of humorous situations; but here the laughter must somehow remain within the film, as is the case with the hilarity of the members of the Werner von Braun fan club, village children whom the Kidlat character has assembled around himself as a supporting cast and to justify his application in the international contest for the best slogan describing the moon shot. The narcissistic sentimentalism of the Kidlat persona is clearly one of the ways in which this formal tension is defused: we are free to attribute our amusement to the 'objective situation' or to the absurdity of its protagonist indifferently. Yet another solution is also present in the regrounding of the travelogue itself into something like a family photo, with our conviction that the shots of the village and the villagers will be shown to the latter for their analysis and appreciation, and received according to the norms of naive realism. Thus Kidlat's sheepish passport photo is remodelled by the village children in the form of a smiling dog. Meanwhile, the shots of the 'West' will also presumably be rescreened in the village, where Kidlat's presence in that exotic scenery can be presumed to have been greeted by equally appreciative hoots. The film, in other words, includes its spectator (or narratee) within itself. Palpably made for a First-World (or film festival) public, it also requires its First-World audience to look over the shoulder of a Third-World public at the same time, or through their 'implied' point of view, without any irony in the Western sense. Travelogue is here rescued and transformed, not by metamorphosis into the great Western spatial image (as, say, in Antonioni's notorious documentary on China), but rather by regression to some first and more primal level of the first forms of photography, the family snapshot or the home movie, the wonderment of sheer reproduction and recognition. The First-World/Third-World dialectic is thereby inscribed within the film, in its very form and the structure of its viewing; at the same time that Kidlat's aesthetic rejoins a whole range of Western avant-garde or experimental projects in which the home movie, the non-professional, non-institutional use of the camera, symbolically becomes the Utopian escape from commercial reification.

The difference is, as I began to suggest above, that this particular film has a message and seeks to transmit an ideological lesson of a type embarrassing if not inconceivable for First-World (realistic) filmmakers. Just as *Turumba* sets out to illustrate the ravages of a money economy, so also *The Perfumed Nightmare* may be read as a virtual textbook illustration of the classical account: 'constant revolutioning of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social conditions, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones...all that is solid melts into air' (Marx and Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*).

What is paradoxical about the illustration - and what distinguishes the procedure here from the aesthetic of Kidlat's second, more openly didactic film - is that the proposition is demonstrated on the First World rather than on the Third. The lesson is learned in Paris rather than in Manila, and the political or pedagogical pathos that might have been expected to be aroused in the service of a properly postcolonial militancy is here displaced and redirected back to the source, and exercised on behalf of the very metropolis that under other circumstances would have been denounced as the subject of the imperial domination and the agent of commodification and of the destruction of the old ways. What Kidlat observes and dwells on is rather the destruction of the older quarters of Paris itself, the sweeping away of a traditional petty bourgeoisie of small shops and shopkeepers by the new chains of supermarkets, the bureaucratic control of space itself, the late capitalist onslaught on the classical capitalist city, something like the dialectical self-destruction of the First World and its own internal social relations. Meanwhile, across the Rhine, the decline in handicraft is also dramatically and spatially registered, in the episode of the setting in place of the last handcrafted Zwiebelturm, distinctive emblem of a specifically German culture which is also in the process of homogenization and standardization.

This paradoxical redirection, this substitution of referents, does not merely recall attempts of the New Criticism to characterize what is unique and specific to poetic language and its effects in paradox itself and in reversals of all kinds. It also makes one think of what must be among the very first texts in this genre, in which, in 1859, the passing of the classical city and its mutilation by technology, modernization and the new, are lamented - *The Swan* of Baudelaire, in which the destructive effects on Paris of that earlier state of modernization symbolized by the name of Haussmann are unexpectedly evoked by way of the memory of a classical reading (Virgil) and the hopeless situations of Third-World exiles and prisoners: by way, that is to say, of the deep past and the violence of European domination (itself then reinscribed, but classically, 'aesthetically', within the Virgilian text); as though the intersection of both these co-ordinates were necessary in order to allegorize the fate of a few old buildings and to project the fate of the city itself as an emblematic destiny. Kidlat's travelogues shake similar perceptions free by way of the transformation of distant superhuman fantasies of the space program, transmitted by satellite into the village, into the ugly poured-concrete masses of the new supermarkets that fall into traditional arrondissements like meteorites from the future. Even so, the message is by no means as simple as the feeling, and it is to imprint the latter with the former that, in Baudelaire fully as much as in *The Perfumed Nightmare*, the indirections and substitutions already mentioned have been deployed: for the perception must be prevented from implying or transmitting any simple denunciation of modernization as such. The lesson's classical text is itself here the model, and conveys the additional lesson that the dialectic necessarily posits mixed feelings. For Marx, the ceaseless destruction of the old by the new is as positive as it is negative; the archaic needed to be given a shove (as Nietzsche put it), everything that is tragic about its disappearance is also to be

welcomed. I'm tempted to say that in Baudelaire what is positive about the destruction of Paris is the excuse it offers for the deployment of that new content called spleen and the occasion it provides for the new (modernist) poetic and formal production the latter now demands. It is therefore language that is here the beneficiary, its modernization is the productive face of the wanton bureaucratic efficiency of Haussmann's baleful embellishment of the city.

The Perfumed Nightmare, however, would seem to be threatened with a different set of impossible alternatives. For in a Third World classically fixated on the dualism between the Old and the New, between tradition and Westernization, culture and science, religion and secularization, the critique of modernization risks tipping the scales, in a situation in which neither alternative can really be satisfactory. It is an ideological message that is ready to transmit itself, simply by the removal or suspension of its opposite. Thus, something like cultural nationalism is implicitly revealed when the option of advanced technology is taken away, whether or not the author or film-maker has thought it through and really means to endorse this reversal and this essentially political position. Kidlat's film, however, goes further than this, for its concluding sections really do seem to conjure up a whole discursive world of visionary legend that fleshes out and gives content to the cultural-nationalist alternative, which despite the images of the village and the countryside had not yet fully taken shape. But this is also the moment in which politics, and the historical fact of imperialism, enter the picture far more vividly, and in which the American conquest and the American occupation, the murder of the father, inscribe power and history openly, as themes, and with none of the tactful indirections of the sparse allusions to the internal political situation.

Yet it is a politics conjoined with another kind of raw material which had not yet been pressed into service in the film's series of vaudeville numbers: that is, myth itself, in the form of the great wind or typhoon which is set in place at the film's climax, and which is called upon to symbolize the will to revolt, the archaic or natural power of the great Third-World revolutions. It is what the New Critics would have called an 'unearned' ending, little enough in this film justifying the banner of revolt raised in its concluding moments. On the other hand, the New Critics worked with organic conceptions of the work of art and of the concrete universal; their conception of a full motivation is unseasonable here, in a form which is deliberately disjointed and heterogeneous. It is precisely that heterogeneity which also frees this unearned ending, and allows the inscription of the force of revolt, but only as a specific figure in this particular film, and not as any generalizable political or cultural program that can be transferred elsewhere. The beauty of the resolution on this particular level - the way in which the image of a butterfly that enfolds the sun in its wings unites the gentleness of the Kidlat persona with the violence of revolutionary rage itself - is marked as a fragile figure by the very nature of its content. The image itself, which we here manhandle with clumsy fingers, has all the brittle delicacy of the butterfly's wings, no matter what may be the ultimate destiny of this figure - from tattoo to historical force of nature. This is perhaps to say that the

culturalnationalist alternative -a politics which draws on indigenous cultural traditions in order to summon the force and will to dislodge the invader -is here inscribed as an impulse rather than a program, as an aesthetics of revolt rather than its concrete politics. It is, as in the Sartrean concept of derealization, a message transmitted by the quality of the image, rather than its structural implications. Above all, it is a message transmitted by the unreal or derealized quality of the image, which consists in very precisely that unreality and that provisional aestheticism.

But that message has also been transmitted outside the image itself, by the very unevenness of its figural context. The great typhoon, the butterfly, must in fact compete with the 'bridge', with the jeepnies, with the Zwiebelturm and the supermarket, the airplane and the man in the moon, a competition in which it proves to have a kind of resilience which is not merely aestheticist or fin-de-siecle. By the same token, the interpretation in terms of cultural nationalism must itself compete with other readings, which I have withheld until now. For First-World modernization and advanced technology is not in fact, in *The Perfumed Nightmare*, simply one term in a dualism or binary opposition: a third term comes to join those familiar ones of the West and of mythic traditional or native culture.

This third term is the moment of industrial production within an otherwise agricultural context (for even the Parisians in this film sell agricultural produce); nor does it turn on the nostalgic essentialization of the vanishing moment of artisanal labor and craft, as we see it for one last time in the final Zwiebelturm. Rather, it consists in the building, the unbuilding, the rebuilding, of the jeepnies - bricolage if there ever was, a scavenging for spare parts and home-made ad hoc solutions - the constant re-functioning (Brecht's *Unfunktionierung*) of the new into the old, and the old into the new, the reconstruction of military machinery into painted traditional artifacts, and the dismemberment of those artifacts for the handicraft assemblage of the jeepnies. This is not merely the auto-referentiality of the naif film itself, whose aesthetic consists precisely in this unremitting collection of miscellaneous footage that you put together at your pleasure. It also in and of itself immediately blasts apart the sterile opposition between the old and the new, the traditional and the Western, and allows its former components themselves to be cannibalized and conceptually resoldered. Unlike the 'natural' or mythic appearances of traditional agricultural society, but equally unlike the disembodied machinic forces of late capitalist high technology, which seem, at the other end of time, equally innocent of any human agency or individual or collective praxis, the jeepney factory is a space of human labor which does not know the structural oppression of the assembly line or Taylorization, which is permanently provisional, thereby liberating its subjects from the tyrannies of form and of the pre-programmed. In it aesthetics and production are again at one, and painting the product is an integral part of its manufacture. Nor finally is this space in any bourgeois sense humanist or a golden mean, since spiritual or material proprietorship is excluded, and inventiveness has taken the place of genius, collective co-operation the place of managerial or demiurgic dictatorship.

