



Laurence A. Rickels

**CRITIQUE OF  
FANTASY**

**NEW**

**VOLUME 3**

**The Block of Fame**

CRITIQUE OF FANTASY, VOL. III



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Fig. 1. Hieronymus Bosch, Ship of Fools (1490–1500)



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Brainstorm Books  
Santa Barbara, California



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First published in 2021 by Brainstorm Books  
An imprint of punctum books, Earth, Milky Way  
<https://www.punctumbooks.com>

ISBN-13: 978-1-953035-28-8 (print)

ISBN-13: 978-1-953035-29-5 (ePDF)

DOI: 10.21983/P3.0279.1.00

LCCN: 2020939532

Library of Congress Cataloging Data is available from the Library of Congress

Book design: Vincent W.J. van Gerven Oei

Cover image: "Palm Springs, CA," July 8, 2016. Photograph by mooninsean.

Frontispiece: "Out, Out Spotlight!" 2020. Photograph by Nancy Barton.

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(For his closing work, Freud returned to the myth or fantasy of the primal father. At the same time Freud translated Marie Bonaparte's transference gift – her narrative of the successful cancer treatment of her beloved chow)

*Cats and Dogs*

(Hilda Doolittle, H.D. or Cat, enters Freud's household. Otto Rank continues striking out on his own with a new and improved poetics of the daydream through which he tries to lose the animal relation and Freud's mortality)

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*Sloburbia*

(Whose wish is it? A father who fled Nazi Europe for California's safe shore novelizes his daughter's innovation: her initiation into the Malibu in-group of surfers. Wishing as training camp for big ideas and big feelings. When word got out that Gidget was Jewish one of the surfers placed a burning cross in her family home's front yard)

*Going Steady; or, the Other Walking on Water*

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(Stopovers in *Jaws* and *The Old Man and the Sea*. Moby Dick sails around the datemark of the blubber industry to arrive, by the temporal paradox of the crypt, in the twentieth century's traumatic histories)

*Wanting Bombs to Explode*

(Spider-Man's late arrival as teenage superhero. The opening of modern adolescence follows detonations within the homosexual component of psychic reality. Fidgeting, fantasizing, and novelization in Klein and Kohner)

*No One Can Know His Name*

(The case of Rumpelstiltskin and the withholding of the fame)

*Space Race*

(In Sturgeon's *More Than Human*, outsiders with psychic powers like telepathy and teleportation join together to form a more perfect origin of species, the Homo Gestalt. But it must first bring up the arrears of innovation by entering upon morality. Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed* shifts the history of slavery from its transitive sentencing of trauma into the alternate histories of evolving psychophysics. Arthur Jafa follows Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* into the outer space of blackness)

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## Preface

Winding up a radio interview in Berlin that never aired, I relented in my scouring of German history – the Trump presidency was already upon us – and allowed that there was “der andere Patient,” “the other patient,” namely, the United States, a patient, however, still finding protection in denial, the protection denied Germany in the world at large. This volume did not become “The Other Patient,” although one of its overriding themes, the wish for fame, can be considered a symptom of American culture and its ubiquitous reach for the stars.

I saved up Edmund Bergler, another analyst in the canon of the psychopathology and poetics of the daydream, to read and perform the symptom picture featured in this volume. His obsessive theorizing makes him candidate or casualty of the wish that he sees underlying all neurosis, all fantasy. Staggered by a relay of defenses and defenses against defenses, the wish to be denied, the bottom line according to Bergler, wasn't a candidate for integration in my *Phantasiermaschine*. But like Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of masochism, in which Bergler was assured a place, the theorization of the wish to be refused can match a specific work, in particular if its abiding focus is on the fantasy of never-lasting fame.

In Palm Springs, I learned that there is “the desert version” of everything “Hollywood,” beginning with the lookalikes of the named stars on Hollywood Boulevard's Walk of Fame stamped into the sidewalks along Palm Drive. But it's not the same names, not the same stars. At dinner our waiter confirmed what we thought we saw in the large poster up against the wall that he



had indeed been on “Dancing with the Stars.” Then his colleague added from across the room – it was like an exchange in a sitcom – but it was only “the desert version.” A leftover from the time when Palm Springs was, at least for a season, Hollywood in the desert, the pairing up like Don Quixote and Sancho Panza of the realized or deluded fulfillment of the wish for fame with the locally more accessible version of falling short would be truly utopian. In childhood any little one could grow up to be a star. But then you just keep getting older – way older than your promise. The striving for fame is the very measure, measured in reverse, of the abyssal falling away of the recognition values that make up our continuity in memory.

“Hollywood” and “the desert version” don’t sum up the wish for fame, its fulfillments and unfulfillments. I offer instead by way of intro a work by Samuel R. Delany in which the best intended content together with a consummate mastery of form cannot outfly the denial of originality. To finance his first trip to Europe, Delany, a New Yorker, wrote *Empire Star* in 1965, a novella that’s also arguably a *Bildungsroman*. Thinking about Europe and that means German history and *Kultur*, Delany composed within the borderlands of fantasy and science fiction an allegory of the East Coast’s recent past as the future curse upon the universe.

It’s on a backwater planet boasting a relocated or replicated Brooklyn Bridge, in other words out West, that the bildungsroman opens, tying a boy’s development to the mission he accepts or which befalls him, the mission to journey to Empire Star and deliver an unknown message. The protagonist, the boy named Comet Jo, is a blond beauty straddling both coasts, Germany and California.

Self-reflexivity, German literature’s romance with itself, enters the looping of sci-fi’s variation on doubling, time travel. When a spaceship crashes nearby and he goes to check it out, “it was only when Comet Jo was kneeling and the figure was panting in his arms that he realized it was his double.”<sup>1</sup> The double-thing melts and then there was Jewel: “The thing was multicolored, multifaceted, multiplexed, and me. I’m Jewel” (6). He’s the omniscient

1 Samuel R. Delany, *Empire Star* (New York: Vintage Books, 2001), 5. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

narrator and a character in the story, a multiple-thing coextensive with the looping novella. To protect the transmission of the message, Jewel crystallizes on the spot, which means he becomes “just a point of view” (8). Jo pockets Jewel, the POV accompanying him on his *Bildungs*-journey.

The novella’s emphasis in the course of Jo’s education and formation appears to be on harvesting strong emotion, even if the harrow is made up not of wishes but the defenses against them. Delany introduces the universal enslavement of the Lll through a division in the belaboring of affect whereby unbearable grief is the unremitting lot of the slave owners. Because the Lll alone can rebuild entire planetary civilizations (including their ethical systems) in the aftermath of total wars, they are under the empire’s protection. Any contact with them leads without exception to extreme grief, which is not what they are feeling, but which is the gist of their defense.

“Why don’t they turn ’em *loose*?” Jo asked, and the sentence became a cry halfway through.

“Economics,” Ron said.

“How can ya think ’bout economics feelin’ like ... this?”

“Not many people can,” Ron said. “That’s the Lll’s protection.” (27)

Along his yellow brick road, Jo meets Lump, a linguistic ubiquitous multiplex, “built by a dying Lll to house its disassociating consciousness” (44). But because Lump is half-machine the other half forfeits the protection and Jo doesn’t feel the grief. Communicating through an idiom of allusions to American popular culture, Lump makes it clear that the Lll stand for the heirs to enslavement in US history. When Jo invites Lump to come along, the sort-of computer warns that if found out a half-Lll free agent is free game. Jo shrugs it off, saying that Lump should identify as a computer. “Like I said, I wouldn’t have known if you hadn’t said anything.” And Lump responds defiantly: “I do not intend to pass” (44). Looking at photographs of Delany, it appears he qualified for the caste of blender idols like Lena Horne or Adrienne Piper, and faced passing as unintended option.

When the poet Ni Ty visits Lump and Jo, doubling and looping displace the *Bildungs*-ideal of empathizing with the Lll. Ni Ty was apprenticed to an older Lll poet who was his same-sex amour. Then he safe-deposited this chapter inside Lump. Now that his better half is gay Black American, the computer half of Lump's blender idol status travels both the no passing and the passing lanes in Delany's 1965 bio.

More twist-off than twist, doubling stays in the lead to the finish line. Ni Ty's gay apprenticeship lies outside Jo's biography to date. But everything else that happened in his life has also happened to Ni Ty. Jo can feel the curse of doubling seizing his life, which in a bildungsroman counts as a work, one that has thus been plagiarized.

He felt as if something in him had been raped and outraged.  
 "You can't steal my life!"

Suddenly Ni pushed him, Jo slipped to the deck, and the poet stood over him, shaking now. "What the hell makes you think it's yours? Maybe you stole it from me. How come I never get to finish anything out? How come any time I get a job, fall in love, have a child, suddenly I'm jerked away and flung into another dung heap where I have to start the same mess all over again? Are you doing that to me? Are you jerking me away from what's mine, picking up for yourself the thousand beautiful lives I've started?" (62)

In Delany's novel, plagiarism isn't a transitive transaction but a trauma that befalls innocent bystanders. Even the omniscient narrator or author Jewel was recognizing his own lines in what Ni Ty was saying (60). Comet Jo is only starting out on his journey of becoming-who-he-is, which transposed to the logic of the loop means becoming his doubles, catching up, for instance, with his life as Ni Ty.

Towards the close, befitting a course of *Bildung*, Jo arrives at a more adult and tempered understanding of the doubling going through him and the poet: "He lets you know how much of your life is yours and how much belongs to history" (87). What follows the apprenticeship phase of *Bildung* is the phase of renunciation

or fitting in, but not for the author, not for Goethe, whose name was heard to resonate nearer to God.

In 2017, Delany named Alfred Bester and Theodore Sturgeon his precursors, submitting writing well as the literary ticket.<sup>2</sup> This volume of *Critique of Fantasy* opens with Bester's two tele-novels, followed by analysis of the masochistic wish underlying writer's block, illuminating an impasse that Bester struggled to breach. We've already touched on the case of Sturgeon, who enjoyed a second career as laugh-track cameo in Kurt Vonnegut's psy-fi satires, which P.J. Farmer carried forward. Sturgeon's fix-it masterpiece *More Than Human* is ready for its closeup reading at the close of this volume. That at one point its author was the most anthologized English-language author is, however, another way of saying the he was hard pressed to break free of the short form.

Delany brings up these precursors in the course of dismissing P.K. Dick's growing literary reputation (he might have included J.G. Ballard's renown as well). He refers to the eccentricity of his reading practice, in other words, his apparent immunity to trends. But what underlies this errant path is his remarkable acumen in recognizing the motive force and shortfall of the wish for fame. Delany attributes the recent phenomenon of Dick's acclaim to the import of politics, if not for Dick then certainly for American academics wishing upon their own stardom.

2 Adam Fitzgerald, "Samuel Delany: 'If You're Going to Write Anything, Try to Take It Seriously.'" Part Two of Adam Fitzgerald's Conversation with the Legendary Writer," *Literary Hub*, December 5, 2017, <https://lithub.com/samuel-delany-if-youre-going-to-write-anything-try-to-take-it-seriously/>.



## No Wish Is Free

### Wishamatic Futures

The streamlining of telepathy against the reign of ghostliness in Arthur C. Clarke's *Childhood's End*, which I interpreted as pivotal to the psychoanalysis of the Devil in Notebook Ten of *The Devil's Notebooks*, is administered by alien overlords (Devil-lookalikes), who reduce the occult arc of human consciousness to live transmission among the children, who undergo the mutation/transcendence for the species. The overlords see to it that the supernatural associations with mourning, like belief in ghosts, are excised from the future and left behind with the rest of humankind, which can now disappear. The fused-together generation of tele-children, however, is awarded the distinction in extinction of raising up/erasing the future by ultimately merging with the divinity from outer space: the Overmind.

From the same era of science fiction as *Childhood's End*, but belonging to the US contingent, which for Gotthard Günther already makes a new world of difference, Alfred Bester published two novels, *The Demolished Man* (1953) and *The Stars My Destination* (1957), which treat telepathy and teleportation, respectively and exhaustively, as the two bookends of a future integration of occult capacities.

Because *The Demolished Man* is basically a novel of detection, albeit set in the distant future, the characters are all lodged inside the mystery-genre midlife milieu. In keeping with all the intrigue, the setting is organized around the difference between two castes: the Espers endowed with tele-abilities or ESP, who

belong to the Esper Guild, and are in turn broken down, in descending order, into class 1, 2, and 3 telepaths, and the normals, comparable, we are advised, to deaf-mutes in the era prior to advances in surgery.<sup>1</sup>

The mystery that the detective, Lincoln Powell, a top-level Esper, must solve is that of the criminal's motive. In other words, this work of detection means bringing the complete picture of the wish and its fulfillment into view. Like the reader, Powell knows that Ben Reich murdered D'Courtney. For the duration of the novel, however, Powell must find the missing motive if he wants to make the case against Reich stick, while Reich must outwit the detective in order to avoid the ominous sentence of "Demolition." Reich, a normal, takes advantage of the popular bias that the telepaths, berated as "peepers," are a kind of illuminati club and conspiracy. Dreading that the readable mind is an open book, Powell's antagonist purchases a homonymous mantra to defend against peeping. Like an advertising jingle, it junks up his brain, rendering it impenetrable: "Tenser, said the Tensor. Tenser, said the Tensor. Tension, apprehension, and dissension have begun" (120). It's a short circuit of thought transference on the page of language.<sup>2</sup>

The utopian goal of the Esper Guild is to extend telepathic prowess throughout the population (26) and by raising literacy to the power of peeping surmount speech and its analogue media.<sup>3</sup> But utopia is another word for off-limits. In his detective work, Powell must observe a longer list of ethical guidelines than what's

- 1 Alfred Bester, *The Demolished Man* (London: Gollancz, 2004), 23. Subsequent page references are given in the text.
- 2 As the pages turn, Bester cathects typography, naming his characters, for example, ¼maine and @kins. While in the US the "at" sign was chosen to link and separate proper names and computing domains because it was hardly ever otherwise used, in the UK it was deployed regularly as a commercial icon on the page. Although Bester wrote the second novel in Europe, he composed both in ear or eyeshot of foreign place names and typography.
- 3 In teaching potential peepers to develop their residual ESP, the instructor repeats: "Words are not necessary. Think. Remember to break the speech reflex. Repeat the first rule after me. [...] And the class chanted: 'Eliminate the Larynx!'" (97).

programmed into Asimov's robots. Powell can't use telekinesis to kill, for example, but must keep it on stun.