It is, indeed, instructive to juxtapose this particular factory space, tossed in as yet another vaudeville number or travelogue segment, with earlier places of production in this book. The optical fittingroom and business convention of Videodrome were clearly outposts of distribution, while Pakula's newspaper office - notwithstanding Joyce's Cave of the Winds - was less plausible as a workplace than those journeys into the bowels of the infrastructure we were able to glimpse in *Three Days of the Condor* or in *The Conversation*. But Hitchcock's Seagram Building is yet another place of management rather than of production, one we see from the outside at that, and from the point of view of an advertising agency executive. Only the Europeans seem willing to make their way back onto the shop floor: but Sokurov's documentary sequence (on 'the building trades' in Central Asia) is spliced into his fiction film as though to make the point about the vanity of all human labor and the impossibility for Soviet people to attain the reliable and efficiently planned and produced object-world of the West. Appropriately enough, then, Godard's Swiss factory seems far more high tech, but also to betray a kind of Western or First-World mesmerization with human interactions and social relations exclusively (how do you show labor, Godard's characters ask; can you make a film about work - isn't it something like pornography?) This is the context in which Kidlat's jeepnies mark the place of a properly Third-World way with production which is neither the ceaseless destruction and replacement of new and larger industrial units (together with their waste by-products and their garbage), nor a doomed and nostalgic retrenchment in traditional agriculture, but a kind of Brechtian delight with the bad new things that anybody can hammer together for their pleasure and utility if they have a mind to. Kidlat's film is then itself just such another jeepney, an omnibus and omnipurpose object that ferries its way back and forth between First and Third Worlds with dignified hilarity.

It is also an excellent provisional ending to this selective anthology of movies from the current world system. It is well to be able to take as one's text and for one's lesson a work so inimitable, for it is unlikely that *The Perfumed Nightmare* will mislead by serving as an immutable model of anything, just as it is improbable that Kidlat should found a school or movement. What is instructive for the new political culture to come is the way in which here the economic dimension has come to take precedence over a political one which is not left out or repressed, certainly, but which (in the person of the father and the butterfly, and the doomed revolt against the army of occupation) is for the moment assigned a subordinate position and role. In *The Political Unconscious*, I suggested that from the point of view of content or raw material we have some interest in distinguishing between three distinct categories or levels: the immediately political, in the sense of the contingencies and reversals of punctual events themselves; the conjunctural, or the realm of social class, in the sense of the larger collective and ideological forces at work all around us, coming to articulation and retreating again into a world of blurred contours and mystified obfuscation, only occasionally, in supreme moments, finding the stark definition of the outright class conflict itself; the economic, finally, in the larger sense of the history of modes of production, the great patterning systems that imprint the daily

lives of producing and consuming subjects, forming their habits and their psyches in the process, and only occasionally entering into crisis as they are challenged with forms of the new, with new collective structures and new human relations (if not indeed with the sometimes equally problematizing recurrence and revival of much more ancient ones). Each of these three dimensions - which always co-exist - has its own logic, so that in politics as much as in art it is advisable to sort them out for openers, it being understood that you may well want to recombine them (explosively or architectonically) later on.

One's sense, in the present conjuncture, sometimes called the onset of postmodernity or late capitalism, is that our most urgent task will be tirelessly to denounce the economic forms that have come for the moment to reign supreme and unchallenged. This is to say, for example, that those doctrines of reification and commodification which played a secondary role in the traditional or classical Marxian heritage, are now likely to come into their own and become the dominant instruments of analysis and struggle. In other words, a cultural politics, a politics of daily life, which emerged in earlier decades but as something of an adjunct and a poor relative, a supplement, to 'politics' itself, must now - at least in the First World - be the primary space of struggle. This is indeed precisely what Kidlat's film teaches us: that the other levels must be inscribed - from the sheerly eventful or punctual (as in the Munich Olympics) to the great class warfare of the national liberation struggle - but that today as never before we must focus on a reification and a commodification that have become so universalized as to seem well-nigh natural and organic entities and forms. We must retain the visibility of these artificial entities, and attempt, through a long night of universal domination, to maintain a flickering self-consciousness of their omnipresence; inscribing them tirelessly on the form of the work as Kafka's lieutenant had his sentence carved over and over again on his own back (or Kidlat's character, his tattoo), in hopes that this second nature can again, by dint of concentration, reveal itself as historical and as the result of human actions, and thereby once again 'lead us to take pleasure in the possibility of change in all things.

Irmgard Emmelhainz

Conditions of Visuality Under the Anthropocene and Images of the Anthropocene to Come

There is no harmony in the universe. We have to get acquainted to this idea that there is no real harmony as we have conceived it.

—Werner Herzog¹

In the experience of deep sadness, the world itself seems altered in some way: colored by sadness, or disfigured ... [This originates] in desolation, in the sense that the world is frozen and that nothing new is possible. This can lead to terrible paroxysms of destruction, attempts to shatter the carapace of reality and release the authentic self trapped within; but it can also lead away from the self altogether, towards new worldly commitments that *recognize the urgent need to develop another logic of existence, another way of going on.*

—Dominic Fox²

The Anthropocene is the era in which man's impact on the earth has become the single force driving change on the planet, thus giving shape to nature, shifting seas, changing the climate, and causing the disappearance of innumerable species, including placing humanity on the brink of extinction. The Anthropocene thus announces the collapse of the future through "slow fragmentation towards primitivism, perpetual crisis and planetary ecological collapse."³ Instead of being conceived as speculative images of our future economic and political system, the Anthropocene has been reduced to an apocalyptic fantasy of human finitude, world finitude, and the manageable problem of climate change. In the last decade, films about the end of the world have been characterized by an apocalyptic and doomsday narrative that may end with moral redemption—from *The Day After Tomorrow* (2004), and *2012* (2009), to Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* (2011) and *World War Z* (2013). In parallel, we have seen in the mass media a narrative presenting climate change as a fixable catastrophe, just like any other (such as the 2008 financial crisis, or the 2010 BP gulf oil spill). Neither our condition of finitude nor the world after the human has been imagined, and the massive environmental impact from the industrial era onward, with its long-term geomorphic implications, has become unintelligible.

The Anthropocene has meant not a new image of the world, but rather a radical change in the conditions of visibility and the subsequent transformation of the world into images. These developments have had epistemological as well as phenomenological consequences: while images now participate in forming worlds, they have become forms of thought constituting a new kind of knowledge—one that is grounded in visual communication, and thereby dependent on perception, demanding the development of the optical mind.⁴ The radical changes in the conditions of visibility under the Anthropocene have brought a new subject position, announced by the reformulating trajectories between impressionism and cubism, and those between cubism and experimental film. While cubism culminated with the antihumanist rupture of the picture plane and converted the visual object, along with surrealism, into “manifestation,” “event,” “symptom,” and “hallucination,” experimental film introduced a mechanical, posthuman eye conveying solipsistic images at the sensorimotor level of perception. The consequence of these developments is that images, as opposed to being subject to our “beliefs,” or being objects of contemplation and beauty, came to be perceived as “the extant.” This involves a passage from representation to presentation, that is, instead of showing a perpetual present in a parallel temporality in order to make the absent partially present, the image has become sheer presence, immediacy: the here and now in real time. Made up of particles of time, wrested out of sensation and turned into cognition, the image deals more with concepts and saying than with intuition and showing.

With its break from the Renaissance point of view, cubism decomposed anthropomorphism. Based on linear perspective, Renaissance perspective had normalized a viewing position as a centered, one-eyed static entity within a mathematical, homogenous space. Creating the illusion of a view to the outside world, Renaissance perspective made the pictorial plane analogous to a window. Images constructed with traditional perspective bestow identities and subjects given *a priori*, configured by the point of view provided by the picture plane. Cubism, in contrast, turned space, time, and the subject upside down, redefining spatial experience by rupturing the picture plane.⁵ If classical representation conveys a continuous space, cubism invented discontinuous space by subverting the relations between subject and object, making identity and difference relative, questioning classical metaphysics. The cubist image renewed the image of the world by dissociating gaze, subject, and space, but without estranging them from each other, bringing about a new, antihumanist subject position.⁶ Moreover, with cubism, temporality—duration—and a multiplicity of points of view became embedded in the picture plane.

With North American experimental (or structural) film in the 1960s and 1970s, notably influenced by Andy Warhol's filmic work, duration became a key component of aesthetic experience, grounded in an exploration of the filmic apparatus and seeking to make it analogous to human consciousness. By creating cinematic equivalents or metaphors of consciousness, experimental film brought about a prosthetic vision giving way to solipsistic visual experiences.⁷ A futuristic technoscape, Michael Snow's experimental film *La Région centrale* (1971) is exemplary in this regard. In the film (as in all of his work), Snow explores the genetic properties of the filmic apparatus, using it to intensify and diminish aspects of normal vision. *La Région centrale* shows images from the wilderness collected by a machine specifically designed to shoot the film (De La). The machine was able to move in all directions, turn around 360 degrees, and zoom in and out, reaching places no human eye could perceive before. The resulting footage was independent of any human decisions and framing vision: a three-and-a-half hour topological exploration of the wilderness, a "gigantic landscape."⁸

Because De La extracts gravity from the situation as well as human (preconstructed or given) referential points of view, *La Région* hypostazises the cubist relativization of identity and difference and its rejection of *a priori* space. Furthermore, the film puts forth an experience of matter within, decentering the subject, which is constituted by the experience of the work itself. To paraphrase Rosalind Krauss on minimalism, the film subverts the notion of a stable structure that could mirror the viewer's own self—a self that is completely constituted prior to experience. That is to say, the film formulates a notion of self that exists only at the moment of externality of that particular experience.⁹ By presenting every possible position of the framing-camera in relationship to itself, *La Région* releases the subject from its human coordinates, creating a "space without reference points where the ground and the sky, the horizontal and the vertical inter-exchange."¹⁰ The references to human coordinates are the screen's rectangular frame and the breaks made by the intermittent appearance of a big glowing yellow "X" against a black screen. Every time the X comes up, it fixes the screen and transfers the movement in a different way or direction; thus, the Xs are the point of view *embodying the apprehension of the passage from chaos to form*. In viewing the film, the present is experienced as immediacy, a pure phenomenological consciousness without the contamination of historical or *a priori* meaning; the world is thus experienced as self-sufficient, pure presence, foregrounding an awareness of the presence of the viewer's own perceptual processes. As Snow stated:

My films are experiences: real experiences ... The structure is obviously important, and one describes it because it's more easily describable than other aspects, but the shape,

with all the other elements, adds up to something which can't be said verbally and that's why the work *is*, why it exists.¹¹

In general, experimental film sought to posit alternatives to the mimetical inscription of lived experience into simulacral images (signs) by artistic neovanguardist practices that came to be embedded within the logic of spectacle—not in order to dislodge subjectivity (early modernism) or to constitute subjects by mapping out signs (postmodernism), but by exploring through film the conditions of cognition and perception. And while there is something in the image delivered by *La Région* that shares something with the condition of thought, it yields a solipsistic subject at the genetic level of perception; beyond auditory or optical perceptions, it delivers motor-sensory perceptions.¹² Therefore, the machine delivers a posthuman, prosthetic enhancement of vision, inaugurating three important developments in the history of perception.

First, the machine introduces the incipient normalization of perception as augmented reality and the solipsistic visualization of data. Second, as Donna Haraway posited, the prosthetic enhancement of vision brings about the notion of limitlessness and an “unregulated gluttony” that desires to see everything from nowhere, spreading the assumption that anything can and is seen.¹³ Third, with *La Région*, machinic vision becomes an epistemological product of a centered human point of view (with the Xs) without stable reference points, foregrounding the conditions of contemporary visuality. While cubism embodies the antihumanist scission of the subject and the possibility of the construction of many psychical planes, *La Région* embodies the displacement of the human agent from the subjective center of operations.¹⁴ Both epitomize modernity's fragmentation by mechanization, its alienating character, its inability to give back an image or to serve as a reflective mirror—it can never do this because the antihumanist image is *indifferent to me*.¹⁵ And yet, this was always going to be the fate of an image and of art based on contemplation. These works also attest to the fact that the foundational experience of modernity is to refuse, in advance, the “given” as a ground for thought.¹⁶

The Transformation of Everything into Data-Images

As previously explained, the Anthropocene era implies not a new image of the world, but the transformation of the world into images. Humanity's alteration of the biophysical systems of earth is parallel to the rapid modifications of the receptive fields of the human visual cortex announced by cubism and experimental film. This alteration is also accompanied by an unprecedented explosion in the circulation of visibilities, which are actually making the outcome of these alterations opaque.¹⁷ For instance, the

exhaustive visualization and documentation of wildlife is actually rendering its ongoing extinction invisible. Aside from having become shields against reality, images are not only substitutes for first-hand experience, but have also become certifiers of reality, and, as Susan Sontag points out, they have extraordinary powers to determine our demands on reality.¹⁸ In discussing the democratization of tourism in the 1970s, Sontag further described tourists' dependence of photographic cameras for making real their experiences abroad:

Taking photographs ... is a way of certifying experience, [but] also a way of refusing it—by limiting experience to a search for the photogenic, by converting experience into an image, a souvenir ... The very activity of taking pictures is soothing, and assuages general feelings of disorientation that are likely to be exacerbated by travel.¹⁹

Almost forty years later, posing for, taking, sharing, liking, forwarding, and looking at images are actions that are not only integral to tourism; they actually *give shape* to contemporary experience. Arguably, representation has ceased to exist in plain view and manifests itself as experience, event, or the appropriation and sharing of a mediatic space. Instead of representation, we have media objects (i.e., a twitterbot) that purport to provide vague participatory representational events that ground our cultural and social experience. Thus, as Stephen Shaviro points out, in the contemporary world, the opposition between reality-based and image-based modes of presentation breaks down, and the most intense and vivid reality is precisely the reality of images.²⁰

In other words, images have in themselves become opaque cognitive and empirical experiences. Each episode of the recent British science-fiction television series *Black Mirror* explores the implications of this precise phenomena—of images becoming not only an intrinsic part of our empirical experience but also our cognitive experience at large. The “black mirror,” then, is nothing other than the LCD screen through which we give shape to reality.

One of the show's early episodes, “The Entire History of You” (2011), imagines a world in which almost everyone has a “grain” implanted behind their ear. This grain has the capacity to transform human eyes into cameras that record reality and projectors that can reproduce it, thereby amalgamating lived experience, memory, and image. In a later episode, “Be Right Back” (2013), a woman is able to revive her dead partner with a program that rebuilds him—first his writing habits, then speech patterns, and eventually his very self via a cloned, synthetic body—solely from the proliferation of information he uploaded on the internet when he was alive. The deathless and bodiless information,

images, and signs—the inert map of a life—becomes embodied by an avatar that exists in actual, not virtual, reality, and that has the (albeit limited) capacity to exist and interact directly with humans. In the episode, the fabrication of subjectivity from data—which implies the automatization of subjectivity—foreshadows the relationship between determinist automatisms and cognitive activity, which, according to Franco Berardi, is the core goal of the Google Empire: to capture user attention and to translate our cognitive acts into automatic sequences. The consequence is the replacement of cognition by a chain of automated connections, seeking to automatize the subjectivities of users.²¹

Aside from the fact that images and data are taking the place of or giving form to experience, automating our will and thought, they are also transforming things into signs by welding together image and discourse, bringing about a tautological form of vision. With the widespread use of photography and digital imaging, all signs begin to lead to other signs, prompted by the desire to see and to know, to document and to archive information. Thus the fantasy that everything is or can be made visible coexists with the increasing automation of cognition, which, following Franco Berardi, is the basic condition of semicapital (the valorization and accumulation of signs as economic assets).²²

In the pilot episode of *Black Mirror*, “The National Anthem” (2011), an alleged terrorist group kidnaps a nationally beloved British princess in the early morning hours. In order to free her, the anonymous group demands that the prime minister have sex on live television with a pig at four o’clock that same afternoon. The video in which the princess announces the “price” of the ransom goes viral and the whole nation pressures the prime minister to fulfill the kidnappers’ demands. At the end of the episode, postcoitus, it is revealed that the kidnapping was a singular artist’s gesture, intended in its successful implementation to point critically to the obscenely inflated role the media has in shaping public opinion and official policy. The artist’s action, in other words, illuminates the highly visceral shift in power brought on almost instantaneously by the ransom video’s circulation in the infosphere. Insofar as the episode unfolds montages of the whole nation glued to televisions in the pub, workplace, and waiting room at four o’clock, the artist highlights how connective interfaces actually govern, as they have the direct capacity to manipulate and coordinate behavior on almost every level.²³

Under the conditions of semicapitalism, images and signs acquire value and/or power by means of being seen, largely through “likes” and retweets. The fact that sign-value has supplanted exchange-value means moreover that we no longer consume material things, but rather swallow cognitive signs embedded in and around them. Aside

from consuming “experiences” or “moods,” we buy immaterial commodities (in the name of lifestyle and branding) and consume signs for “equality,” “happiness,” “wellness,” and “fulfillment.” In Don DeLillo’s *White Noise* (1985), Jack Gladney describes a trip to the supermarket and makes clear how the signs found in the brands and labels of products that he and his wife buy have the power to relieve them of the mysteries and anxieties brought about by everyday life:

It seemed to me that Babette and I, in the mass and variety of our purchases, in the sheer plenitude those crowded bags suggested, the weight and size and number, the familiar package designs and vivid lettering, the giant sizes, the family bargain packs with Day-Glo sale stickers, in the sense of replenishment we felt, the sense of well-being, the security and contentment these products brought to some snug home in our souls—it seemed we had achieved a fullness of being that is not known to people who need less, expect less, who plan their lives around lonely walks in the evening.²⁴