The detective is a scion of philosophical ethics and bears witness to the injunction turning on his first name to control his impulse to lie (32). He must keep on separating "dishonest Abe" from the honest one responsible for the work of detection that goes by the book. In the past, we are given a hint, but everyone in the novel seems to know it. Powell stole the weather, a reference, in my books, to the Werther Effect of adolescence. All that belongs to a past wherefrom the criminal named Reich hails.

The light of a distant future burns brightest in the twilight of our media-technical Sensurround, once it is history and scrapped for junk. The phone is an oldie that is still in use by the normals for the "protection" it affords them "from mind readers," since it doesn't transmit the "Telepathic Pattern" (22). Analogy with recording devices can be used to illustrate the inaccessibility (ultimately to ESP) of the psyche of the daughter of the murder victim, who witnessed the crime, but can only relive, not remember, the terrifying moment upon hearing the "key word 'help.'"

Conceive of a camera with a lens distorted into wild astigmatism so that it can only photograph the same picture over and over – the scene that twisted it into shock. Conceive of a bit of recording crystal, traumatically warped so that it can only reproduce the same fragment of music over and over, the one terrifying phrase it cannot forget. (127)

The therapies from the vintage era of mental illness are still available when they cut closer to wish power, which is where we thrive and shrive in the future. In observation of the divide between peepers and normals, between crime and motive, therapy addresses wish fantasy alone.

We witness two brief sessions in which a psychiatrist addresses the pivotal wish. Upon examining a woman patient on the TP level, the psychiatrist summarizes: "You're delighted with yourself because you're a woman. [...] It's your substitute for living. It's your phantasy. [...] 'He desires me. It's enough to know that thousands of men could have me if I'd let them. That makes me real.' Nonsense!" (135).



Though these sessions are imbued with comic relief, such doodling caricature is a mode of familiarity and identification, which is another way of conveying just how immersed in psychoanalysis this future culture is (or rather the present one from which it is extrapolated). The psychiatrist forgets his client's name and misnames him, which prompts the client to offer the correct name. "And that's your whole trouble [...]. Semantic escape [...]. You live in terms of the label, not the object. It's your escape from reality" (134).

Because the tele-scan of the unconscious of the victim's daughter isn't retrieving from her broken-down apparatus useful, identifiable information, the psychiatrist reaches further back in history to induce "artificial Déjà Éprouvé," his updating of a nineteenth-century therapy technique that brings about rebirth through wish-fulfillment:

We make the catatonic wish to escape come true. [...] We dissociate the mind from the lower levels, send it back to the womb, and let it pretend it's being born to a new life all over again. [...] Infancy, childhood, adolescence, and finally maturity. [...] By the time she catches up with herself, she'll be ready to accept the reality she's trying to escape. She'll have grown up to it, so to speak. (128–29)

What Reich doesn't consciously realize is that he murdered his own father. Powell: "He discharged his hatred. But his Super-ego [...] could not permit him to go unpunished for such a horrible crime. [...] That was the meaning of Reich's nightmare image" (241). Before committing the crime, Reich was already beset by the nightmare image of the "Man With No Face." It is the seal of Reich's repression impressed upon the knowledge that the man he wants dead is the father who rejected him. He was convinced instead that his motive was economic gain, incorporation of the victim's corporation. Reich didn't register, or, rather, he foreclosed, that D'Courtney had already acquiesced in the takeover. Powell's strategy is to wield the castrated mirror image against Reich to corral his inimical strivings within the small world after all of his wish fantasizing.

But first he must obtain from the Esper Guild the permission to enter a state of Mass Cathexis, which will raise in him a power comparable to what charges the Galactic Observer in A.E. van Vogt's "Asylum" (and the novelizations and adaptations that followed) to counter the threat of vampires from outer space. His pitch to the Guild is that Reich is "the deadly enemy" of humankind's "entire future" (200). The complex of Oedipus must not be mythically reinstated. "Reich is about to become a Galactic focal point [...] he will become immune to our reality, invulnerable to our attack, and the deadly enemy of Galactic reason and reality" (207).

As "human canal for the Capitalized energy" (206), Powell can project Reich inside a solipsistic vacuum and evacuate the stars, the planets, the sun, as well as the corporations that Reich was counting on incorporating from the reality that he shares with all others. Like a therapist, then, but on a cosmic scale, Powell builds for Reich "a common neurotic concept, the illusion that he alone in the world was real" (242), which is "one of the run-of-the-mill escape patterns. When life gets tough you tend to take refuge in the idea that it's all make-believe" (243). The trap is sprung by Reich's own sense of his import after it looks like he's gotten away with the murder: he avows that his dreams will be the world's dreams (205).

The threat of demolition makes its deadline, which is punch-line and happy end at once for the "German" history on the same page with Reich's name. Rebirth within a year into a corrective identity follows demolition of the former psycho-pattern. The energy or industry that indwells psychopathic violence must be reassigned. It proves incumbent to "straighten him out and turn him into a plus value" (249). If (the) Reich had awakened "to the wrong reality" (208), he would have held a "position of power to rock the solar system": "He was one of those rare World-Shakers, whose compulsions might have torn down our society and irrevocably committed us to his own psychotic pattern" (241-42).

The future post-war world does not punish Reich but integrates him instead. In one year's time, Reich will undergo psychic destruction, dissociation, and pain, or more explicitly, mourning without end: "The mind bids an eternity of farewells; it mourns at an endless funeral" (248). Like his traumatized younger half-

sister, who was the witness, the psycho Reich crawls to be born/borne by growing on Powell. In the future world of detection there are only midlifers, like Powell, whose favorite phrase is “Here’s thinking at you.” There is one exception, Reich’s half-sister, the traumatized witness to his murder of their father, and the first to undergo rebirth therapy. The only libidinal outlet for smiles grows on Powell until they march down the aisle of coupling. As in the world of James Bond upon the introduction of SPECTRE, the future at the end of the novel fits an adult profile of mourning.

But what is the evacuation/isolation of adolescence doing in the postwar worlds of American science fiction? There was Alfred Bester and then Philip K. Dick, who did it better. Dick’s novels promoting the empathy test in future post-war worlds, in which the main coordinates on the map of recognition are “California” and “Germany,” address the integration of psychopathic violence within a Teen Age, which the Nazis sacrificed to youth’s elevation to the position of superego. Dick’s post-war worlds doubly wrap the German flunk-you failure in a renewable milieu of immunization with and against the outer limits of psychic reality.

The second Bester novel sets *The Count of Monte Christo* on science fiction. But there is a mystery too to solve: who was responsible for ignoring Gully Foyle’s sos? He only has leads, which draw him onward. What’s more, how did he make it from the stranded spaceship to the first station he remembers? The organizing and determining capacity of this future world is teleportation. Since outer space transport, however, remains “closed to teleportation,”<sup>4</sup> Foyle’s forgetting of the scene of abandonment orbits an epistemological limit.

It was to survive a sudden fire in his lab that Mr. Jaunte looked around for the fire extinguisher, saw that it was haplessly in a remote corner, and suddenly found himself standing next to it (3). This instance of teleportation was the first to be witnessed by professional observers, his colleagues in the laboratory. Experiments ensued, claiming the lives of the majority of the test

4 Alfred Bester, *The Stars My Destination* (London: Gollancz, 2004), 8. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

subjects, until jaunting could be secured for a safe means of movement. “Transportation of oneself from one locality to another by the effort of the mind alone” is tied to a *Ding an Sicht*, the limit that allows nature to be overcome in second nature. “Jaunting is like seeing; it is a natural aptitude of almost every human organism, but it can only be developed by training and experience” (5). “Any man was capable of jaunting provided he developed two faculties, visualization and concentration” (6). He must focus on his point of arrival, visualize it completely, and “concentrate the latent energy of his mind into a single thrust to get him there” (*ibid.*). None of this sounds all that easy.

While telepathy is a specialty item in this future world,<sup>5</sup> “telecommunication systems were virtually extinct – when it was far easier to jaunte directly to a man’s office for a discussion than to telephone or telegraph” (35). The ultimate luxury lies therefore in the self-conscious use of collectible communications devices. As goes the genealogy of media so, too, goes history, in other words the recent past, in its subservience to pageantry. While reference to the recent past in the 1953 novel is lost in the enormity of the demolition/integration of an antagonist named Reich, here reference to this past indwells details illuminating gaps in the specifics of techno-history. One detail almost outflies repression by summoning the German science fiction going into Fritz Lang’s films prior to the traumatic era of realization of their high points. Among the leaders in business decked out for historical costume balls in attire that name-brands them according to their main commodities there are also the “daring Peenemundes (Rockets and Reactors), dating from the 1920s,” who “wore tuxedos, and their women unashamedly revealed legs, arms, and necks” (126). Lang already popularized the conjunction of telepathy and media in his 1922 film *Mabuse, der Spieler* (*Mabuse, the Player*). On location and at closer range, Hans Dominik, the forgotten leader of German science fiction in the 1920s and 1930s, lifted the conceit for his “technological utopian” novels.<sup>6</sup>

5 Telepathy can suit a candidate for certain “glamorous careers,” but if barred because only a “telesend, a one-way telepath,” then a teaching career is still possible (28). There is only one full telepath on Mars (182).

6 See my *Nazi Psychoanalysis*, Vol. 3: *Psy Fi* (Minneapolis: University of

In the first Bester novel, a related German deposit, “Ye New Neu Babblesberg” (162), remained nonspecific. It belongs to Spaceland, a resort that’s also a cemetery that’s also a mixed-media Globe Theater (158–65), all of which stirs associations with the Perry-Como cubism that’s at play in Dick’s novels. Consider the sports clothes that are *de rigueur* in Spaceland: “spray-gun-tights” (162). But in the course of Foyle’s progress we stop over in stations that can count truly as styling with cyberpunk *avant la lettre*. From the masquerade processions of commodities already mentioned, in which Foyle, at the top of his game, presents himself as Geoffrey Fourmyle, impresario of his own Four Mile Circus (III), backtracking through the lightless prison with its “whisper line” across displaced tangents, all the way to the first stop of survival, a meteorite McEnhanced with the debris of space wrecks, we seem already on the good ship cyberpunk anticipating what post-machinic digital mediation holds in store.

PyrE was the treasure encrypted in the forgotten scene of Foyle’s abandonment in space, which he carried forward by interrogating unto death all suspects or witnesses. This ultimate secret weapon, he is instructed, is the force of wish fantasizing going way beyond its harnessing for jaunting. “As the original energy was generated in the beginning of time” (200), its untold force of destruction is waiting to be released for the wanting “through Will and Idea” (*ibid.*). “PyrE can only be exploded by psycho kinesis. Its energy can only be released by thought. It must be willed to explode and the thought directed at it” (*ibid.*). But we’re at loose ends with this relocation of wish fantasy to the intergalactic suicide drive.

There’s a second secret now revealed upon turning around to face the crypt: the body memory of Foyle, who to get out of his scuttled ship “space-jaunted [...] six hundred thousand miles through the void” (207). The mind trained upon the first secret, the way in which “the Will and the Idea” succeed in “searching out, touching and tripping the delicate subatomic trigger of PyrE” (210), is the mind of Foyle recycling back after two years to the ultimate secret, his innate ability to space jaunte. Pulling

Minnesota Press, 2002) for an extensive plotting of Dominik’s oeuvre by the compass of its repressibility.

himself together out of “synesthesia,” “the kaleidoscope of his own cross-senses,” Foyle re-realizes “the miracle of two years ago;” by “a magnificent act of imagination,” then, Foyle can stand “in the door to nowhere” (218).

But he can't outflly what rebounds from the *Zeitmarke* grounding the arc of willing and wishing in the present. “His wild beatings into the unknown sent him stumbling up geodesic space-time lines that inevitably brought him back to the Now he was trying to escape, for in the inverted saddle curve of space-time his Now was the deepest depression in the curve” (221). He is counseled that he can go further in fantasy control, that he can learn “how to hold on,” “how to turn any Now into reality” (226). But by the limit concept of the *Zeitmarke* he holds back introducing a new weapon and forgoes the techno-evolutionary strategy for redrawing the map.

We return to the enigmatic force of PyrE for the novel's conclusion. Foyle ignores all counsel, taking inspiration instead from the robot bartender. “Foyle turned to the others. ‘That’s me. [...] That’s all of us. We prattle about free will, but we’re nothing but response’” (228). Since not himself a robot, Foyle identifies himself as “a freak of the universe [...], a thinking animal” (231). But this merits the robot's tender affirmation: “Life is a freak. That's its hope and glory” (233). Foyle's closing act is to release PyrE and all information about it to the holder of its datemark, a postwar cosmic public that will itself be able to know and decide (*ibid.*).

### The Wish to Be Refused

In *The Writer and Psychoanalysis*, Edmund Bergler reroutes Sigmund Freud's argument about the adulteration and publication of omnipotent wish fantasy that yields *Dichtung* by considering only unconscious wishing and the multiple defenses to which it gives rise. Bergler's polemical issue is with the “confusion between wish and defense” that characterizes the analytic understanding of creative writing and can, in clinical practice, lead “into tragic therapeutic errors.”<sup>7</sup> The alterations going into

7 Edmund Bergler, *The Writer and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Doubleday, 1950), 37. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

the private daydream *en route* to *Dichtung* were already carried out by the relay of defenses rising up against the deeply untenable wish underlying all “neurotic” fantasizing.

The written work is another defense in the series. When you scratch the surface and glimpse inside the sublimation process, it is not a wish that is revealed but a defense against the defense against a conflict that remains hidden. The agon is loaded with “pseudo aggression” serving the “tendency to keep above the masochistic waters” (35). What the writer repeats “in later life unconsciously” is “not the direct continuation of the baby’s parasitic wish to get, but the masochistic reversal of this, *the wish to be disappointed*” (47).