What becomes evident in this paragraph is Baudrillard’s assertion that objects are no longer commodities whose message and meaning we can appropriate and decipher, but rather, tests that interrogate us. For him, commodities are a referendum, the verification of a code, circularity as well as sameness and homogeneity: here the commodities bring a well-being that reflects the well-being of the consumer and his or her lifestyle.²⁵ Furthermore, the acceleration in proliferation of cognitive signs since the time of DeLillo’s novel is another of the features of communicative capitalism’s subjugation, submitting the mind to an ever-increasing pace of perceptual stimuli, and in so doing generating not only panic and anxiety, but also destroying all possible forms of autonomous subjectivation.²⁶ Under communicative capitalism, images transformed into signs embody the current concatenation of knowledge and machines—that is, the technological organization of capitalism to produce value. With the enabling of the visualization of data by machines, images have become scientific, managerial, and military instruments of knowledge, and thus of capital and power.²⁷ In this context, *seeing* means the accelerating perception of the fields of everyday experiences, or rather, the field of trivial visual analogies of experience: a kind of groundless, *accelerated tautological vision* derived from passive observation. This is for Berardi another of communicative capitalism’s forms of governance, as this kind of vision generates technolinguistic automatisms by carrying information without meaning, automating thought and the will.²⁸

Images as Cognition and thus Forms of Power

Images circulating in the infosphere are also charged with affect, exposing the viewer to sensations that go beyond everyday perception. Hollywood cinema, for instance, delivers pure sensation and intensities that have no meaning. In Alfonso Cuarón's *Gravity* (2013), the main characters try to survive in outer space by solving practical and technical problems. The movie repudiates a point of view and a ground for vision in favor of immersion, transforming images into physical sensations mobilized by the visual and auditory (especially in its 3-D version), and thus into affect. The becoming-affect of images derives from communicative capitalism's ruthless conversion of sensation and aesthetic experiences into cognition: its transformation of these experiences into information, sensations, and intensities without meaning is precisely what enables them to be exploited as forms of work and sold as new experiences and exciting lifestyle choices.²⁹ One of the problems that arises is that affect cannot be linked to a larger network of identity and meaning. *Gravity* also presents itself as a symptom of the normalization of a groundless seeing brought about by modernity's decentering of the subject parallel to our exposure to aerial images (for example, Google Earth). The hegemonic sight convention of visuality is an empowered, unstable, free-falling, and floating bird's eye view that mirrors the present moment's ubiquitous condition of groundlessness.³⁰

According to many thinkers, this groundlessness characterizes the Anthropocene. The current fragmentation and transience of sociopolitical movements attests to the fact that we are first of all lacking ground on which to found politics, our social lives, and our relationship to the environment. Second, as Claire Colebrook put it, with the Anthropocene we are facing human extinction, as well as causing other extinctions, thereby annihilating that which makes us human. We are thus all thrown into a situation of urgent interconnectedness, in which a complex multiplicity of diverging forces and timelines that exceed any manageable point of view converge.³¹ In this context, criticality is both in trouble and spinning on its head. Many questions arise: How do we redefine the ground of deterritorialized subjectivation beyond the subsumption of subjectivity by the modes of governance of accelerated tautological forms of vision and communicative capitalism? How can we transform our relationship to the indeterminacy of deterritorialization and the multiplicity of diverging points of view in order to provide a heightened sense of place, giving way to the possibility of collective autonomous subjectivation and thus a new sense of politics and of the image?

In an era of ubiquitous synthetic and digital images dissociated from human vision and directly tied to power and capital, when images and aesthetic experience have been turned into cognition and thus into empty sensations or tautological truths about reality, the image of the Anthropocene is yet to come. The Anthropocene is “the age of man” that announces its own extinction. In other words, the Anthropocene thesis posits “man” as the end of its own destiny. Therefore, while the Anthropocene narrative keeps “man” at its very center, it marks the death of the posthuman and of antihumanism, because there can be no redeeming critical antihumanist or posthuman figure in which either metaphysics or technological and scientific advances would find a way to reconcile human life with ecology. In short, *images* of the Anthropocene are missing. Thus, it is necessary to transcend our incapacity to imagine an alternative or something better. We can first do this: draw a distinction between *images* and imagery, or pictures. Although it is related to the optic nerve, the picture *does not make an image*.³² In order to make images, it is necessary to make *vision* assassinate perception; it is necessary to *ground vision*, and then *perform* (as in artistic activity) and *think vision* (as in critical activity).³³

Images to Come

Following Jean-Luc Godard, who operates in his work between the registers of the real, the imaginary, and art, only cinema is capable of delivering images as opposed to imagery, conveying not a subject but the supposition of the subject and thus the verb (substance).³⁴ Alterity is absolutely necessary for the image, as the *image* is an *intensification of presence*—this is why it is able to hold out against all experiences of vision.³⁵ In this light, Godard’s cinematic project can be interpreted as a conception of the image as a promise of flesh. For Godard, the image is incertitude, it is “trying to see” and the possibility of “giving voices back to their bodies.” For the filmmaker, *images do not show*; rather, images are a matter of belief and a *desire to see* (which is different from the desire *to know* or *to possess*).

An essay-film Godard made with Anne-Marie Miéville, *The Old Place* (2001), addresses the Anthropocenic concerns of life after the extinction of man, the current groundlessness of vision, and the lack of *images* of the world and of humanity. While we see images from outer space, Miéville and Godard discuss “CLIO,” the archaeological bird of the future, a microsatellite sent into space in 2001. The satellite is supposed to come back to earth in five thousand years to inform its future inhabitants about the past. Aside from carrying traditional human forms of knowledge, the bird will deliver messages written by the current inhabitants of the globe addressed to its future inhabitants. Miéville and Godard ponder whether humanist messages such as “Love each

other,” or “Eliminate discrimination against women,” will be included in the satellite (they doubt it). Later on, they conclude:

We are all lost in the immensity of the universe and in the depth of our own spirit. There is no way back home, there is no home. The human species has blown up and dispersed in the stars. We can neither deal with the past nor with the present, and the future takes us more and more away from the concept of home. We are not free, as we like to think, but lost.

Here Godard and Miéville paint the termination of a world, its exhaustion and estrangement from its conditions of possibility. As they underscore the lack of a home for the spirit, they highlight the loss of a sense of origin and destination, implying that the active principle of the world has ceased to function.³⁶ The last line is spoken while we see the image of a mother polar bear staring at her dead cub, followed by an image of Alberto Giacometti’s sculpture *L’homme qui marche* (Walking Man, 1961): life persists irrationally, not given form by imagination, ceasing to cohere into a higher truth.³⁷

In *The Old Place*, Godard and Miéville explore the image of humanity throughout the Western history of art, underscoring the fact that for two thousand Eurocentric, Christian years, the image was sacred. We also see images of violence, torture, and death juxtaposed with beautiful sculpted and painted figures and faces created throughout all the ages of humanity: people by turns smiling, screaming, or crying.

For Godard and Miéville, the image is also something related to the origin that reveals itself as the new but that had been there all along: an originary landscape always present and inextricable from history. Marking the passage to the current regime of communicative capitalism, where images are permeated by discourse and tautological truths about reality, they state: “The image today is not what we see, but what the caption states.” This is the definition of publicity, which they further link to the transformation of art into market and marketing represented by both Andy Warhol, and by the fact that “The last Citroën will be named Picasso,” which has as a consequence that “The spaces of publicity now occupy the spaces of hope.” And yet, in spite of the ubiquity of communicative capitalism, for them there is something that resists, something that remains in art and in the image. Meanwhile, we see a blank canvas held by four mechanical legs moving furiously.³⁸ This evokes the resisting image to come; this resisting image is a question of (sensible, un-automated) purity and, in post-Christian secular sense, of the sacred and redemption, of an ambivalent relationship between image and text, foreign to knowledge and intrinsically tied to belief. At the end of *The Old Place*, the filmmakers posit the Malay legend of A Bao A Qu as the paradigm of the

image of these times in which “we are lost without a home,” as they state. “The text of *A Bao A Qu* is the illustration of this film.” The legend is rewritten by Jorge Luis Borges in his *Book of Imaginary Beings*:

To see the most lovely landscape in the world, a traveler must climb the Tower of Victory in Chitor. A winding staircase gives access to the circular terrace on top, but only those who do not believe in the legend dare climb the tower. On the stairway there has lived since the beginning of time a being sensitive to the many shades of the human soul known as *A Bao A Qu*. It sleeps until the approach of a traveler and some secret life within it begins to glow and its translucent body begins to stir. As the traveler climbs the stairs, the being regains consciousness and follows at the traveler’s heels, becoming more intense in bluish color and coming closer to perfection. But it achieves its ultimate form only at the topmost step, and only when the traveler is one who has already attained Nirvana, whose acts cast no shadows. Otherwise, the being hesitates at the final step and suffers at its inability to achieve perfection. As the traveler climbs back down, it tumbles back to the first step and collapses weary and shapeless, awaiting the approach of the next traveler. It is only possible to see it properly when it has climbed half the steps, as it takes a clear shape when its body stretches out in order to help itself climb up. Those who have seen it, say that it can look with all of its body and that at the touch, it reminds one of a peach’s skin. In the course of the centuries, *A Bao A Qu* has reached the terrace only once.³⁹

In their film, Godard and Miéville explore the imprint of the quest of what it means to be human throughout the history of images. Humanity transpires as a mark that is perpetually reinscribed in a form of an address. *A Bao A Qu* is an inhuman thing activated by the passage of humans wishing to see the most beautiful landscape in the world. The act of vision is a unique event, and what delivers the vision of the landscape and of the creature are the purity and desire of the viewer. *A Bao A Qu* is an image of alterity; it stares back with all of its body. *A Bao A Qu* is an antidote to the lack of imagination in our times: an inhuman vision that undermines the narrative that holds the human as the central figure of its ultimate form of vision and destruction.

In the voiceover of his most recent film, *Adieu au langage* (Farewell to Language, 2014), Godard quotes Rilke: “It is not the animal which is blind, but man. Blinded by consciousness, man is incapable of seeing the world.” With a strident palette and saturated sound, the film evokes abstract, fauvist, cubist, and impressionist painting, and is Godard’s most radically experimental film (as in the genre, because all his work is experimental and radical) to date. Rilke’s quote, together with an aphorism he attributes to Monet, frame Godard’s quest in this film: “It is not about seeing what we see, because

we do not see anything, but [it is about] painting what we cannot see.” In parallel, Godard revives the romantic poet’s wish to “describe” immediate reality, to hit the viewer with electroshocks that make a real visible and audible world emerge from language. In the film, as a way to enable a new form of communication beyond tautological digital communication (Godard points out that with texting there is neither the chance to interpret a code nor room for ambiguity) and to reestablish harmony between the couple in the movie who can no longer communicate face to face, Roxy Miéville’s dog appears. Roxy becomes the metaphor for the possibility of an “other” post-anthropocentric language “between” humans. In the movie, the dog asks, “What is man? What is a city? What is war?” Rocky’s comings and goings between the couple bear the possibility of giving back freedom to the face-to-face encounter. Godard compares Roxy’s “other” language to the lost language of the poor, the excluded, animals, plants, the handicapped—those who are out of the frame. In sum, the movie is a giant mirror that reflects a grammar of thought that no longer resides in enunciation (and this is the farewell to language): marking the absence of a relationship between the characters by using Roxy—the third person, the post-anthropocentric “other”—as a vehicle of communication.

In both *The Old Place* and *Adieu au langage*, Godard addresses spectacular modernity’s (semicapitalism’s) crisis of visibility, which causes a lack of imagination, or even blindness. He also posits alternatives: an inhuman vision beyond a humanist-centered view, a post-anthropocentric “other.” In contrast to post-humanism, the filmic camera and technology are not what enable vision in these films. Rather, vision is enabled by a mythical being (A Bao A Qu) and by Roxy the dog, which, at the end of *Adieu*, barks in unison with the cry of a newborn baby, announcing the new to come.

1Werner Herzog, *Herzog on Herzog* (New York: Faber and Faber, 2003), 164.

2.Dominic Fox, *Cold World: The Aesthetics of Dejection and the Politics of Militant Dysphoria* (London: Zero Books, 2009), 1.

3.Nick Srnieck and Alex Williams, “#ACCELERATE MANIFESTO for an Accelerationist Politics,” May 14, 2013, par. 23 →

4.Stan Brakhage, “From ‘Metaphors on Vision,’” *The Avant-Garde Film: A Reader of Theory and Criticism*, ed. P. Adams Sitney (New York: Anthology Film Archives, 1978), 120.

5. Georges Didi-Huberman, "Picture = Rupture: Visual Experience, Form and Symptom According to Carl Einstein," *Papers of Surrealism* 7 (2007): 5.
6. *Ibid.*, 6.
7. Anthology Film Archives is a theater in New York where in the late sixties and early seventies filmmakers and artists (Snow amongst them) would gather to watch films. At the time, the theater had wing-like chairs that isolated the viewer sensorially in order to "equate" her field of vision to the screen, thereby delivering a solipsistic experience.
8. Michael Snow, *The Michael Snow Project: The Collected Writings of Michael Snow* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1994), 56.
9. Krauss, 50. [Please add full citation here]
10. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 84.
11. Snow, *The Michael Snow Project*, 44.
12. Deleuze, *Cinema I*, 85.
13. Donna Haraway, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective" *Feminist Studies*, vol. 14, no. 3 (Autumn 1988): 575–99, 582.
14. Didi-Huberman, "Picture = Rupture," 9.
15. Melissa McMahon, "Beauty: Machinic Repetition in the Age of Art," in *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Brian Massumi (London: Routledge, 2002), 4.
16. *Ibid.*, 8.
17. Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), 12.
18. Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977), 80.
19. *Ibid.*, 177
20. Stephen Shaviro, "Post-Cinematic Affect: On Grace Jones, *Boarding Gate* and *Southland Tales*," *Film Philosophy* 14.1 (2010): 12.
21. Franco "Bifo" Berardi, "The Neuroplastic Dilemma: Consciousness and Evolution," *e-flux journal* 60 (Dec. 2014): pars. 21–23→
22. *Ibid.*, par. 3.
23. Franco "Bifo" Berardi, *The Uprising: On Poetry and Finance* (New York: Semiotexte, 2012), 15.
24. Don DeLillo, *White Noise* (New York: Picador, 2002), 20.
25. Jean Baudrillard, "Toward a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign," trans. Carl R. Lovitt and Denise Klopsch, *SubStance*, vol. 5, no. 15 (1976): 111–116.

- 26.** Franco “Bifo” Berardi, “Accelerationism Questioned from the Point of View of the Body” *e-flux journal* 46 (June 2013): par. 11 →
- 27.** Benjamin Bratton, “Some Trace Effects of the Post-Anthropocene: On Accelerationist Geopolitical Aesthetics,” *e-flux journal* 46 (June 2013): par. 16 →
- 28.** Berardi, *The Uprising*, 41.
- 29.** Shaviro, “Post-Cinematic Affect,” par. 14.
- 30.** Hito Steyerl, “In Free Fall: A Thought Experiment on Vertical Perspective,” *e-flux journal* 24 (April 2011): par. 6 →
- 31.** Claire Colebrook and Cary Wolfe, “Dialogue on the Anthropocene,” Haus der Kulturen der Welt, Berlin, Jan. 23, 2013 →
- 32.** Serge Daney, “Before and After the Image,” *Revue des Études Palestiniennes* 40 (Summer 1991): par. 2 →
- 33.** Didi-Huberman, “Picture = Rupture,” 17.
- 34.** Georges Didi-Huberman, “The Supposition of the Aura: The Now, the Then, and Modernity,” *Walter Benjamin and History*, ed. Andrew Benjamin (New York: Continuum, 2006), 8.
- 35.** Daney, “Before and After the Image,” par. 2.
- 36.** Fox, *Cold World*, 7.
- 37.** Ibid., 70.
- 38.** I have been unable to locate the author, title, date and location of this evocative mechanical sculpture.
- 39.** Jorge Luis Borges, *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, trans. Andrew Hurley (New York: Viking, 1967), 2.

La Region Centrale 1969

The following is an excerpt from a proposal by Michael Snow to the Canadian Film Development Corporation in March 1969. It was first published in *About 30 Works* by Michael Snow in 1972 by the National Gallery of Canada for an exhibition at the Centre for Inter-American Relations in New York.

After finishing *Wavelength*, which is in its entirety a single camera movement (a zoom), I realized that the movement of the camera as a separate expressive entity in film is completely unexplored. In 1967 I made diagrams and wrote plans for sets of possible camera movements and made a short film (*Standard Time*, 8 minutes) as a first investigation of the effects of a particular set of repeated camera movements. After that I started on ideas for a longer film using a repeated scanning back-and-forth pan and a repeated up-and-down pan as the only camera movements. This film was shot in July 1968 while I was teaching at Fairleigh Dickinson University in New Jersey and completed in March 1969. It is titled <—>, is 50 minutes long and will have its premiere at the Whitney Museum in New York on May 22. It is almost impossible to describe the effect of this film. Visual rhythms (in film) can have as infinitely varied qualities as rhythms in music. The camera pans continuously at various tempi, starting at a medium speed, then gradually going slower and slower, then gradually rising in speed to very, very fast. It is set in a classroom and the activity therein was scripted by myself.

This film has opened up incredible possibilities, and this is what this essay is all about: I would like to make a three-hour film "orchestrating" all the possibilities of camera movement and the various relationships between it and what is being photographed.

The movement can be an imperceptible part of the activity, can accent it, can counterpoint or contradict it and be independent from it. Since I'm sure nothing has been done in this area, perhaps I should clarify the sense in which I can say that camera movement is an unexplored potentially rich part of cinema: camera movement has generally been allied to the dictates of the story and characters being presented and follows what has been assumed to further these things, e.g., someone leaves the room, the camera follows this action. I give the camera an equal role in the film to what is being photographed.

The camera is an instrument which has expressive possibilities in itself. I want to make a gigantic landscape film equal in terms of film to the great landscape paintings of Cézanne, Poussin, Corot, Monet, Matisse and in Canada the Group of Seven.

The scene and action will be shot at different times of day and in different weather, although all in the spring or summer.