This is as close as Bergler gets to Freud’s *fort/da* staging in childhood of what can later become the pathogenic death wish in maturity. In American, if you are well received by people you’ve just met, you might claim they really get you. Which can also mean, coming ‘round the bend of a mood swing, that they are against you, indeed going to get you. Freud is the sore spot that Bergler must wash out from the double distance of getting close. Bergler’s training analysis was with Wilhelm Reich. The only serious kudo his work received since the rise and fall of his fame was from Gilles Deleuze.<sup>8</sup>

Writers belong to the character-type of “injustice collectors,” who “run unconsciously not after the wish *to get*, but *to be refused*” (60). They provoke the situation of refusal and denial, but repress their initial provocation and see only the malignancy of the refuser against whom they turn in righteous indignation, another show of pseudo-aggression. Reveling in self-pity, they enjoy unconsciously once more psychic masochism (61).

There is a “specific twist,” however, that is unique to “creative artists,” which “consists of a *negation of masochistic dependence by unconsciously pretending that the disappointing mother* (the first object of attachment) *never existed*” (68). This defense, which “is fashioned after the juridical principle of ‘no body, no evidence’” (*ibid.*), makes over the creative artist as “*autarchic* and fully self-sufficient” (69). Thus, the creative writer’s masochism

8 Gilles Deleuze and Leopold von Sacher-Masoch, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty and Venus in Furs* (New York: Zone Books, 1989), 55.

“results in productivity. He acts, unconsciously, both roles – that of the corrected *giving* mother and the *recipient* child” (ibid.). In this setting, the writer “does *not* simply give expression to his *unconscious wishes*. My belief is that he expresses, exclusively, *secondary defenses against these wishes*” (77). But each defense is in fact a “substitute wish” that’s “not chosen arbitrarily”: “It corresponds to an unconscious tendency of the specific writer, but is, however, at the specific time, dynamically less important. Therefore it can be used as a defense” (ibid.).

To avoid the overwhelming mother of babyhood, a male writer might regress to feminine identification (the back-end deal of the negative Oedipus complex) and thus dislodge the witch by the body switch to receive the powerful father. Guilt feelings and sublimation follow letting the writing flow but the development and adjustment are faux. The unblocked writer can achieve an apparent self-cure of a targeted pressing inner conflict in simulation of sublimation. But the psychic masochism isn’t represented – nor the defense against this untenable wish fantasy. We witness only the defense against the defense (85).

The writer cannot shake the “basic ‘conflict,’ *undigested masochistic passivity* connected with the giant of the nursery – Mother. Simplified, one can state that the writer writes to furnish *inner alibis* to his tormenting inner conscience” (81). Alibi number one follows the indictment: “You want to be masochistically refused (milk, love, tenderness) by the image of the pre-oedipal mother.” The alibi: “That’s impossible, – I want to get; Mother does not even exist. Hence she cannot refuse” (81). The successful writer, as already noted, acts both roles – that of the giving mother and the receiving child all on his own person (80–81).

What exactly is the “undigested aggressive conflict” that the “orally regressed psychic masochist” suffers in early babyhood? When his omnipotence is too severely hit, he is unable to take the unavoidable or fantasied libidinal frustrations. The resulting fury can only be mishandled and miscarry. “Instead of choosing the normal way out – shifting and later sublimation –,” the psychic masochist “derives unconscious pleasure” “by libidinizing punishment, moral reproach, guilt” (82). “And *the only pleasure one can derive from displeasure is to make that displeasure a pleasure*” (ibid.).



Because the superego denounces this conclusion of the infantile conflict, secondary defenses follow. Bergler refers to “*the triad of the mechanism of orality*” (ibid.). Act I, as he calls it, is provocation of the situation of refusal, the next Act focuses on the malice of the other, giving rise to righteous indignation in self-defense against the enemy’s malice. All this qualifies for what Bergler terms pseudo aggression. Act III follows defeat with self-commiseration. In this concluding Act, the self-pity is conscious (in agreement with Hanns Sachs’s view of the daydream of self-pity), while the psychic masochistic enjoyment is unconscious (83). The three-act drama presents “*the wish to get*, though historically real,” as, clinically, the later development: it is but “*a defense against the wish to be refused*” (ibid.).

For Bergler, then, the bottom line that no one must cross leads inside the primal scene of original masochism. To draw the line, he intervenes in Freud’s transformative reversal (with which Deleuze also takes issue regarding sadism and masochism<sup>9</sup>) between voyeurism and exhibitionism. “Every writer fights a never-ending battle with his peeping (voyeuristic) tendencies,” which begin when a baby finds pleasure in the displeasure of being refused (90). The banned masochistic pleasure of peeping, so close to the prep work going into fashioning a fictional world, must be disowned in the court of conscience to allow productivity to flow or follow (91).

Bergler speaks of the writer’s “imagination” as the successor to infantile peeping, which, according to the Freudian poetics, folds out of fantasizing or daydreaming (ibid.). It is only when the writer succeeds, unconsciously, in convincing his conscience (=superego) that his “creative imagination” – a.k.a. omnipotent fantasy – no longer constitutes peeping, that his “imagination” works. The peeper fantasizing undergoes a shift, a change, and crosses over into the social relation of productivity (ibid.). That readers then buy the work means they buy and buy into its unconscious content (90). The author’s guilt is thus shared and the burden lightened.

9 See Gilles Deleuze, *Présentation de Sacher-Masoch* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1967), ch. 9 “Le froid et le cruel.”

Here Bergler cites his immediate precursors in the poetics of daydreaming, Otto Rank and Sachs, but challenges the analytic understanding of creative activity. What is submitted for approval is only a chain link of defenses (ibid.). Bergler cites Freud's reading of *Hamlet* at length (97–98). The childhood wish fantasy represented like in a night dream on the stage of classical antiquity (the stage, according to Sachs, of primary narcissism) has undergone progress in repression (the entry upon secondary narcissism) and become the blocked untenable unconscious wish fantasy under the Elizabethan arch. Situated within Bergler's reading, Freud's reference to *Timon of Athens* as the bottom line of the author's share in the significance of Hamlet's epic fail, the signatory suicide of the tragedy, admits the Berglerian conclusion that writer's block is writing, that is, the ongoing attempt to circumvent it. In the forum of Shakespeare, reading between the lines of Freud's diagnosis, Bergler finds a concatenation of defenses against the masochistic wish to be refused.

The primal solution of the infantile conflict requires that the writer ward off reproaches of conscience. "When the writer cannot convince his Super-Ego of the 'harmlessness' of his imagination, he has no idea at all" (93). Conscience makes blocked writers of us all. "Alibis are needed to disprove the charges, and thus a kind of inner reversible conveyor belt for the mass production of alibis is installed" (46). The faux secret or "moral alibi" of scandalous self-revelation, for example, is the exhibitionism that can more likely be confessed than one's immersion in the masochism of voyeurism (93).

Alfred Bester published a non-science-fiction novel at the same time as *The Demolished Man* titled *Who He?* Although it earned him a good amount of money, largely through film options that were never realized, it was a unique effort. It might count, by Bergler's terms, too close to the "oral" masochistic wish. Upon awakening from an alcoholic blackout, the protagonist, a TV variety show writer, recognizes that someone is out to destroy him. The pseudo-aggression is not far enough away from the masochistic pleasure. Bergler: "Writer's block sets in the moment the inner conscience rejects the alibi and substitute alibi" and hits "the Hurdle of 'Too Little Distance' between Wish and Defense" (113). Bester took the money and ran with his wife to Europe to

write his second science-fiction novel. But then for more than ten years he worked as journalist and TV scriptwriter. Peeping, the term used for telepathy in *The Demolished Man*, the extra-sensory capacity organizing its future world, gives way before the exclusive tele-capacity in the next future work and world, *The Stars My Destination*. Following out the arc of his own flight, Bester addresses teleportation or jaunting, a form of flaunting: exhibitionism.

To project the future and split the present, Bester's novels unleash wish fantasizing, which skips inner reality for a reality amped up by omnipotence. Ben Reich in *The Demolished Man* and Gully Foyle in *The Stars My Destination* pass through the alternation between oblivion and omnipotence, depression and elation that on a tighter schedule is so close to "wishful drinking" (to borrow the title of the celebrity memoir by the actress forever tied to the role of Princess Leia). Behind the distance of science fiction in Bester's work there is an inner reality that is locked up on a "morals charge" within a relay of defenses. It is the categorical imperative to obtain pleasure from being disappointed that gets tendered at the bar. In his last will and testament, Bester left his literary estate to his then favorite bartender.

Bergler specialized in successful treatment of writer's block together with the, for him, intimately related disorders of homosexuality, gambling, and alcoholism. Bergler kept pushing his masochism notion, especially in the sensational incarnation of homosexual deviation, up against the frontiers of publicity and fame. But he couldn't make the contact hold, couldn't transform the Now he shared with Foyle or Bester into explosive realization.

Bergler's kernels of truth must be pried loose from the broadsides of his proprietary frenzy shoring up his fame claim. He hitched his reputation to a specialization in treating homosexuality as curable illness and reacted badly, as seen on TV, to any evidence of a trend toward integration of homosexuals. He regularly attacked the research behind the Kinsey report. Although the hierarchy of the unconscious masochistic wish in his theory disallows influences later in life, which are only occasions for alibis and bouts of pseudo-aggression, Bergler at one point even charged that the published claim that 37% of the male population had engaged in same-sex activity was an ideal recruit-

ment tool. The statistical proof could be used to tear down the scruples of not a few candidates for homosexuality. You can't argue against 37% of the whole population.<sup>10</sup>

The stage of recruitment is set free from the hierarchy established in childhood and set going by those who are teenagers at heart. But Bergler shares with Bester the strategic evacuation of adolescence. The sense of the death wish is, bottom line for Freud, the transitive reflex of omnipotence in thought already in early childhood. Its suicidal reformulation, which went into the saying "to have a death wish," traverses the haunted Hamletian stage of adolescence. The difference between childhood playing and adolescent fantasizing is that the teenager is physically able to realize the death wish and its consequences (like haunting). Bergler discounts a separate phase that not only recharges the earliest death wishes but also embodies them as inoculum against psychopathic violence: "Puberty is comparable to the bringing of one's case, lost in lower courts, before the highest authority, the Supreme Court. Experience and statistics show that the higher courts all too frequently confirm the decisions of the lower" (67).

Sachs's English was so good that the works that appeared later in the US are not translations of their earlier iterations in German but often completely new versions. In the 1924 monograph *Gemeinsame Tagträume* (*Mutual Daydreams*), the first part, which is on daydreams in common, and moreover based on a 1920 lecture, Sachs identifies the other exceptional daydream, that of self-pity, as the "masochistic" daydream.<sup>11</sup> Given the care Sachs took to ambiguate "masochistic" in *The Creative Unconscious* over a decade later, we must see this anticipation of a Berglerian formulation as being in error, like another elaboration that doesn't make it into his English-language book.

At age five, Sachs's patient added to the other boy's direction of the fantasy scene with the machine in the pond that he would emerge from the initiation not only in India but like a

10 Edmund Bergler, *Divorce Won't Help* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1948), 66.

11 Hanns Sachs, *Gemeinsame Tagträume* (Leipzig: Internationaler Psychoanalytischer Verlag, 1924), 6. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

doll without genitals. Sachs fills in the five-year-old's distaste for sexual difference with the castration threat the father delivered to curtail masturbation. However, the boy's alleged enactment of a so-called "deferred obedience" (15) matches Sachs's own fealty to Freud, who urged a focus on the sexual problem to counter the drift into occultism. On the same page, separated by a full paragraph, in which his patient's failed attempt face down in the local pond is recounted, Sachs introjects another parenthetical aside:

(I would like to point out by the way the striking resemblance of the myth of Osiris to this fantasy of two five-year-olds. Osiris is also thrown into the water, dismembered, and reborn without phallus. It cannot be ruled out that a piece of the myth became known to both little fantasists through the mediation of a children's fairy tale, but in essence its immortal content originating in the unconscious "materialized" here again.) (15)

Before his patient remembered the mutual daydream of going to India at age five, the analysis was centered on his guilty efforts on behalf of a younger brother, who was trouble; he had to protect him and make amends for his misbehavior. In early childhood he had wished the new sibling dead. The body of Osiris, dismembered by his brother and reassembled by Isis, his sister-bride, lacked one body part, the penis, which Isis replaced with the phallus she fashioned to inseminate herself with avenging offspring. Osiris in turn became the god of the underworld and his myth the model for funerary practices that aimed for the deceased's resurrection.

The resurrected body of Osiris sets the scene of recognition of a living dead who, like angels and dolls, continues without the genital centering of reproduction. To repair the wish that kills – you become the returning dead. Sachs sees the Osiris connection in the childhood recollection of his suicidal patient, which he interprets via the patient's history of overprotecting the younger brother since adolescence. Sachs belabors a dangerous game of climbing where the wish that the brother fall must have crossed his patient's mind. But do you need a real scenario to suggest the wish that the brother go? Melanie Klein, the first analyst to work

with young children, extended the death-wish scenario of sibling rivalry to include the not-yet born. Every young child wants to be an only child. Actual siblings are bad enough, but one can also wish away future siblings, keep them from being born, an impasse that by guilty recoil animates the unborn as a variety of undead.<sup>12</sup> The missing siblings are such dolls brought back by the other wish for their reparative resurrection.

Looking back on the various mutual daydreams he has recounted and analyzed, Sachs singles out the fantasy shared by the two five-year-olds going to India. It has gone the furthest toward the transformation of private narcissism into the social relation of art.

It is not possible to overlook in this case that condensation, which we know is a typical accompanying effect of the advance of unconscious psychic material, thoroughly discharged its duties. [...] Given this acute condensation together with the copious use of symbolism, the mutual daydream goes beyond the basics of the simple daydream and draws nearer to the night dream. (24–25)

In *The Creative Unconscious*, Sachs settles the arrears in his first account of the two mutually daydreaming boys, who as poets who don't know it are out from under the analytic purview blinded by the castrating father. Sachs had to realize the potency of the death wish alone before making lasting formulations of the social relation of art evolving out of mutations inside the simple daydream. The equation between the daydream of self-pity and a masochistic daydream could also no longer hold. Sachs was able to make these adjustments and reparations because he never lost sight of daydreaming as fundamentally adolescent. "The wish to be a poet arises for the first time as ideal and goal in adolescence, at a time when daydreams flourish abundantly, although in the great majority of cases it declines as quickly as it emerged, like the childhood ideals of the security guard and the train conductor"

12 Klein elaborates this notion in "On Identification" and "The Sense of Loneliness," both in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works: 1946–1963* (New York: The Free Press, 1984).

(3). Through the interpretation of night dreams, the mysterious power that fantasy wields over psychic life could be explained by making connections in the depths with the repressed and the unconscious (3–4). But the upward arc of the question how the daydream becomes an artwork tends to be neglected because not grounded like the unconscious wish in childhood (4).

Wish fulfillment in adolescence means there is no longer any delay in the recoil and repercussion of an untenable wish. This dynamic isn't, at least for a longer spell, unconscious. The embarrassment of the riches of an inner life in adolescence is the basis for the wish to be a poet, which, in German culture at least, or at least back then, was the wish for fame. In giving form to the omnipotence delivered from private fantasy the poet reaches back into the play factory of childhood.

Where he fails to appreciate the bottom line of the death wish skewering together childhood and adolescence, Bergler loses violence control in the close quarters of analogies that are unanalyzed, rolling, as we'll see, in the fantasy fallout from the atom bombs dropped in history. Bergler submits that the unconscious wish to be refused, which is as unrelenting as Hitler's will against the concentration camp inmates (15), locks us down in early childhood. The child "would seem confronted by a problem of greater proportions than the one that faced the atomic scientists" working in contest with Hitler's will: "The child, like the scientists, succeeds in conquering the problem and producing a bomb – in his case, the internal atomic bomb of *psychic masochism*, which means: *unconscious pleasure derived from displeasure*" (45).<sup>13</sup> The bomb that the child builds is directed against himself. "In psychic masochism the individual uses himself, and not the enemy, as the target for his 'atomic bomb'" (46).

### Intrigue

In preparing for his interpretation of the allegory going into the Baroque mourning play as harbinger of a secularized world in which inert Christian symbols were repurposed to fit the

13 Please note how the *Zeitmarke* presses through the very page numbered 45.

prospect of reorientation in a new world of free will or wish and mortality without redress, Walter Benjamin was reading Freud closely, the analysis of Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* as well as, like so many thinkers at the time, notably Heidegger, the essay on the uncanny. The latter was easy to appropriate because here too Freud pulled up short before religion and philosophy, a lack the reader-author could start filling out, thus yanking the thought experiment into his court of inquiry. In *Origin of the German Mourning Play*, Benjamin relies on the archive of Christianity in making his claim that the original allegorist was the Devil, who demarcated and decorated a realm of his own through demonization of the leftovers of antiquity. Allegory first aimed at revising the evidence of classical antiquity. The naked pagan body was transferred to the account of the creature, with the Devil at the front of the line. "The [...] most important impulses in the origin of western allegory are non-antique, anti-antique: the gods project into the alien world, they become evil, and they become creatures. [...] This is the basis [...] for the survival of fabulous creatures like the faun, centaur, siren and harpy as allegorical figures in the circle of Christian hell."<sup>14</sup> In the field of Christian representation, the pagan gods lingered on, then, in an infernal setting or, in effect, within a fantasy habitat.

In illuminating J.R.R. Tolkien's Shire we already had occasion, in the first volume of *Critique of Fantasy*, to distinguish Christianization from secularization, the former going into fantasy, the latter into modern allegory and science fiction. Christianization is an ongoing process that at the same time tolerates traffic with a fairy-tale world that is of heathen provenance. Beginning in the Renaissance and passing through the Enlightenment all the way to the new world, secularization, by contrast, showcases continuities with Greek and Roman antiquity, which must first, however, be cleansed of the demonization. This secular setting is therefore not at home in Tolkien's Shire,

14 Walter Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, trans. John Osborne (London: Verso, 2009), 225–26. Subsequent page references are given in the text. I have brought the title closer to *Trauerspiel*.



which partakes instead of a continuous northern European medievalist tradition.

At the close of *Origin of the German Mourning Play*, Benjamin gives the surprise twist-off that there is a half-life to the modern allegorical mode of reading, which lies in allegory's origin. Through the Devil, original allegory's poster boy, Benjamin projects a turn or return, which by restoring the Christian context would extinguish in the light of redemption the finite recording surface of remembrance. Transitoriness, which is not so much signified as displayed in modern allegory, thus swings around into the allegory of resurrection (232). "Allegory, of course, thereby loses everything that was most peculiar to it; the secret, privileged knowledge, the arbitrary rule in the realm of dead objects, the supposed infinity of a world without hope. All this vanishes with this one about-turn" (ibid.).

Benjamin allows that in a secular setting the abyssal contemplation of evil can trigger the return. I followed this out in *The Psycho Records*. In a split-off corner of mass psychology, the *Psycho* Effect coursing for decades through countless slasher films denied and defied the ongoing failure in the interpretation of psychopathic violence. Upon conclusion of the termination phase of the cathartic film therapy, we witnessed the horror screen of B-pictures turn to the conceit of a compact with the Devil.

The jumpstarting of psycho horror at the end of the 1990s through the import of infernal instruction in the *Saw* franchise adumbrated the contemplation of evil not as a turn away from the secular figuration of violence on the screen of psycho horror but as another station in the mourning process awaiting integration. This B-picture vantage is syntonic with Benjamin's own emendation of his sense of a Christian ending of modern allegory in the closing evocation of the German *Trauerspiel* as a ruin that tells all you need to know about the complete edifice.

"The inadequacy of the German *Trauerspiel* is rooted in the deficient development of the intrigue," at which Calderón excelled on the Baroque stage. The Spanish dramatist's deployment of intrigue circumscribes the German *Trauerspiel's* status as incomplete substitute or ruin that supplies the allegorical caption to a complete result.

The intrigue alone would have been able to bring about that allegorical totality of scenic organization, thanks to which one of the images of the sequence stands out, in the image of the apotheosis, as different in kind, and gives mourning at one and the same time the cue for its entry and its exit. The powerful design of this form should be thought through to its conclusion; only under this condition is it possible to discuss the idea of the German *Trauerspiel*. (235)

The German exponent extrapolates from the setting of its failure the prospect of successful mourning looping through simultaneity to vouchsafe the intricate innovations of survival.

That success and succession in mourning are a wreck waiting to happen reflects the vantage of the undead prolonging the opening season of mourning following the first death. The second death stands outside this advantage, different in kind and kindred. The zombie epidemic, a crude form but just the same another forum for intrigue, staves off redemption by taking mourning through the second death. The interlude of undeath opens the caption of legibility, which the zombie frenzy enacts.

The German *Trauerspiel* through which Benjamin stages the allegorical reading of ruins is, then, another ruin speaking more plainly of the idea of the plan than do buildings that are well preserved. From its vanishing point of redemption in the Devil's train, the *Trauerspiel* looks the other way upon the plan of intrigue, which it outlines in reverse.

Does the intrigue that rescues allegory partake of the "encapsulation" Benjamin attributed to Schreber's delusional system?<sup>15</sup> Yes. It corresponds to Freud's identification of endopsychic perception in the delusional system basic to Schreber's recovery in a relational world of his own making.<sup>16</sup> Schreber fictionalized the

15 Walter Benjamin, "Bücher von Geisteskranken: Aus meiner Sammlung," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, eds. Rolf Tiedemann and Hermann Schweppenhäuser (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1972–1989), 4:616.

16 Sigmund Freud, "Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund*

new world in place of the one he lost to repression via intergalactic intrigue and science fiction. For all the theocratic trappings of the delusion, the intrigue saves a secular endopsychic allegory from the precipitating soul murder, which Schreber associated with the Devil.

Andrzej Żuławski's 1981 film *Possession* follows the rise and fall of allegory in infernal precincts, but then, via the intrigue of Cold-War secret agency, pulls up short before allegory's damnation to redemption. Mark returns from a secret mission to his wife Anna and young son Bob in West Berlin. But the marriage doesn't live there anymore. Anna (Isabelle Adjani) is a classic collectible hysteric; but the curtains closed long time ago on the theater of hysteria and she might be more readily identified on the streets as psychotic. At the same time, she exhibits symptoms of infernal possession.

Anna announces that she has two sisters, Chance and Faith. In an underground passage, she undergoes a hysterical-psychotic paroxysm that she calls a miscarriage but to which she awards the emblem: the death of Sister Faith. Anna must care for and carry her forward – unto extinction and preservation. Thus, she supplies the allegorical caption to the creaturely relationship that will forsake all others.

We know that in the recent past there were intermediary stages to the marital crisis, like Anna's affair with Heinrich, a yogic sex mystic who is the prosthesis of his mother. But if her dissatisfaction with her marriage leads Anna into the environs of a maternal relationship, then she is only spinning circles inside the Oedipal foundation of the sacrament. In the meantime, however, she has moved on and entered a relationship with her own creaturely ectoplasm. Heinrich ends up the third victim of the tentacled gastrointestinal gargoyles that Anna keeps and protects in an apartment right up against the Berlin wall.

Heinrich's mother tells Mark that she is looking for Heinrich, not for his body, which she already identified at the morgue, but

*Freud, Vol. XII (1911–1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), 79.

for his soul. Her suicide upholds the nihilistically transvalued sacrament of the *Liebestod*.

At the start of the film, Mark announced that he was leaving the secret service. But by the end we know it didn't let go. The intrigue that is greater than the two of them catches up with him and Anna. In the shootout that's escalating by the metonymy between espionage and world affairs unto the end of the world, they die together, a union that sure looks like the *Liebestod*. Just before the denouement, however, Anna introduced Mark and us to her fully transformed creature. It is Mark's *Doppelgänger*, who survives (together with Bob's teacher, a double of Anna, though she doesn't know it). In the final scene, Bob is in the teacher's care. The last stand of reproduction and death begs her not to answer the door when the *Doppelgänger* comes a knocking. When she ignores his childish fears, the future that reproduction secured assumes in the bathtub the dead-boy-floating position. The mother's double catches a green gleam in her eyes and opens the household and economy of the holy family to doubling.

Beginning in German Romanticism, doubling was the uncanny harbinger of death because the wish for replication (on the human side) could not be fulfilled. Instead, the close of *Possession* is modern science fiction, which skips the negative theology of the *Liebestod* and lets the doubling go through. The double was a limit concept in the regional civilizations that hailed from the east and made it as far west as Faustian Europe. But when it crossed over from Gothic letters to film and psychoanalysis (and became what it was, science fiction) the double inherited the artificial redistribution of processes of reflection across man and machine. Human-I and human-you can be pushed together on one side, while the man-made mechanism takes up the other side as the new *Doppelgänger*. Doubling is bigger than the two of us, not only because the double is the unacknowledged in oneself but also because, released from mourning and unmourning duties, it heralds a multiplicity like all the iterations of the same moment in the science fiction of time travel, each one qualifying as unique and binding as the first moment.

## Creaturally Innocence

John Bock told me that he had not in fact seen Żuławski's film at the time he made *Kreatürliche Unschuld* (*Creaturally Innocence*, 2012/2015) and was instead thinking of Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Teorema* (1968). The role of the Visitor goes to the maid, Rebecca, the third person rocking the couple in Bock's film. Early on, the husband enters the maid's room and stereotypes her as the other woman. During their prolonged embrace the camera circles repeatedly above them and exhausts a recognizable conceit of cinema.

Rebecca finds her calling not as the husband's other woman or mother but in concert with a creaturely, parasitic mutation organ. Like Odradek, the care or concern of the father of the house in Franz Kafka's story, the organ creature is introduced into the household by its head, a surgeon. He unpacks and manipulates the "summary mutation organ" or "nanogenic mutation" to make it regular, keep the blood circulating, and get it ready to bite.<sup>17</sup> Like a demonic curse it cannot be undone but only passed on.

Rebecca adopts and adapts the creature until it fills out her room and she has her fill of it: "it crawls inside you and fills you fully" (1125). In time she seduces the wife, who follows her. Rebecca instructs her that "the overturning of the great mother ground" must follow (1128): "My flesh is a fallow field. It must be prepared ripe-fruitful for the planting" (1127). Rebecca animates the organ creature and presses its missing link inside her. The climax of infernal film images that the depressed link releases stops short of redemption or damnation. The surgeon dumps what's left, her inert body, into a box (one of the props of Rebecca's big scene). He is reassured that with her removal the household has been restored. But when he restarts their interrupted status quo, his wife is elsewhere: "I am in the body [...] in nothingness" (1130).

17 John Bock, *Meechfieber: Gesammelte Texte 1992–2013* (Cologne: Walter König, 2013), 1122–23. Subsequent page references to the screenplay are to this collection and are given in the text.

*Creaturely Innocence* is scatter-shot throughout with precise and exaggerated references, associations, and ideas, which the artist brings together and juxtaposes through heightened cinematography, special effects, and improvisation. The film illuminates a writerly screenplay composed in a language that Bock devised like the patois in *Clockwork Orange*, mixing, however, Northern German dialects raised in the course of the nineteenth century to the power of literature by the likes of Theodor Storm and Theodor Fontane. Into the mix he adds the stock of mad science. Between the midlifer mastermind and the teen maid, the antisocial sensibility reflected in horror B-pictures rebounds but buffered through an accessibility befitting the play area of childhood.

In *Creaturely Innocence*, the relationship to a creature beckoning from the dark side of adolescence (and its midlife reprisal) enters the open display of child's play. Bock stitches playfulness into the borders of scenes of transgression, horror, and ecstasy. In the domestic space, Rebecca sews grapes upon the stockings of her lady. In the "crucifixion" scene the wife in turn inserts playful variations on bodily violation. She attaches edibles to Rebecca's Passion and accompanies the height of the performance on a diminutive scale with hand puppets. Another way to identify the vantage point for mixing what Freud kept separate in "The Poet and Daydreaming" is that the momentum of fantasy gathering in the digital relation overshoots the opposition that sets adolescence apart as the living proof of Fallen Man. "All the names in history" is no longer the cry before the psychotic break as end of the world but describes the digital archive's best offer. Every entry is a returning return divested of the former setting on opposition.

*Creaturely Innocence* was filmed in the Hindelooper Room, a period-room exhibit in the Fries Museum in Leeuwarden, Netherlands – in alternation with one other film set identified as the maid's chamber but in effect the special-effects stage for a cite-specific phantasmagoria of film references. When the head of the household in full period costume pulls out a typewriter from his antique desk the scene is not entirely site-nonspecific. The Hindelooper Room was a late-nineteenth-century reconstruction of what was considered a typical local interior dating

back to the seventeenth century and continuing on as typical for another century or so. It was originally one of many display cases comprising a vaster historical exhibition that in 1877 aspired to the new format of the world's fair.