The film will become a kind of absolute record of a piece of wilderness. Eventually the effect of the mechanized movement will be what I imagine the first rigorous filming of the moon surface. But this will feel like a record of the last wilderness on earth, a film to be taken into outer space as a souvenir of what nature once was. I want to convey a feeling of absolute aloneness, a kind of Goodbye to Earth which I believe we are living through. In complete opposition to what most films convey, this film will not present only human drama but mechanical and natural drama as well. It will preserve what will increasingly become an extreme rarity: wilderness. Perhaps aloneness will also become a rarity. At any rate the film will create a very special state of mind, and while I believe that it will have no precedent I also believe it will be possible for it to have a large audience.

I have two general areas in mind for the location. I am familiar with the country north of Chicoutimi (my mother's birthplace) in Quebec, and to familiarly balance it out, in 1912 and 1914 my father was in surveying parties which mapped what are now partly the chief mining districts in Northern Ontario (Kapuskasung, Timmins). I have his notebooks and snapshots from that time and they have always had a fascination for me. Enclosed is a snapshot (mine) of the type of typically Canadian northern landscape I would like to use.

Converging on *La Region Centrale*: Michael Snow in Conversation with Charlotte Townsend 1971

Michael Snow, with Joyce Wieland, spent ten weeks of the 1970 fall semester as visiting artist at the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design. He had just finished filming *La Region Centrale* in northern Quebec and was editing in Halifax. Charlotte Townsend took the following from taped conversations with Snow in Halifax. The article was first published in *artscanada* 28, no. 1, Issue 152/153 (February-March 1971).

Note: The opening section of the film in which Pierre Abbeloos is described as appearing was finally removed. The interview gives the impression that the "sound-instruction" method was used through most of the film. In fact, the three hours derived from six hours of material were created, following the pre-composed score, by instructing the camera-mount machine electrically with a series of dials and switches. These were the On/Off switch for the machine and camera, and dials for the Horizontal, Vertical, Rotation (centred on the lens) and Zoom. The score defined speed from 1 (slow) to 10 (fastest) and duration. An example would be Horizontal speed 5, plus Vertical speed 1, plus Rotation 10 for three minutes. This would produce a particular kind of motion shape created by determining relative simultaneous speeds of movement for each arc.

M.S. More than five years ago I started speculating on how you could make a real landscape film, a movie of a completely open space. *Wavelength*, 1966-67, *Standard*

Time, 1967, and <—>, 1969, used closed, rectangular spaces, each for different purposes. *New York Eye* and *Ear Control*, 1964, had both city and country spaces, but they were part of a completely different composition from what one might call "landscape." I wanted to make a film in which what the camera-eye did in the space would be completely appropriate to what it saw, but at the same time equal to it. Certain landscape paintings have achieved a unity of method and subject. Cézanne, for instance, produced an, to say the least, incredibly balanced relationship between what he did and what he (apparently) saw.

Standard Time had the germ of the idea. When I saw what happened with the continuous circular, horizontal pans I realized there was a lot to be done with it. If properly orchestrated it can do some powerful physical-psychic things. It can really move you around, as I think you felt in the ten-minute excerpt I showed you. If you become completely involved in the reality of these circular movements it's you who is spinning surrounded by everything, or, conversely, you are a stationary centre and it's all revolving around you. But on the screen it's the centre which is never seen, which is mysterious. One of the 45 titles I considered using was *!432101234?!* [an adaptation of a sculpture title], by which I meant that as you move down in dimensions you approach zero and in this film, *La Region Centrale*, that zero point is the absolute centre, Nirvanic zero, being the ecstatic centre of a complete sphere. You see, the camera moves around an invisible point completely in 360 degrees, not only horizontally but in every direction and on every plane of a sphere. Not only does it move in predirected orbits and spirals but it itself also turns, rolls and spins. So that there are circles within circles and cycles within cycles. Eventually there's no gravity. The film is a cosmic strip.

I'd wanted to use another non-verbal title like <—> but hadn't settled on one when Joyce saw the words *La Region Centrale* in a book on physics in a bookstore in Quebec City and suggested it. I think it's fine, very appropriate.

As a move from <—> I decided to extend the machine aspect of film so that there might be a more objective feeling; you wouldn't be thinking of someone's expressive handling of the thing but perhaps how and why the whole thing got set in motion, what's behind it. In both <—> and *La Region Centrale* once it is set up it keeps on going. The camera itself is a machine, so attaching it to another personally designed machine seemed a way of augmenting its possibilities. In this case I was composing for a very special instrument. The piano is a machine too.

When I'm talking about my films it sometimes worries me that I give the impression that they're just a kind of documentation of a thesis. They're not. They're experiences: real experiences, even if they are representational. The structure is obviously important, and one describes it because it's more easily describable than other aspects; but the shape, with all the other elements, adds up to something which can't be said verbally and that's why the work is, why it exists. There are a lot of quite complex things going on, some of which develop from setting the idea in motion. The idea is one thing, the result another. In <—>, for example, there were some

qualities that I couldn't possibly have foreseen but which were organically appropriate and which I tried to strengthen in the editing. *Wavelength* was like a song, like singing, but with <—> I wanted to do something that emphasized rhythm. One of its qualities is a kind of percussive rawness, but it goes through various stages of effects and qualities at the different speeds. When it's very slow one is more interested in identifying everything; as it gets to a medium speed there's the rickety quality, a kind of futurist staggering. Faster, and the image begins to smear, to blur. The continuous side-to-side motion is so ongoing that it sets up its own [real] time and the things and people that are caught up in the scanning process become consumed by it. The film has a time of its own which overrides the time of the things photographed. The people photographed seem victimized by it, but the film wins out and so does the real live spectator. *La Region Centrale* grew from this. In seeing *One Second in Montreal* you have to be able to live with what is happening for a certain length of time in order to begin to understand it, to start to speculate with it. It is literally made with lengths of time. In a completely different way this applies to *La Region* too. It is a big space and it needed a big time. It's manageable, however. Three hours isn't that long. You can see three hours. It's embarrassing to say it, but within the terms of my work I had in the back of my mind great religious works like Bach's St. Matthew Passion, B Minor Mass, St. John Passion, Ascension oratorio. What an artist! I wish he could hear and see *La Region Centrale*. In various philosophies and religions there has often been the suggestion, sometimes the dogma, that transcendence would be a fusion of opposites. In <—> there's the possibility of such a fusion being achieved by velocity. I've said before, and perhaps I can quote myself, "*New York Eye and Ear Control* is philosophy, *Wavelength* is metaphysics and <—> is physics." By the last I mean the conversion of matter into energy. $E=mc^2$. *La Region* continues this but it becomes simultaneously micro and macro, cosmic-planetary as well as atomic. Totality is achieved in terms of cycles rather than action and reaction. It's above that.

Also it should present the clearest dialogue between what one identifies as "sky," for example, and the actual, physical effect on the eye-mind of the projected moving light image. *La Region* isn't only a documentary photographing of a particular place at various times of day but is equally and more importantly a source of sensations, an ordering, an arranging of eye movements and of inner ear movements. It starts out here, respecting the gravity of our situation but it more and more sees as a planet does. Up down up, down up down, up up up. The first 30 minutes shows us the four people who have set the camera and machine in motion doing various things, talking, looking, but after that we are gone and the remaining two and a half hours is entirely made by the machinery (you?). There are no other people but you (the machinery?) and the extraordinary wilderness. Alone. Like a lot of other humans I feel horror at the thought of the humanizing of the entire planet. In this film I recorded the visit of some of our minds and bodies and machinery to a wild place but I didn't colonize it, enslave it. I hardly even borrowed it. Seeing really is believing. Joyce was planning to make a film of the making

of *La Region* but unfortunately it wasn't possible. She had a wonderful title for it too: *A Humane Use of Technology*.

The Canadian Film Development Corporation gave me a grant for about half the money I figured I needed to make this film. Later, Famous Players, the theatre chain, invested some more money in it and made it possible for it to be made. Finding someone to solve the problem of making the camera move in the controllable way that I wanted and then to build the necessary equipment was the first thing to be done. I knew what I wanted but wasn't sure about how it could be done. I tried a lot of people, companies. Graeme Ferguson, an old friend and fine filmmaker, recommended Pierre Abbeloos of Montreal with whom he had worked on some special camera-mechanism problems. Pierre had some fine ideas how to do it, and in about a year he built this fantastic machine and all its electronics. He's a really extraordinary person. He appears in the film. You don't see the machine, but a couple of times you see its beautiful, strange shadow, a passing hint at the source of the phenomenon you're involved with. The other big problem was finding a place. I had several requirements and Joyce and I spent months of fantastic trips trying to find them all in one place. We looked mostly in Quebec from Montreal north to 100 miles south of Ungava. I wanted complete wilderness with nothing man-made visible, yet it had to be relatively accessible because of the budget and the heavy but delicate equipment, four people, etc. We tried by car first, thinking we could find something just off a road, but there was always something wrong. I finally gave up on the car idea and after a lot of consulting with people, maps and aerial photos, I rented a helicopter and found the place about 80 miles north of Sept-Îles. It's a mountaintop strewn with extraordinary boulders, it had some of the kinds of slopes I wanted and a long deep vista of mountains. It's not a travel-poster beauty, but it's a unique place, arctic-like, rocky, no trees. I was thinking of titling the film "A Rock and Grass Festival"!