The Hindelooper Room was delivered from the condemned site of the exhaustive exhibition and became transportable like a commodity or, as the Fries Museum's website puts it, like promotional material. It is today the portal to an eclectic documentation of the history of Friesland. The room in the original exhibition was a huge success and reopened in the first Fries Museum in 1881.

Two years earlier, this room – almost identical in every way – had been exhibited in Paris, where it was so well received that other cities and even collectors too wanted a similar room: Hindeloopen (1881), Amsterdam (1883), Düsseldorf (1885), Dordrecht (1896), Berlin (1898), Nuremberg (1902) and Arnhem (1919).

The Hindelooper Room in the Fries Museum is, in effect, the mother of all Hindelooper rooms, even those that can be seen in Hindeloopen! The room that was installed temporarily in Hindeloopen in 1881 is the same as the one in Berlin in 1898. The room that has been installed in Museum Hindeloopen since 1964 is the same room that was made for Düsseldorf in 1885.<sup>18</sup>

Simultaneity, Benjamin advised in *Origin of the German Mourning Play*, is the secularization of time, making it present in space.<sup>19</sup> And if we no longer transport a period made to fit a room then let's make a science fiction of it.

That we can feel at home in Bock's Hinde-loop we owe to the prep work of the clairvoyant subjects of Mesmerism carried forward by the hysterical patients in the opening season of psychoanalysis. In the Hinde-loop, we take a turn through the magnetic treatment of Auguste Müller in Karlsruhe, which

18 "The Hindelooper Room," *Fries Museum*, <https://www.fries-museum.nl/en/collection/icons/the-hindelooper-room/>.

19 Benjamin, *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, 370.

the first volume of *Critique of Fantasy* visited in the setting of Schopenhauer's investigation of waking fantasy states from the protocols of Mesmerism. It's not just that the sessions with Müller could be imagined taking place in this period room. When the treatment discloses her own clairvoyant talent, Müller finds a steadying setting upheld by the intrigue of differences between those who believe (and obey) her and those who doubt her role as medium.

The solitude and emptiness that can befall us while we await transport into outer space must be met by the related challenge of making inner space habitable. Borrowed from *Futureworld* (1976) and *Supergirl* (1984), the term "inner space" addresses the issue of consolidation or stability pressing at the outer limits of psychic reality. Staying a steady course between delusion and therapeutic containment describes a certain artistic practice within the modern history of performance.

On the list of contemporary artistic practices that Yayoi Kusama began checking off in 1957, there were performances and happenings, notably "Walking Piece" and "Grand Orgy to Awaken the Dead" (in 1966 and 1969 respectively). She followed the bouncing polka dot from her hallucinations already in childhood to her signature style.<sup>20</sup> The dotting of the I is the extinction of distinction before the prospect of the cosmos. In science fiction, we are regularly given to understand that the outer space to be colonized for the survival of the species is psychosis, which must be delivered from its status as outer-limit concept or condemned site and opened up for frontier or "borderline" settlement.

To become part of the environment, as Kusama underscored, one's own body had first to be obliterated/liberated by polka dots. And yet the orgy of polka dots keeps a wake for the dead. Kusama returned to Japan following the death of her partner Joseph Cornell and, following her father's death, consolidated her long history of intermittent treatment by taking up perma-

20 See Grady Turner's 1999 interview with Kusama in *Theories and Documents of Contemporary Art: A Sourcebook of Artists' Writings*, eds. Kristine Stiles and Peter Selz, 2nd. edn. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012), 111–13.



ment residence in Seiwa Hospital for the Mentally Ill. The hospital environment provided the best conditions for her to work. That it was a transportable setting that allowed her on occasion to travel puts through the performance connection with the therapeutic immersion in or micromanagement of a new world.

Brian Wilson, the lead Beach Boy, hated the beach and was afraid of the ocean.<sup>21</sup> He broke down in an airplane during a tight tour schedule. As client of Eugene Landy's 24-hour milieu therapy, which he entered following his father's death in 1973, Wilson was later able to travel through his abyssal fear of flying (*en route* to another containment of his stage fright) in a section of the plane set aside for his treatment apparatus and its administrators. The abuse charge Landy landed for his boundary blending with Wilson misses the point (at which point the family system reasserted control but without, thanks to Landy's treatment, incapacitating the identified patient).

The normal-to-neurotic Everyman in psychoanalysis and psychotherapy is an afterthought, a byproduct of the stabilization of the psychotic borderline at the outset of modern therapy. D.W. Winnicott overturned the centrality of the construct and returned to the original momentum of treatment. But he was also overlooking (in both senses) Freud's introduction of the second system upon contact with the shell shock epidemic of World War One. Freud declared that shell shock opened up a new frontier forging ahead within the former off-limits concept of psychosis. The battlefield of the theory and therapy of shell shock also reopened the concession stand of eclecticism within psychoanalysis.

To illustrate the repetition compulsion in the serial dreaming of shell-shocked soldiers, Freud cited the case of a woman who was over and again the merry widow of each new husband.<sup>22</sup> By

21 To prepare for my stint as talking head in Christopher Dreher's documentary *Pop Odyssey – Die Beach Boys und der Satan* (1997), I did a great deal of research on the Beach Boys, on which I base this account.

22 Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," In *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVIII (1920–1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology,*

its own serial momentum, the repetition compulsion, which rises up with the obliteration of the anxiety defense, grows into the outside world a protuberance of its own disordering, a new foundation for intrigue or preparedness. Winnicott's famous line that the fear of going insane was just another way of admitting that a breakdown had already occurred was his roundabout way of addressing the way mental illness can go out of itself, casting out borderlines that net a structure on the inside out.<sup>23</sup>

### Wish Capital

In *The Devil Notebooks*, I offered close commentary on Vilém Flusser's reading of our infernal relation in terms of a metabolic cycle for which the mortal sins serve as stations, and which I applied to the momentum of hesitation guiding Freud's speculations on the death drive in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. An error in Rodrigo Maltez Novaes's translation of Flusser's study, *History of the Devil*, enters into this performance and inscribes the death-wish increments of Freud's larger hesitation. A brain-twister in English, the fragile hierarchy of "substitution" depends entirely on either "for" or "by" – a distinction as muddled and bypassed in the meantime as the split-infinitive rule. When we read that "magic formulas are being substituted for more mathematical formulas" in the context of an argument about the "progressive scientification of the world" we must hesitate over an undertow of reversal of the intended meaning.<sup>24</sup> Successful mourning would shore up the limping distinction and make the decision for living on via the upgrade of substitution. But the shaky foundation for this decision-making reflects the greater likelihood of what we might term unmourning, the ultimate

*and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 22.

23 D.W. Winnicott, "Fear of Breakdown," *International Review of Psychoanalysis* 1 (1974): 103–7.

24 Vilém Flusser, *The History of the Devil*, ed. Siegfried Zielinski, trans. Rodrigo Maltez Novaes (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 103. Novaes translated the second version of the study, which Flusser wrote or rewrote in Portuguese.

inhibition that must be abandoned by those who sign up with the Devil and his Christian frame of reference.

The 2010 staging at the Berlin State Opera of Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* (1951) under the direction of Krzysztof Warlikowski was another wrap of Flusser's reading of the Devil. Inspired by William Hogarth's cycle of paintings, Stravinsky commissioned W.H. Auden to write the libretto for the opera he had in mind (Auden brought along Chester Kallman as his collaborator). It is immediately quite an intervention to add the Devil to Hogarth's resolutely secular tableaux, which represented, like storyboards before their time, complete scenes in the narrative of a spendthrift's decline unto madness. Shadowed all the while by his abandoned but steadfast true love, he is installed at Bedlam and doesn't go to Hell. At the end of the Auden/Stravinsky version, the Devil, Nick Shadow, can't convince protagonist Tom Rakewell to kill himself. So, he makes a bet, which is how Goethe's Mephistopheles bound his Faust to the terms of a compact. Tom is able to guess the cards Nick draws and the Devil withdraws directly to Hell without collecting a soul. When the departing sponsor of Tom's rise and fall just the same places the curse of madness upon him, the delusional system that results – in which Tom is Adonis and his abandoned beloved Anne Trulove his Venus – preserves the love relation he denied but which, like the Eternal Feminine in *Faust II*, saves him.

When the job that his prospective father-in-law, Mr. Trulove, offers him isn't good enough, since he aims to be rich not busy (and honest), Tom wishes for money, and Nick Shadow arrives to fulfill this wish. In *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Freud stages an allegory of the wish in fantasizing, which then returns in the case study of Dora (*Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria*) as follows:

A daytime thought may very well play the part of entrepreneur for a dream; but the *entrepreneur*, who, as people say, has the idea and the initiative to carry it out, can do nothing without capital; he needs a capitalist who can afford the outlay, and the capitalist who provides the psychical outlay for

the dream is invariably and indisputably, whatever may be the thoughts of the previous day, a wish from the unconscious.<sup>25</sup>

What underlies the wish for free money is masked by the free-floating fulfillment that Nick offers; Tom has inherited a fortune from an unknown uncle. The money he comes into, inherited from an unidentified dying object, implies and denies a relationship to the dead and Dad. Freud speculates that an infantile relationship to the father inscribed in the unconscious through prohibition and repression of masturbation backs the fantasizing that determines Dora's symptomatic relations.

This fragment of a case is famous for the import it first won for the transference in Freud's assessment of what went wrong and right in the sessions with Dora. What went wrong with Herr K. went wrong with Dora's father and so on. Freud came to an appreciation of the transference in his effort to render intelligible the benefits the analysis did bestow on the patient after all and despite the botched termination. The transference that was left implicit and anticipated in the sessions with Freud caught up with the plotting of her symptoms, putting it all to rest. That it was a wrap became clear when she visited the K. couple to offer her condolences on the not unanticipated death of one of their children. It was as though nothing had happened and Herr and Frau K. spoke plain text. It was really over.

A transference interpretation that happens in session, Freud decided, was more cost-effective than the construction of such an auto-analytical roundabout. It was easier said and done that their relationship in the setting of the sessions was the current funding opportunity for the unconscious capitalist otherwise backing her double-dealing relations with Herr K. and with her father in prehistory. The only parent on the stage of *The Rake's Progress* is Mr. Trulove. His daughter Anne seems, like Dora, to

25 Sigmund Freud, "Fragment of an Analysis of a Case of Hysteria," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. VII (1901-1905): A Case of Hysteria, Three Essays on Sexuality and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953), 87. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

be just one step ahead of old incest fantasies, which the father's proximity, at least in Warlikowki's staging, brings home. When toward the end of the Berlin production she arrives on stage with a baby, an accessory imported from the Hogarth paintings, one must wonder if Tom or her father sired the offspring. Her loyalty to Tom would be, then, her adaptation to reality – a prospect as pressing and remote as Dora's attachment to Herr K.

Tom's laziness, which is how Mr. Trulove faults the unwillingness to look for a job, gives rise to the wish for narcissistic supplies. The infernal impresario of wish fulfillment who arrives to initiate Tom into Lust wears an Andy Warhol wig throughout Warlikowski's interpretation of the opera. The alignment is made evident when Nick, seated at the table in front of the screening of the film in which Andy demonstrates how he eats a hamburger, follows suit. Flusser sets up Lust and Sloth as the framing supports of our relationship to the world through or according to the Devil. All the sins between could be seen as aspects of Lust, to which sin Flusser dedicates the longest chapter by far. His exegesis of Lust ranges widely but subtly, and extends to the attachment to the mother tongue and the paroxysms of nationalism.

The Warhol identification applies a touch of perversion to Tom's initiation. Flusser, like Freud, emphasizes that the human sex drive is constitutively non-reproductive, technically perverse, still in thrall to the replicational sex of cells. In *The Rake's Progress*, the first stopover in Tom's full entry into Lust is a house of prostitution named (in keeping with the ancestry of the fantasy genre) Mother Goose. To obviate the introspection of dissipation, Nick proposes Tom's marriage to Baba the Turk, a Medusoid sideshow attraction that everyone loves to dread. In Flusser's metabolic cycle, Lust, doubled by infantile Wrath and Gluttony, is conjugated with power via the more Oedipal sins of Greed, Envy, and, ultimately, Pride. Nick reroutes the sense or direction of matrimony by brokering this alliance, which is Tom's short cut to prestige. As the bearded lady's consort, Tom would proudly stand above the two defining limits of Everyman,

mere desire for the sexy and adaptive *mores* (in other words: adolescence and its midlife criticism).<sup>26</sup>

Sloth (or “sorrow of the heart”) is Tom’s intermittent condition, which he escapes through wish fantasy. What the Devil must circumvent, according to Flusser, is contrition. To this end the Devil bestows on Tom a machine that purportedly turns stones into loaves of bread. By turning the backlot of mankind into a utopia, Tom hopes to make reparation. The singular machine, multiplied down the assembly line into gadgets for sale, will ensure free bread for all. But since the machine is but a magician’s trick everyone who invests, backers and consumers alike, is soon out of money. In the Berlin production, it is the fantasy genre that folds out of the Devil’s technology. At the auction following the bankruptcy of Tom’s breadwinning scheme, Minnie Mouse, Darth Vader, and two superheroes are among the properties for sale.

The footnotes to Dora’s second dream are addenda that came up in the course of free association in session. The second addendum in the footnote underworld concerns the out-of-placement of a question mark. In Dora’s telling of her dream what follows the news imparted by her mother in a letter, “Now he is dead,” is the fragment-phrase, “and if you like you can come.” A question mark cut short the phrase and gave emphasis to “like” (95). Every increment in the lexicon of what the English and French reception of psychoanalysis might call “desire,” is marked in the original language by willing and wishing: “Und wenn Du willst?” She recalls the question mark upon recognizing that her mother’s dream sentence cites a note she received from Frau K.: “If you would like to come?” This was the note she followed to the lakeside setting where the breakdown of her relations with the K. couple led to her sessions with Freud. As Freud notes, the analysis was subsequently broken off in connection with the content of this dream (95), which, aggravated by his own inattention to the transference, triggered his patient’s acting out.