I composed the camera movements, made an overall score for the film. Pierre worked out a system of supplying the orders to the machine to move in various patterns by means of sound tapes. Each direction has a different frequency of an electronic sine wave assigned to it. It makes up a layer of tones divided into five sections starting very high, about 10,000 cycles per second, down to about 70 cycles. The speed information is in terms of beats or pulses going from slow to fast. So the sound space is divided up horizontally, which makes it equivalent and synchronous to the eye space in some ways, but in others it's a foil to it. Anyway, this layered but simple sound space is the sound track. The machine can be operated remotely with a set of dials and switches. The sound-image relation in films is a whole world of conversation in itself.

I only looked in the camera once. The film was made by the planning and by the machinery itself. So you can imagine I was eagerly awaiting the results when the film (about six hours) finally went to the lab in Montreal.

Most of my films accept the traditional theatre situation. Audience here, screen there. It makes concentration and contemplation possible. We're two sided and we fold.

Truly three-dimensional pieces can only be done with sound, and I did a sound piece at Expo 67 called *Sense Solo* that completely wrapped that up as far as I'm concerned. Multiscreen things usually involve such vague optical direction that they're often a kind of therapeutical Impressionism. My work is classical in the sense that it involves a definite directing of one's concentration. The single rectangle can contain a lot. In *La Region* the frame is very important, as the image is continually flowing through it. The frame is eyelids. It can seem sad that in order to exist a form must have bounds, limits, set and setting. The rectangle's content can be precisely that. In *La Region* the frame emphasizes the cosmic continuity which is beautiful, but tragic: it just goes on without us.

Oswald de Andrade

Manifesto Antropofágico

Só a Antropofagia nos une. Socialmente. Economicamente. Filosoficamente.

* * *

Única lei do mundo. Expressão mascarada de todos os individualismos, de todos os colectivismos. De todas as religiões. De todos os tratados de paz.

* * *

Tupi, or not tupi that is the question.

* * *

Contra todas as catequeses. E contra a mãe dos Gracos.

* * *

Só me interessa o que não é meu. Lei do homem. Lei do antropófago.

* * *

Estamos fatigados de todos os maridos católicos suspeitosos postos em drama. Freud acabou com o enigma mulher e com outros sustos da psicologia impressa.

* * *

O que atropelava a verdade era a roupa, o impermeável entre o mundo interior e o mundo exterior. A reacção contra o homem vestido. O cinema Americano informará.

* * *

Filhos do sol, mãe dos viventes. Encontrados e amados ferozmente, com toda a hipocrisia da saudade, pelos imigrados, pelos traficados e pelos touristes. No país da cobra grande.

* * *

Foi porque nunca tivemos gramáticas, nem colecções de velhos vegetais. E nunca soubemos o que era urbano, suburbano, fronteiriço e continental. Preguiçosos no mapamúndi do Brasil.

* * *

Uma consciência participante, uma rítmica religiosa.

* * *

Contra todos os importadores de consciência enlatada. A existência palpável da vida. E a mentalidade pré-lógica para o Sr. Lévy-Bruhl estudar.

* * *

Queremos a Revolução Caraíba. Maior que a Revolução Francesa. A unificação de todas as revoltas eficazes na direcção do homem. Sem nós a Europa não teria sequer a sua pobre declaração dos direitos do homem.

* * *

A idade de ouro anunciada pela América. A idade de ouro. E todas as girls.

* * *

Filiação. O contacto com o Brasil Caraíba. Oú Villegaignon print terre. Montaigne. O homem natural. Rousseau. Da Revolução Francesa ao Romantismo, à Revolução Bolchevista, à Revolução Surrealista e ao bárbaro tecnizado de Keyserling. Caminhamos.

* * *

Nunca fomos catequizados. Vivemos através de um direito sonâmbulo. Fizemos Cristo nascer na Bahia. Ou em Belém do Pará.

* * *

Mas nunca admitimos o nascimento da lógica entre nós.

* * *

Contra o Padre Vieira. Autor do nosso primeiro empréstimo, para ganhar comissão. O rei-analfabeto dissera-lhe: ponha isso no papel mas sem muita lábia. Fez-se o empréstimo. Gravou-se o açúcar Brasileiro. Vieira deixou o dinheiro em Portugal e nos trouxe a lábia.

* * *

O espírito recusa-se a conceber o espírito sem o corpo. O antropomorfismo. Necessidade da vacina antropofágica. Para o equilíbrio contra as religiões de meridiano. E as inquisições exteriores.

* * *

Só podemos atender ao mundo orecular.

* * *

Tínhamos a justiça codificação da vingança. A ciência codificação da Magia. Antropofagia. A transformação permanente do Tabu em totem.

* * *

Contra o mundo reversível e as ideias objectivadas. Cadaverizadas. O stop do pensamento que é dinâmico. O indivíduo vítima do sistema. Fonte das injustiças clássicas. Das injustiças românticas. E o esquecimento das conquistas interiores.

* * *

Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros. Roteiros.

* * *

O instinto Caraíba.

* * *

Morte e vida das hipóteses. Da equação eu parte do Kosmos ao axioma Kosmos parte do eu. Subsistência. Conhecimento. Antropofagia.

* * *

Contra as elites vegetais. Em comunicação com o solo.

* * *

Nunca fomos catequizados. Fizemos foi Carnaval. O índio vestido de senador do Império. Fingindo de Pitt. Ou figurando nas óperas de Alencar cheio de bons sentimentos portugueses.

* * *

Já tínhamos o comunismo. Já tínhamos a língua surrealista. A idade de ouro.

* * *

Catiti Catiti

Imara Notiá

Notiá Imara

Ipejú

* * *

A magia e a vida. Tínhamos a relação e a distribuição dos bens físicos, dos bens morais, dos bens dignários. E sabíamos transpor o mistério e a morte com o auxílio de algumas formas gramaticais.

* * *

Perguntei a um homem o que era o Direito. Ele me respondeu que era a garantia do exercício da possibilidade. Esse homem chamava-se Galli Mathias. Comi-o.

* * *

Só não há determinismo onde há mistério. Mas que temos nós com isso?

* * *

Contra as histórias do homem que começam no Cabo Finisterra. O mundo não datado. Não rubricado. Sem Napoleão. Sem César.

* * *

A fixação do progresso por meio de catálogos e aparelhos de televisão. Só a maquinaria. E os transfusores de sangue.

* * *

Contra as sublimações antagônicas. Trazidas nas caravelas.

* * *

Contra a verdade dos povos missionários, definida pela sagacidade de um antropólogo, o Visconde de Cairu: - É mentira muitas vezes repetida.

* * *

Mas não foram cruzados que vieram. Foram fugitivos de uma civilização que estamos comendo, porque somos fortes e vingativos como o Jabuti.

* * *

Se Deus é a consciência do Universo Incriado, Guaraci é a mãe dos viventes. Jaci é a mãe dos vegetais.

* * *

Não tivemos especulação. Mas tínhamos adivinhação. Tínhamos Política que é a ciência da distribuição. E um sistema social-planetário.

* * *

As migrações. A fuga dos estados tediosos. Contra as escleroses urbanas. Contra os Conservatórios e o tédio especulativo.

* * *

De William James e Voronoff. A transfiguração do Tabu em totem. Antropofagia.

* * *

O pater famílias e a criação da Moral da Cegonha: Ignorância real das coisas + falta de imaginação + sentimento de autoridade ante a prole curiosa.

* * *

É preciso partir de um profundo ateísmo para se chegar à ideia de Deus. Mas a caraíba não precisava. Porque tinha Guaraci.

* * *

O objectivo criado reage com os Anjos da Queda. Depois Moisés divaga. Que temos nós com isso?

* * *

Antes dos Portugueses descobrirem o Brasil, o Brasil tinha descoberto a felicidade.

* * *

Contra o índio de tocheiro. O índio filho de Maria, afilhado de Catarina de Médicis e genro de D. Antônio de Mariz.

* * *

A alegria é a prova dos nove.

No matriarcado de Pindorama.

* * *

Contra a Memória fonte do costume. A experiência pessoal renovada.

* * *

Somos concretistas. As ideias tomam conta, reagem, queimam gente nas praças públicas. Suprimamos as ideias e as outras paralisias. Pelos roteiros. Acreditar nos sinais, acreditar nos instrumentos e nas estrelas.

* * *

Contra Goethe, a mãe dos Gracos, e a Corte de D. João VI.

* * *

A alegria é a prova dos nove.

* * *

A luta entre o que se chamaria Incriado e a Criatura – ilustrada pela contradição permanente do homem e o seu Tabu. O amor quotidiano e o *modus vivendi* capitalista. Antropofagia. Absorção do inimigo sacro. Para transformá-lo em totem. A humana aventura. A terrena finalidade. Porém, só as puras elites conseguiram realizar a antropofagia carnal, que traz em si o mais alto sentido da vida e evita todos os males identificados por Freud, males catequistas. O que se dá não é uma sublimação do instinto sexual. É a escala termométrica do instinto antropofágico. De carnal, ele se torna electivo e cria a amizade. Afectivo, o amor. Especulativo, a ciência. Desvia-se e transfere-se. Chegamos ao aviltamento. A baixa antropofagia aglomerada nos pecados de catecismo – a inveja, a usura, a calúnia, o assassinato. Peste dos chamados povos cultos e cristianizados, é contra ela que estamos agindo. Antropófagos.

* * *

Contra Anchieta cantando as onze mil virgens do céu, na terra de Iracema, - o patriarca João Ramalho fundador de São Paulo.

* * *

A nossa independência ainda não foi proclamada. Frase típica de D. João VI: - Meu filho, põe essa coroa na tua cabeça, antes que algum aventureiro o faça! Expulsemos a dinastia. É preciso expulsar o espírito Bragantino, as ordenações e o rapé de Maria da Fonte.

* * *

Contra a realidade social, vestida e opressora, cadastrada por Freud – a realidade sem complexos, sem loucura, sem prostituições e sem penitenciárias do matriarcado de Pindorama.

OSWALD DE ANDRADE em “Piratininga Ano 374 da Deglutição do Bispo Sardinha.” (Revista de Antropofagia, Ano 1, No. 1, maio de 1928.)

Oswald de Andrade

Cannibalist Manifesto (translated by Leslie Bary)

Cannibalism alone unites us. Socially. Economically. Philosophically.

* * *

The world's single law. Disguised expression of all individualism, of all collectivisms. Of all religions. Of all peace treaties.

* * *

Tupi or not tupi, that is the question.

* * *

Down with every catechism. And down with the Gracchi's mother.

* * *

I am only concerned with what is not mine. Law of Man. Law of the cannibal.

* * *

We're tired of all the suspicious Catholic husbands who've been given starring roles. Freud put an end to the mystery of Woman and to other horrors of printed psychology.

* * *

What clashed with the truth was clothing, that raincoat placed between the inner and outer worlds. The reaction against the dressed man. American movies will inform us.

* * *

Children of the sun, mother of the living. Discovered and loved ferociously with all the hypocrisy of saudade, by the immigrants, by slaves and by the touristes. In the land of the Great Snake.

* * *

It was because we never had grammars, nor collections of old plants. And we never knew what urban, suburban, frontier and continental were. Lazy in the mapamundi of Brazil.

* * *

A participatory consciousness, a religious rhythmic.

* * *

Down with all the importers of canned consciousness. The palpable existence of life. And the pre-logical mentality for Mr. Lévy-Bruhl to study.

* * *

We want the Carib Revolution. Greater than the French Revolution. The unification of all productive revolts for the progress of humanity. Without us, Europe wouldn't even have its meager declaration of the rights of man.

* * *

The Golden Age heralded by America. The Golden Age. And all the girls.

* * *

Heritage. Contact with the Carib side of Brazil. OÙ Villegaignon print terre. Montaigne. Natural man. Rousseau. From the French Revolution to Romanticism, to the Bolshevik Revolution, to the Surrealist Revolution and Keyserling's technicized barbarian. We push onward.

* * *

We were never catechized. We live by a somnambulistic law. We made Christ to be born in Bahia. Or in Belém do Pará.

* * *

But we never permitted the birth of logic among us.

* * *

Down with Father Vieira. Author of our first loan, to make a commission. The illiterate king had told him: put that on paper, but without a lot of lip. The loan was made. Brazilian sugar was signed away. Vieira left the money in Portugal and brought us the lip.

* * *

The spirit refuses to conceive a spirit without a body. Anthropomorphism. Need for the cannibalistic vaccine. To maintain our equilibrium, against meridian religions. And against outside inquisitions.

* * *

We can attend only to the orecular world.

* * *

We already had justice, the codification of vengeance. Science, the codification of Magic. Cannibalism. The permanent transformation of the Tabu into a totem.

* * *

Down with the reversible world, and against objectified ideas. Cadaverized. The stop of thought that is dynamic. The individual as victim of the system. Source of classical injustices. Of romantic injustices. And the forgetting of inner conquests.

* * *

Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes. Routes.

* * *

The Carib instinct.

* * *

Death and life of all hypotheses. From the equation "Self, part of the Cosmos" to the axiom "Cosmos, part of the Self." Subsistence. Experience. Cannibalism.

* * *

Down with the vegetable elites. In communication with the soil.

* * *

We were never catechized. What we really made was Carnival. The Indian dressed as senator of the Empire. Making believe he's Pitt. Or performing in Alencar's operas, full of worthy Portuguese sentiments.

* * *

We already had Communism. We already had Surrealist language. The Golden Age.

* * *

Catiti Catiti
Imara Noti
Noti
Imara
Ipej

* * *

Magic and life. We had the description and allocation of tangible goods, moral goods, and royal goods. And we knew how to transpose mystery and death with the help of a few grammatical forms.

* * *

I asked a man what the Law was. He answered that it was the guarantee of the exercise of possibility. That man was named Galli Mathias. I ate him.

* * *

Only where there is mystery is there no determinism. But what does that have to do with us?

* * *

Down with the histories of Man that begin at Cape Finisterre. The undated world. Unrubrified. Without Napoleon. Without Caesar.

* * *

The determination of progress by catalogues and television sets. Only machinery. And blood transfusers.

* * *

Down with the antagonistic sublimations. Brought here in caravels.

* * *

Down with the truth of missionary peoples, defined by the sagacity of a cannibal, the Viscount of Cairu: - It's a lie told again and again.

* * *

But those who came here weren't crusaders. They were fugitives from a civilization we are eating, because we are strong and vindictive like the Jabuti.

* * *

If God is the consciousness of the Uncreated Universe, Guaraci is the mother of the living. Jaci is the mother of plants.

* * *

We never had speculation. But we had divination. We had Politics, which is the science of distribution. And a social system in harmony with the planet.

* * *

The migrations. The flight from tedious states. Against urban scleroses. Against the Conservatories and speculative tedium.

* * *

From William James and Voronoff. The transfiguration of the Taboo into a totem. Cannibalism.

* * *

The paterfamilias and the creation of the Morality of the Stork: Real ignorance of things + lack of imagination + sense of authority in the face of curious offspring.

* * *

One must depart from a profound atheism in order to arrive at the idea of God. But the Carib didn't need to. Because he had Guaraci.

* * *

The created object reacts like the Fallen Angels. Next, Moses day dreams. What do we have to do with that?

* * *

Before the Portuguese discovered Brazil, Brazil had discovered happiness.

* * *

Down with the torch-bearing Indian. The Indian son of Mary, the stepson of Catherine of Medici and the godson of Dom Antonio de Mariz.

* * *

Joy is the proof of nines.

In the matriarchy of Pindorama.

* * *

Down with Memory as a source of custom. The renewal of personal experience.

* * *

We are concretists. Ideas take charge, react, and burn people in public squares. Let's get rid of ideas and other paralyses. By means of routes. Believe in signs; believe in sextants and in stars.

* * *

Down with Goethe, the Gracchi's mother, and the court of Dom João VI.

* * *

Joy is the proof by nines.

* * *

The struggle between what we might call the Uncreated and the Creation - illustrated by the permanent contradiction between Man and his Taboo. Everyday love and the capitalist way of life. Cannibalism. Absorption of the sacred enemy. To transform him into a totem. The human adventure. The earthly goal. Even so, only the pure elites managed to realize carnal cannibalism, which carries within itself the highest meaning of life and avoids all the ills identified by Freud - catechist ills. What result is not a sublimation of the sexual instinct. It is the thermometrical scale of the cannibal instinct. Carnal at first, this instinct becomes elective, and creates friendship. When it is affective, it

creates love. When it is speculative, it creates science. It takes detours and moves around. At times it is degraded. Low cannibalism, agglomerated with the sins of catechism - envy, usury, calumny, murder. We are acting against this plague of a supposedly cultured and Christianized peoples. Cannibals.

* * *

Down with Anchieta singing of the eleven thousand virgins of Heaven, in the land of Iracema - the patriarch João Ramalho, founder of São Paulo.

* * *

Our independence has not yet been proclaimed. An expression typical of Dom João VI: "My son, put this crown on your head, before some adventurer puts it on his!" We expelled the dynasty. We must still expel the Bragantine spirit, the decrees and the snuff-box of Maria da Fonte.

* * *

Down with the dressed and oppressive social reality registered by Freud - reality without complexes, without madness, without prostitutions and without penitentiaries, in the matriarchy of Pindorama.

OSWALD DE ANDRADE In "Piratininga, in the 374th Year of the Swallowing of Bishop Sardinha"

Timothy Morton

Beginning After the End

There are thoughts we can anticipate, glimpsed in the distance along existing thought pathways.

This is a future that is simply the present, stretched out further. There is not-yet- thought that never arrives—yet here we are thinking it in the paradoxical flicker of this very sentence.

If we want thought different from the present—if we want to change the present— then thought must be aware of this kind of future. It is not a future into which we can progress.

This future is unthinkable. Yet here we are, thinking it.

Coexisting, we are thinking future coexistence. Predicting it and more: keeping the unpredictable one open.

Yet such a future, the open future, has become taboo. Because it is real, yet beyond concept. Because it is weird.

Art is thought from the future. Thought we cannot explicitly think at present. Thought we may not think or speak at all.

If we want thought different from the present, then thought must veer toward art. To be a thing at all—a rock, a lizard, a human—is to be in a twist. How thought longs to twist and turn like the serpent poetry!

Or is art veering toward thought? Does it ever arrive? The threads of fate have tied our tongues.

Tongue twisters inclined towards nonsense.

Logic includes nonsense as long as it can tell the truth. The logic of nonsense.

The needle skipped the groove of the present. Into this dark forest you have already turned.

I take present to mean for the last twelve thousand years. A butterfly kiss of geological time.

Dark Ecology – For a logic of future coexistence

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