The death wish can be devastating prep work for the other’s death. His analysis of Dora’s second dream leads Freud to recog-

26 We recall that Hannah Arendt, the author of “the banality of evil,” turned down Auden’s marriage proposal.

nize in the somatic symptoms he earlier dismissed as history his patient's susceptibility to melancholic identification. The death of Dora's aunt triggered a series of identifications (notably with two cousins), which by the light of her second dream revealed the foundation of her subsequent hysterical symptom picture. In Dora's second dream, her father is gone, though not yet in her waking lifetime. The dream goner goes back to her earliest wish that he should get lost, out of the way of her infantile sex. A multi-layered topography of wishing opens up around the dream news of the father's death. A dream, as Freud advises, circumvents repression to give a measure of representation to wishes that, in Dora's case, the dreamer in her waking state must actively unfulfill. Freud admits that Dora walked out on the analysis because he had not recognized that he was transferentially synonymous with Herr K. and therefore bound to receive the rebound of her revenge against them both (117–18). Freud wagered that the negative transferential aspect that Herr K. triggered, also in Dora's relationship to him and to the analysis, most likely turned on money (119).

Nick Shadow's granting of Tom's wish for free money in the form of inheritance from the unidentified dead steps closer to what is at the same time manically denied. It is the other's death that splits into shares the omnipotence of wishing (or the equation Flusser draws between the will and Pride). Because the other goes first, a departure we inevitably wished upon, there is a ghostly remainder or return, the goner's share in the omnipotence that the death wish flexed, on which we speculate.

In the final analysis, Flusser gives a powerful reading of the very span of hesitation Freud applied to his formulation of the death drive. Freud is surely able, as he writes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, to throw himself "into a line of thought and to follow it wherever it leads out of simple scientific curiosity, or, if the reader prefers, as an *advocatus diaboli*, who is not on that account himself sold to the devil."<sup>27</sup> When Freud earlier formulated the hypothesis that the goal of life is death he still had to account for the instincts of self-preservation. In this speculative setting, however, they can be seen as issuing the guarantee

27 Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," 59.

that the organism will follow its own path to its proper death and not die in a random way. This is the Devil's best offer: an uninterrupted span of quality time that concludes on schedule at the certain deadline. But Freud interrupts himself ("let us pause for a moment and reflect") and counters that the sexual instincts reintroduce "potential immortality" after all (39–40). In performing a deferral at close quarters of the deadline, Freud's hesitation leaves room for mourning and melancholia. Flusser follows Freud in disbanding a fantasy scenario but in lieu of mourning constructs a loop. In 1987, as we saw, Flusser publishes an alternate history that resituates the ends of fantasy within a dystopic science fiction.

### Playing Bank

Like the impostor who inspires love and admiration for the sake of narcissistic face saving and then provokes his own downfall often in a criminal manner,<sup>28</sup> the gambler, as Bergler argues at length in *The Psychology of Gambling*, reduces the giving mother to absurdity, pulling up short before this defense against his unconscious pleasure in her refusal. In gambling, losing is already the moral alibi. Gambling is an accepted way to lose, which also holds the player back from the scene of his being refused, of being a loser, which spurs him on libidinally.<sup>29</sup>

Gambling, like fetishism according to Freud, is never brought to analysis as a presenting problem but always only slips out from behind the client's alcoholism or sexual problems, including homosexuality. In libidinal company, the psychic masochism underlying gambling flexes sexual feeling, which is not of the genital type. Instead what is sought is "a feeling of being passively overwhelmed." That's why we watch "mystery thrillers."

28 Edmund Bergler, "Psychopathology of Impostors," in *Selected Papers of Edmund Bergler*, ed. Marianne Bergler (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1969), 725–41.

29 Edmund Bergler, *The Psychology of Gambling* (New York: International Universities Press, 1957), 27–28. Subsequent page references are given in the text.



We identify with “the victims, and thereby enjoy the thrill of being overwhelmed” (29).

The argument of one of Bergler’s patients was that “compared to kleptomania, gambling is a socially acceptable way of getting money” (102–3). Another patient who presented with homosexuality and alcoholism, was taking masochistic revenge on his mother (106). Drinking proves that you can fill up with as much fluid as you want. His homosexuality proved that you don’t need the breast for the fulfillment that he was refused and now chug a lugs. He fills the mother with poison before he takes his fill from his improvement upon her. His homosexuality “supposedly began as an episode” (109). Seduced or rather recruited at age fourteen by an acquaintance of his parents, he got used to it, getting more and more enjoyment out of it (105). But blaming “his perversion on the seduction” was a defense (110). He also claimed that his gambling began as a solitary occurrence, a first, chance instance – a seduction (112). The pseudo-aggression of his gambling added syntax to the semantics of being at a loss that the presenting problems accounted for. Through gambling he was defending against his masochistic attachment to the fantasy of a bad, depriving, and refusing mother (107).

When Bergler considers the type of gambler motivated by unconscious guilt, he gets in touch with Freud’s reading of gambling in the case of Fyodor Dostoevsky. But the precursor gets lost within the elaboration of the cover-up of the underlying problem: “In this type, inner guilt originating in psychic masochism is shifted to later masturbatory fantasies that have an Oedipal content. Here again Oedipal fantasies are used to conceal a guilt that is more deeply repressed” (96).

Freud passed along the enigmatic stumbling block of the unconscious sense of guilt, which Melanie Klein elaborated in terms of envy, and Bergler identifies as “always related to psychic masochism and the omnipotence wish” (*ibid.*). Encountered in session as resistance, Freud argued, the analyst interprets it in the usual way, but then “even after allowance has been made for an attitude of defiance towards the physician and for fixation to the various forms of gain from illness, the greater part of it is still left

over; and this reveals itself as the most powerful of all obstacles to recovery.”<sup>30</sup>

In a long footnote Freud details a variation on this unconscious sense, one that is in theory available for treatment. The “borrowed” unconscious sense of guilt belongs to the environs of melancholia. “A sense of guilt that has been adopted in this way is often the sole remaining trace of the abandoned love-relation and not at all easy to recognize as such.”<sup>31</sup>

It depends principally on the intensity of the sense of guilt; there is often no counteracting force of a similar order of strength which the treatment can oppose to it. Perhaps it may depend, too, on whether the personality of the analyst allows of the patient’s putting him in the place of the ego ideal, and this involves a temptation for the analyst to play the part of prophet, saviour and redeemer to the patient.<sup>32</sup>

In Bergler’s world, there are normal children who can cope with early megalomania and let it go when running up against its limits. What’s out of the world is a childhood wish that gets tested and becomes pathogenic beginning in adolescence. In the normal-enough world where Winnicott installed the transitional object, the adolescent can act out asocially the consequences of a flaw in the earlier installation. Certainly for Sachs in *The Creative Unconscious* the crisis point in the feeling of uncanniness is reached in the adolescent setting of sculptures of ephebes and roto-scoped princes and princesses.

According to Bergler, the neurotic child always already can’t cope: “he is constantly faced with the fact that every ‘forbidden’ wish is paralleled by painful punishment, reproach, and feelings of guilt” (25). This is the pay-back plan of inner guilt. The only way out is “to make the best of it,” meaning produce pleasure

30 Sigmund Freud, “The Ego and the Id,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIX (1923–1925): The Ego and the Id and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 49.

31 *Ibid.*, 501n.

32 *Ibid.*

out of “displeasure” (ibid.). “Psychic masochism is an ingenious device for the nullification of punishment: when punishment becomes pleasure, punishment itself is reduced to absurdity” (25–26).

Bergler stages his alternate universal of psychic masochism for all neurotics as a drama in three acts. First the subject enters center stage provoking or misusing the situation in which he must then be defeated. In the second act, he strikes out in righteous indignation. The third act is devoted to self-pity. While the first act is entirely unconscious, the second and third acts are equally conscious – with the exception of the pleasure quotient in self pity, which remains unconscious.

That Bergler doesn’t use unpleasure as his contrast to pleasure but always the wrong term, displeasure, beckons unconsciously toward the scene he’s stuck on, a scene of refusal and humiliation by the displeased parent, which comes to be libidinally charged. The BDSM scenarios of displeasure, which can culminate in the fantasy of male birth, “are, after all,” Freud writes in “The Economic Problem of Masochism,” “only a carrying-out of the fantasies in play.”<sup>33</sup> “The masochist wants to be treated like a small and helpless child, but, particularly, like a naughty child” (162). We are inside the laboratory where the love potion mixes with the death potion, and the wishbone connects to the resurrection bone: “If pain and unpleasure can be not simply warnings but actually aims, the pleasure principle is paralysed – it is as though the watchman over our mental life were put out of action by a drug” (159).

The centerpiece of his psychology of gambling is the feeling of uncanniness, which results when “reaffirmation of the aggressive content of omnipotence, the first human fantasy,” loops through “*its later masochistic elaboration*” (41). Freud theorized the aggressive reflex of this return, the first act. The second act of the return, the later history of omnipotence fantasy, is its masochistic end that Bergler’s precursor overlooked. The first act is

33 Sigmund Freud, “The Economic Problem of Masochism (1924),” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIX*, 159–70.

overplayed, overstressed, fessed up to, in short order to disguise the more serious offense.

For the new sense and direction of uncanniness, Bergler finds his own E.T.A. Hoffmann story to belabor: “Spieler-Glück” (“Gambler’s Luck,” 1820). *Spielen* means to play or, as we’ve seen, act on stage. It also means to gamble; a casino is a *Spielbank*, not consciously in the sense of “playing bank.” *Glück* in German means equally luck and happiness. *Spiel* also means “game,” a form of playing. “The gamelike quality adds a touch of reassurance to the masochistic enjoyment: ‘It’s only child’s play’” (41).

Not a confrontation with myth, the feeling of uncanniness “is a condensed record of what happened to infantile megalomania” (ibid.). That psychic masochism holds the bottom line in the defile of gambling means that it is Bergler’s last word on the return of infantile megalomania, which flexes the “feeling of uncanniness.” That this feeling is the strongest fear “explains why uncanniness is so frequently enjoyed in game form: in motion pictures, plays, books, magazine articles, and – spiritualism” (40).

The intensity of the feeling is heightened and buffered by the brevity. What happens to the “shock” sure sounds like it enters the shot of inoculation “as if the whole tragic fate of infantile omnipotence were unconsciously recapitulated in a fraction of a second” (ibid.). The short form of the feeling of uncanniness spares the subject the long-haul recollection of anguish at the destruction of the first fantasy (41).

The protagonist of Hoffmann’s story is a happy-go-lucky gent who is inured to speculation but finds out that his milieu misunderstands his lack of interest in gambling and deems him a tightwad. To put an end to the talk of the town he goes to the casino hoping to lose so as to get it over with already. Instead he wins and wins. One day he meets the stare of an old man standing across from him day after day. At last losing his cool, he berates him and drives him out. His rage was disproportionate he soon feels and wishes to make amends. Promptly, he crosses the man’s path and begs his forgiveness.

The old man tells the protagonist a story, which is also about a balefully staring old man shadowing a certain Chevalier who is also on a winning streak, on which he stumbled by chance and

a dare, but which now stokes his endless greed. This old man starts placing bets and losing to the winning Chevalier, until he loses everything he owns, which was to be his beloved daughter's inheritance. He begs for a small loan drawn on the vast sum the Chevalier has won from him – for the sake of his daughter. To plead his case he tells his story. He was a recovering gambler living for his wife and then, when she died in childbirth, for their daughter. When he heard about the nonstop winner in town he went to the casino to stop or warn him by losing before his eyes.

The crescendo of his begging and wailing in the name of his daughter summons the beauty, who enters the scene left by the family fortune. The greedy winner can no longer say no when he sees the daughter, especially when she flaunts the true love between her and her father – way more valuable, she underscores and scorns, than his wealth and his loneliness. Now he's a recovering gambler. In time she's won over, and the father sees that the possessions he legally lost, but which the repentant gambler didn't claim, would now be his daughter's again by marriage.

Then there's an end in the happy end: the old man dies, but in his dying hours he's back in his element, hallucinating that he's betting and winning. That the wish is shown to be stronger than desire or love brings about a relapse in the son-in-law, which tests the marriage. His wife realizes that it was the recovery that diverted her love meant for the boy next door who was just then marching off to the war. Everyone bides their time. The husband comes to his senses again but then there's a new gambler in town, a soldier back from the war, who challenges him. The Chevalier loses again and again. When the winner goes home with him to claim the goods, including the wife (that's right, he's that true love from next door) they find her dead in bed. The cursor of the wish leads all the characters in the stories within the stories to find the end in inner reality's dead end, but it's where the dead are.

As in Robert A. Heinlein's story "By His Bootstraps," when the doubles of older versions of the self return unrecognized the pause for second thoughts is busted. Doubling in the moment is the missed opportunity to say what you feel or mean. Doubling belonging to the future eclipses all second chances. It's recovery and reparation, second thoughts and second chances that are

shown up and thrown away as delusional in the stricken world of Hoffmann's story, which follows more closely than Bergler's gloss the uncanny wish to be refused.

This is one of those Hoffmann stories further framed by the collection's greater narrative in which there is storytelling among friends. It turns out, a friend points out, that the storyteller never gambles. But when he goes on and on sharing an anecdote from his life that inspired the fictional story they just heard the others can't take it any more. They snatch at a non sequitur to get them out of the infinite regress of denial. They ask instead for a story about the eccentric figure described at the start of the anecdote, who frames and packages the view of a burning church tower in the manner of aesthetic entertainment with comestibles and drink. As we saw in the case of Alfred Bester, Bergler's wish to be refused fits the tight spot of addiction to wishful drinking, which Hoffmann visits upon the happiness of the player. We know that Hoffmann wrote with the ink of drink. But we owe the whole of their *Kultur*, according to Friedrich Nietzsche, to the Germans rolling 24/7 in a buzz and a blur.

### Among the Dead

Freud's reading of Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*, which was composed back to back with "The Poet and Daydreaming," was his premier demo of psychoanalytic interpretation of the symptom picture of literature.<sup>34</sup> "Dreams and Delusion in Jensen's *Gradiva*" was a text that commanded a following in letters and, in particular, on the screen. The media-technological reception brought up the arrears in a one-sided accounting of what Freud double booked as the truth in delusion alternating between archaeology and the machine age (as he spelled it out later on in his reading of Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*). For it is the archaeological nimbus of protagonist Norbert Hanold's "Pompeiiian

34 Sigmund Freud, "Dreams and Delusion in Jensen's *Gradiva*," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. IX (1906–1909): Jensen's 'Gradiva,' and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1959). Subsequent page references are given in the text.

Fantasy” that alone is endopsychic in this reading (51). “There is, in fact, no better analogy for repression, by which something in the mind is at once made inaccessible and preserved, than burial of the sort to which Pompeii fell a victim and from which it could emerge once more through the work of spades” (40). In Norbert’s dissociated fantasy, archaeology houses the repressed and supplies the means of repression. The underlying opposition between eros and repression enters a season of “unrest” (52) that coincides with the onset of the narrative. Unrest gives rise to a new lease on fantasizing that extends and varies the archaeological delusion until it no longer coincides with both the purpose and the means of repression (52). Fantasizing a find, which turns out to be a re-finding, he travels to Pompeii.

Norbert Hanold’s delusion doesn’t need to work toward admitting a stabilizing diplomatic relationship to reality, as did Schreber’s delusional system in the interface of the zero-people. As Freud stipulates in a footnote, it’s a hysterical delusion in the case of the young archaeologist, not the psychotic kind (451n). Hanold’s delusion began by zeroing in on zeroing out the reality of one person only, his love object from childhood, Zoë Bertgang. Her surname supplies what Norbert has yet to recognize again as her own trait, the “gait” (*Gang*) that in the ancient bas-relief of a girl walking propels him into his Pompeian fantasy. Zoë happens to have traveled to Pompeii, too, to tend to her scientist father, who’s conducting his all-consuming research there.

Once she realizes that the figment Gradiva is her placeholder, Zoë enters the dissociation as the ghost of the Pompeian girl. Working from the inside she can bring down the delusion, which began, she says, as “negative hallucination” (67). At the onset of puberty, even the happy memory of their child’s play, which came complete with the innocent erotic undertow of the wish for Big Time, was vacuumed up and away. Adolescent fantasizing was squashed. The foot fetishism balances on the cusp of this foreclosed fantasizing.

When the negative hallucination comes tumbling down, sounds and sights penetrate to Norbert’s ground zero and he starts daydreaming in the environs of archaeology. He starts fantasizing the fantasy, unlocking its dissociation. The triggers are figments of repressed wishes torn away from their setting in buried

memory. He begins to dream again in Pompeii and remembers a night dream, which lends coherence to his delusion, bringing it closer to the specific situation of his missing affect.

The dream confirms that Gradiva belongs to the Pompeian past and that she died during the volcanic eruption long time ago. "Melancholy feelings accompanied this extension of the delusional structure, like an echo of the anxiety which had filled the dream" (57). The anxiety rebounds from the stirrings of the erotic life in puberty, which the negative hallucination had packed away but was now on its way back following in Gradiva's footsteps. Norbert begins to sense a newfound "respect" for the honeymooners he had before disdained like flies to swat (26).

Zoë's therapeutic inspiration in treating Norbert's overvaluation of archaeology comes from her loving relationship to her failed, maternalized father, who related to her through, even named her after, the living-creative body of his science. Freud underscores that Zoë first fell in love with Norbert when he followed her father and withdrew from her to embark on his all-consuming career in archaeology. The amalgamation of her love for him and for her father is evident in the belittling caricature she finds for Norbert: "archaeopteryx," a bird-creature belonging equally to archaeology and zoology (33). Zoë was available for a new release of life from the incestuous milieu of neglect and unfulfillment. In the role of wife-to-be rescuing Norbert (and his proposal) from the depths of mother earth, Zoë represents the father function. That she enlightens Norbert in her new role of father is a benefit that also accrues to her.

The clear text to which she restores him results from her deft understanding and use of double meanings. Freud points out that in the analytic session double meaning often provides a good sense of the wish fantasy hovering over a patient's free association. A preponderance of double meanings promotes a sense of apparent absurdity. The absurdity charge is the favorite testimony submitted by those who scoff at the notion that the dream has the status of a psychic act or function (73). A telling resistance since the content we consider absurd means that strongly charged wishes are coming to the fore to be recognized. Among the typical absurd dreams that Freud considers in *The Interpretation of Dreams* three involve visitations by the dead.



The absurdity is reversed when Freud adds syntax to the dreamer's death wish.

In his reading of *Gradiva*, Freud gives another example of a seeming absurdity: established scientists who are able to combine their allegiance to reason with the ghosts of modern spiritualism (71). But the opening season of the allegiance to reason, the Enlightenment, allotted more than one lifetime for the fulfillment of the Kantian duty of perfectibility. Extended finitude, however, can never equal everlasting life. Heir to the Enlightenment, modern spiritualism science-fictionalized the afterlife in much the same way the mechanical brain, in Günther's argument, updated the double.

Zoë steps out of the shadow of haunting into the spotlight of an Enlightenment transmission. She can enlighten, illumine the dark spots in the narrative. The narrative as a whole partakes of the coherence that comes with Zoë's intervention in Norbert's delusion. Zoë enters the unstable site of negative hallucination in the guise of the ghost in the fantasy coupling and through her "Enlightenment" brings it back to reality under the aegis of the father function. She integrates the death wish, a fact of life that she learned about through Norbert's delusional intrigue. She hadn't known going into it that one must first die to come alive, to be loved (37).

Freud states outright that fantasizing is the harbinger of delusion (58). And yet Norbert's unscientific tendency to daydream, which culminated in the delusion, also offered a corrective to the repression. Coupling (in both the spousal and the analytic relationship) was inscribed in advance in the delusion. It allowed Zoë to make an effortless switch from analyst to wife.

"Aufklärung und Heilung," enlightenment and treatment,<sup>35</sup> coincide in Zoë's therapy, leading to the awakening of affect. Love is liberated from the symptom's compromise outlet. In the course of analysis, the love that returns for the patient finds its "first" object in the treating analyst, which opens up another

35 Sigmund Freud, *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens "Gradiva,"* ed. Bernd Urban (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2009), 118.

chapter of work on the transference.<sup>36</sup> It amounts to a fantastic reversal of the analytic setting when in *Gradiva* the repressed love object is the treating analyst.

Is the overcoming of the sojourn in the underworld that leads Norbert and Zoë down the aisle the ultimate fantasy in Wilhelm Jensen's *Gradiva*? When Freud expands on the archaeology analogy in session with the Ratman, indicating that the unearthing of long-buried relics can trigger rapid decay, he must rush to reassure his stunned patient that everything was being done to reverse this side effect. The Ratman was carrying a girl encrypted inside him. The fantasy of the happy end in *Gradiva* coincides with a prime "construction" site in psychoanalysis. In the transfer between the original Ratman case notes and the published study we can watch Freud "construct" mourning for the father as the treatable problem in the foreground of the analysis – as the inoculum that curtails the dominion of his patient's legible but untreatable melancholia.<sup>37</sup>

The emotion picture of funereal doubling that is extinguished in the light of *Gradiva*'s happy ending made it into pictures, beginning with Karl Freund's *The Mummy* (1932), which turns on the analytic breakthrough and deliverance of Helen, Dr. Muller's "favorite patient," from psychotic burial alive with her dead mummy. Her safe harbor, however, is a libidinally limited marriage to someone more normal like Frank (who sees in her his dead mummy).<sup>38</sup> Did the archaeologist Frank always have to open graves to fall in love with a woman, Helen like Zoë wonders?

The novella *Gradiva*, which draws on Jensen's own attachment to a lost childhood sweetheart, was retold in terms of a melancholic's manipulated stabilization through doubling in Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac's 1954 novel *D'entre les*

36 Ibid., 90.

37 I explore the underworld of the Ratman case and Freud's re-construction of the original record in *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988).

38 See my reading of *The Mummy* in its full endopsychic setting, including the histories going into it, in the chapter on Artaud in *Aberrations of Mourning*.

morts (*Among the Dead*), which Alfred Hitchcock adapted in *Vertigo*.<sup>39</sup> The torment of Hitchcock's Judy while grief-stuck Scotty is remaking her into the double of the lost object, Madeleine, finds a vestigial rehearsal in two photographs that Jensen cherished. The first one is the only image that was left of Jensen's first sweetheart who died in childhood; the second one he composed like the first, thus setting the image of the other girl he (re)found later in life on the doubling and haunting of a dead ringer.<sup>40</sup> The second girl's lookalike status was alone in the eyes of the beholder. In his novella, however, Jensen proposed a way out of the encryptment by introducing the living "lost" object, Zoë Bertgang, into Hanold's delusion of contact with the ghost of Gradiva. Jensen brings back his childhood love across the waste of repression, which only looks like death.

In Alain Robbe-Grillet's 2006 film *C'est Gradiva qui vous appelle* (*It's Gradiva Who's Calling You*), an English academic, John Locke, is in Morocco investigating Eugène Delacroix's stay there. An antique dealer offers him the painter's unknown sketchbooks, promising the prize of fame for the academic and his book. Sample pages on slides tempt Locke and the film begins getting the feel and fill of self-reflexivity. When critics cry surrealism, it means surrender before the enigmatic force of waking fantasy.

The pages of the sketchbooks are erotic drawings. Their draw is Delacroix's model back then, his lover and murder victim. Soon Locke sees her all over town. It's Gradiva. Robbe-Grillet transforms Gradiva's role as therapist into something a little less fantastic, the role of dominatrix who wields authority over his own authorship. In one scene, she's writing the screenplay while it passes into and through the sight we behold. There's always a lag, however, or a near miss in Robbe-Grillet's rendition of the

39 See my psychoanalysis of *Vertigo* in *The Psycho Records* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2016), 165. It is while busting the ghost on behalf of a new life in mourning and substitution that Scotty witnesses a real murder – second death. The better half of melancholia claims him.

40 The biographical information was in the introductory material in the German double edition of Freud's essay and Jensen's story, from which I cited above. The two telltale photographs can be found online.

Pompeiiian fantasy, and when Locke locks steps with Gradiva she's always just ahead. Following her lead he enters an underworld of orientalist sado-masochistic fantasizing.

Robbe-Grillet, on or off purpose, amplifies a detail in Jensen's story and Freud's close reading which belongs to the repressed past of Norbert Hanold's and Zoë Bertgang's childhood friendship. There were bouts of roughhousing in their play together that heralded sexual awakening and which Norbert buried in the ash of negative hallucination. The upsurge returns from the repressed era when Norbert swats but misses a fly and instead hits Gradiva/Zoë's hand. With one swipe we are given a more complete setting of the fetishism suggested by the lost object's surviving trait.

Locke whips up a storm and thinks he's getting closer. Instead, the BDSM fantasizing swaps over into his home, where his regular sexual outlet awaits. But the block is not in time. Gradiva isn't a step ahead; she's dead. When he ties the concubine to the BDSM fantasy, she's no longer available. Locke cannot enter the spectacle. The sado-masochistic elaboration of the wish fantasy pulls up before the dead body inside the doubling.

Robbe-Grillet's parting shot, amped up by the endopsychic perceptions of archaeological and media-technological delusion, takes us back to his 1961 screenplay *Last Year at Marienbad*. The impact of Freud's reading of *Gradiva* was already there in the manifest references to Orpheus and Euridice, redirecting the myth of love and death through the poetics of daydreaming. Citing Claudio Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo* we lay claim to the myth as the primal scene of all opera. Barrie Kosky's 2012 production at the Komische Oper Berlin remade the opera into the origin story of all "work" in columns A and B. But before we can get our fill of culture we must stand before the portal to the underworld and the fresh grave beside it.

In *D'entre les morts*, the detective stands there when he gives his lost-and-found object the nickname "little Euridice."<sup>41</sup> His

41 Pierre Boileau and Thomas Narcejac, *Vertigo*, trans. Geoffrey Sainsbury (London: Pushkin Vertigo, 2015), 60. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

Pompeiiian fantasy rebounds from a screen memory illuminating the illustration of a book he cherished in childhood:

At the age of twelve, under the shadow of that hill, he had read a translation of that unforgettable book of Kipling's *The Light that Failed*. The frontispiece was a picture of a boy and a girl who were leaning over a revolver [...]. The young girl, dressed in black, resembled Madeleine – he was sure of it now – and had made no less an impression on him. He had thought about her as he went to sleep and heard her footsteps in his dreams. (41)

The schemer renamed Elster in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* tells his friend, the acrophobic detective, the story of his wife and motivates the role the double will perform (9). He says, she suddenly relapses into silence and hardly hears what's said to her. Or she stares at something in the middle distance as though seeing things invisible to the rest of us. When she comes back to her normal self, she has a bewildered expression on her face, as though needing time to recognize her surroundings. The detective wants to know whether she has ever "dabbled in fortune-telling or any of that psychic stuff" (11). No, it's something that happens to her: then, "all of a sudden you realize she's somewhere else" (ibid.). The husband has the sense that she "feels the attack coming," and that "she tries to ward it off" (ibid.). But if diversion fails, "she seems to go rigid and her eyes seem to be intently watching something which moves. [...] Then for five minutes, ten perhaps, but rarely more, she's for all the world like a sleep-walker" (12). But, he adds: "you don't really get the impression she's asleep. She's absent-minded as though her body no longer belonged to her, as though she had become someone else" (ibid.).

Outside, the story is set on the opening of war between France and Nazi Germany in 1939, a quiet for the storm of projections of French victory. The season of whether or not forecasting is as far as the half-dead (the dead and their mourners) regress in P.K. Dick's *Ubik*. At once tragic irony and running gag in *Ubik*, in the novel by Boileau and Narcejac the scam, the psychopath's manipulation of his symptomatic friend through fantasy, is in sync or swim with the forecast season. A major change from

what the screenplay adds follows. The detective splits the scene of Madeleine's suicide rather than be caught in a recurring shameful act. He doesn't deliver the role of witness. The intermission of France's occupation brings an end to best-laid plans. The story restarts when the detective glimpses Madeleine's double or ghost in a postwar newsreel.

The incident that revealed the inspector's fear of falling, which kept him from helping a colleague who took the fall, is a trauma he suspects is comparable to what Madeleine is hiding. His traumatic memory is lodged in his interior thoughts and fantasies about Madeleine. Early on he is anxious to rein in his tendency to let his "imagination run away with him" (26–27): "Perhaps he ought really to have been a novelist, with this host of images which so readily and of their own accord flooded his brain. They weren't vague ones either: they had all the relief, the dramatic intensity of life" (27). He's ready or not for the close-up of memory, which is the interruptus of his running imagining: "That roof, for instance – the shiny wet slates, the discoloured red-brick chimneys, the wisps of smoke all blowing the same way, the rumble of the traffic below, like a torrent at the bottom of a gorge. He wrung his hands" (ibid.).

In the Postscript to "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," Jacques Derrida elaborates the words on Norbert Hanold's mind in Jensen's *Gradiva*, which Freud cites: "'traces' in a literal sense."<sup>42</sup> The reading of the words on the page returns Freud's *Gradiva* to the citation or summons of the irreducible/irretrievable trace of the ghost's passage in the ashes of Pompeii. But a literal trace on the page is on screen the special or visual effect, like the Dolly Zoom inspired by Scottie's acrophobia.<sup>43</sup> Hitchcock

42 Jacques Derrida, "Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression," trans. Eric Prenowitz, *Diacritics* 5, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 9–63. The Postscript is on pages 61–63.

43 Another entry into the thicket of influence by following the rebounding special effect opens with Saul Bass's instruction to Robert Abel to visit John Whitney Sr. Whitney was working on the swirling effect in the opening titles of *Vertigo*. Abel decided on the spot to apprentice himself. Under Whitney's tutelage he learned how to use the slit-scan and motion control cameras (which informed celebrated effects in

ratchets up the import of the dread of falling with this literal trace. In the original language of psychoanalysis, *Trauer*, grief and mourning, is etymologically linked to a sense of falling.<sup>44</sup> In Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, Scotty falls in love with Madeleine, his "patient" in distress. He must deliver her from the delusion of possession. He is clear-text-minded, like Zoë in *Gradiva*, like Clara in "The Sandman." The film has been busy constructing her as ghost.

The highpoint of Scotty's first day of observing Madeleine comes in the museum when she sits in front of the portrait of Carlotta. The camera goes out of its way to construct the resemblances. Camera guidance underscores the sameness of the bouquet Madeleine brought with her to the one in the portrait, the sameness of the bun in each hairdo. The explanatory camera-work is excessive. It's like the camera is imparting the resemblance to another camera. The viewer is not addressed. Does the camera take us out of the interpersonals into the intrapsychic space of haunting, in which, whatever resemblance may be or signify, it first has the status of special effect? The hair bun in particular fits the *Vertigo* Effect, opening upon a trajectory of fetishism, a dissociation that allows one, as Freud makes clear, to know and not to know that the object is absent, dead. At the next stop, a hotel, Scottie watches Madeleine park her car, enter, and then open an upstairs window. But when he interrogates the hotel owner about her tenant, she says she didn't come today. Where's her car he asks as he opens the front door. What car?

2001: *A Space Odyssey* and *Star Wars*). For the company he established in 1971, Abel purchased the leftover slit-scan equipment used for Kubrick's film. Robert Abel & Associates skipped the alternate line of development, *Star Wars*, to work on the first *Star Trek* movie. To conclude this sampling along one family line, the son of Whitney, John Whitney Jr., while working for Triple-I urged together with Gary Demos that a newspaper-printer scanner be converted for motion-picture work, which led to early demonstrations of CGI in *Westworld*, *Futureworld*, and *Tron*. I've culled this cascade of anecdotes from Tom Situ, *Moving Innovation: The Early Days of Computer Animation* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2013).

44 The etymology counts stopovers in Old Saxon (*driosan*) and Old English (*drēosan*).

In the novel and film, the rescue of Madeleine from drowning means that the detective and Madeleine have met and can now be alone together on their wanderings through the city and environs. In the movie their trip to the Sequoia National Park is a therapy field trip. The ancient trees that surpass lifetime are fantasy props that Scotty tries to historicize. Madeleine immediately reacts with what seems a non sequitur: the ancient trees remind her that she is going to die. The fit is made clear when he brings her before the cross section of a felled sequoia marked at each layer with another historical datemark. Her tree fantasy of foreboding he points out is a legible part of historical memory. But Madeleine outlines with her reading finger what goes unmarked in this history, the span of her (Carlotta's) nineteenth-century lifetime. While Scotty keeps up his relentless questioning for the clear text of memory, he falls for the ghost between two deaths.

After Madeleine makes her exit by faking the fall, Scotty looks for Madeleine's double, her return once again from the dead. But then he encounters a woman on the street who bears a basic resemblance to Madeleine but is someone else. Given a chance at substitution, Scotty instead makes her over into the double. Only her language is different, slightly vulgar. She's Judy from Kansas and Hitchcock updates the American fantasy epic. In his reading of *Gradiva*, Freud points out that "somewhere" can be used to hide that the exact location is in fact known<sup>45</sup>: what lies somewhere over the rainbow is the realm of the dead.

Judy carelessly wears the Carlotta necklace, and Scotty now knows for certain what he suspected earlier, which Hitchcock went to great lengths to show. While waiting in her room for Judy's return from the beauty parlor he surveys the space with an anxious alertness that suggests he is reconstructing the evidence that his Madeleine never existed. The detective-therapist is back, now intent on clearing the false memory of the patient he himself is and surmounting once and for all, as though this had been the therapy goal all along, his acrophobia. They drive back to the tower.

In contrast to the novel, Hitchcock allows Scottie to go scott-free. He is not in fact responsible for his colleague's fall. However,

45 Freud, *Der Wahn und die Träume in W. Jensens "Gradiva,"* 82.



Hitchcock adds a court scene in which Scottie again cannot be charged but in which he is blamed, humiliated. How could he save someone this second time (from second death) if he cannot tolerate scaling heights? After the hearing, the psychopath Elster takes him aside to side with him: we both know who killed Madeleine, i.e., Carlotta. That's his only acquittal.

Scotty climbs the tower behind Judy remade as Madeleine, the star of Elster's show in which the detective unwittingly played the role of immobilized witness. Her performance was better under Elster's direction, Scotty concludes. The whole film is a film within a film. Is that why Kim Novak never reported against the director? How could he act out within this *mise-en-abyme* staging of his predilection?

In the novel, the acrophobe tries shaking sense into his serial ghost, when she reveals to him that she was never Madeleine and certainly not the ghost who allegedly possessed Madeleine. He tries shaking out of her this terrible denial but kills her. In the movie, Scotty makes it to the top this time. Judy pleads with him to take this chance. She's the one he loved and she still loves him. In other words, she's alive. But before the third chance can be sealed with a kiss, a nun enters abruptly, interrupts without warning, and Judy takes fright, steps back, and plummets. The nun crosses herself. For the Catholic boy, a nun is the feared and respected authority figure wielding justice like the Furies fate. Scotty looks down and is relieved of the special effect but must accept that he loved a dead woman. He can take the fall of mourning.

## Pet Theories

### The POV of the Daydreamer

The wish alone can be self-fulfilling. Consider one of the examples Freud gives of the lasting impression made by a fortuneteller on his patient in the past, even though in the meantime it's plain that the prophecy didn't come true. In the forecast, the details of her mother's marriage and childbirth were repeated: "The prophecy promised her the fulfillment of the identification with her mother which had been the secret of her childhood."<sup>1</sup> The fortuneteller thus touched on the fantasy his client had unconsciously wished upon. That the fortuneteller, perhaps telepathically, came as close as the client's ego would allow to fulfilling her wish for real left the lasting impression. Daydreaming can be its own reward by the proximity it keeps, but without realization, to an unconscious death wish that remains off limits.

While the wish itself isn't repressed, its fantasy elaboration, its fleeting, throwaway fixation, is hard to remember and only bears repeating. Only in the series in which it is an episode does the daydream begin to show staying power. When fantasizing begins to organize itself like advertising or a so-called haunting melody in the mode of "to be continued," then we enter upon a private

1 Sigmund Freud, "Psycho-analysis and Telepathy," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVIII (1920-1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 187-89.

theater. The production value of the show is low. Even when a night dream borrows the ready-made formulation of a daydream, Freud observes in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, the part on loan is “more fleeting than other parts of the same dream.”<sup>2</sup> In *The Psychology of Daydreaming* (1921), J. Varendonck sought to develop waking fantasy as reality testing’s parallel universal and secure for daydreaming the mode of hypothesis (specifically, a creative process of hypothesis and rejoinder). But, example after example, we discern chains of thought pulling up short before memory. Daydreaming in its dependence on and incompatibility with memory is largely a fitful process of stops, restarts, and oblivion.

In *They Live* (1988), aliens manipulate the psycho-economy of human servitude through fantasy. There isn’t a POV. You see manipulated reality in the film or, if the protagonists flip on the special shades, you see the truth or, more likely, the ultimate fantasy. At the start of *They Live*, there is a momentary glimpse of a name, a word, a message, loaded in a film bent on revealing all subliminals, but which, as Jonathan Lethem points out, is accidental or documentary rather than staged.<sup>3</sup> We recognize that the logo on the train spells out Shock Control. The train bisects the path of the protagonist like Scapinelli’s carriage at the start of *The Student of Prague*, foreclosing background and context. In Stellan Rye’s 1913 film, the vehicle’s arrival serves to mark all that follows in the close quarters of doubling as illusion, even delusion. A train’s passage on screen is an internal simulacrum of the history of cinema. On the double tracks of train wreck and roller-coaster rides, Benjamin discerned in media, with film at the front of the line, a defense mechanism containing the shocks within shots of inoculation.

2 Sigmund Freud, “The Interpretation of Dreams,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. V (1900–1901): The Interpretation of Dreams (II) and On Dreams*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1953), 493.

3 Jonathan Lethem, *They Live: A Novel Approach to Cinema* (New York: Soft Skull Press, 2010), 9–10.

In the prehistory of mediatization, Benjamin argues in “The Storyteller,” the novel already supplied a form of immunizing containment.<sup>4</sup> The novelty of the novel was the import of the protagonist’s happy ending in death. The protagonist becomes in the end a figure who died then and thus, whereby his entire life is held up in necrospect as meaningful – and, most importantly, contained, like an inoculum. These parting shots rendered uncanny and literally unhoused the prospect of death. No longer would there be rooms in the home still bearing the residue of an ancestor’s passing. Instead, the dying were to be kept out of sight in peripheral institutions.

*They Live* introduces into our obsession with surveillance, which is largely a Christian comfort, the bogie of our alien manipulation by ten or so subliminal commandments. The caste from Outer Space reflects back the majority’s projection that members of the alien minority seduce by inducing the illusion that they are beautiful. The agon seems rather specific to the Hollywood “industry.” Not all the rich (producers) are from Outer Space, but soon the threat is conveyed that the rich who are in control are all alien.

The subliminal veiling of perception in *They Live* closes a loop with the parting-shot inoculations administered by the novel (according to Benjamin). When the protagonist puts on the decoder sunglasses, he not only recognizes the commandments, but also sees that the aliens are the decayed, skeletal dead. Either they have or he has already died (once). He then kills as many aliens as he can on a guilt-free spree reminiscent of the thrill-a-kill consumerism of zombie movies. In horror films, as already, for example, in *Phantom of the Opera*, the mask of the psycho covers and resembles the skull-face, and the camera POV that assumes the mask (in John Carpenter’s *Halloween*) looks like it’s looking out of one.

Before the shooting begins, the new heroes in *They Live* put on the glasses of detection to see through the cover-up and get

4 See my reading of Benjamin’s “The Storyteller,” “Back to Frankfurt School,” in *A Concise Companion to Psychoanalysis, Literature, and Culture*, eds. Laura Marcus and Anghi Mukherjee (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2014), 66–81.

to the truth (and the ultimate fantasy). Time to remember that, as Benjamin jotted down in *The Arcades Project*, the arrival of the detection genre coincided with the advent of modern spiritualism. Before Conan Doyle took the genre and ran with it on the one-way street leading to his celebrated championship of modern ghost-seeing, the origin of the genre was shared by Edgar Allan Poe on the cusp of communication with the other side and E.T.A. Hoffmann at the tail end of the episode of animal magnetism (and the vampire epidemic).

In *Whose Body?* (1923) by Dorothy Sayers, a detection novel that Freud was reading while waiting for the move to London, a psy-fi conceit develops out of the unidentified body that opens the case: “Assigning a motive for the murder of a person without relations or antecedents or even clothes is like trying to visualize the fourth dimension – admirable exercise for the imagination, but arduous and inconclusive.”<sup>5</sup> Sir Reuben Levy went missing at the time. But his resemblance to the body is a near miss. Could it be a test corpse from the nearby teaching hospital? At the inquest, Dr. Julian Freke, an expert surgeon in charge of educational dissection at the facility, rules out that any of his stiffers are missing.

Dr. Julian Freke studies the brain as the body of the mind. When the police detective asks him whether he indeed considers the neuroses as physical he replies: “Undoubtedly. I am not ignorant of the rise of another school of thought, [...] but its exponents are mostly charlatans or self-deceivers. ‘Sie haben sich so weit darin eingeheimnisst’ that, like Sludge the Medium, they are beginning to believe their own nonsense. I should like to have the exploring of some of their brains” (75). The prep work for such exploration is the wish his research denies.

Lord Peter, the master sleuth, sees through Dr. Julian based on another of his PTSD flashbacks to the trauma of war service, the outbreak of his war neurosis, and the physical-only type on the military medical staff confounding his predicament. He recognizes in Dr. Julian the criminal mastermind, who killed his Jewish victim out of lingering, malingering jealousy, so hard to

5 Dorothy L. Sayers, *Whose Body?* (Mineola: Dover, 2016), 54–55. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

reconcile with his view of the mind as surface symptom of the brain's physical irritation. By making the switch with a body donated to the teaching facility, he diverted the investigation so that there would be enough time for the hated corpse to vanish in the course of studious dissection. By way of his own talking detection, Lord Peter wins one for the exponents of the other school of thought, whose brains Dr. Julian fantasied carving up: "Most people don't associate anythin' – their ideas just roll about like so many dry peas on a tray, makin' a lot of noise and goin' nowhere, but once you begin lettin' 'em string their peas into a necklace, it's going to be strong enough to hang you, what?" (82).

In 1925, Siegfried Kracauer wrote a philosophical study of the detective novel at the same time that Benjamin was concluding his allegory book: *Der Detektiv-Roman. Ein philosophischer Traktat* (*The Detective Novel: A Philosophical Treatise*, a.k.a. *Detective Novel*). Theodor Adorno, who was the prize pupil that Benjamin and Kracauer each claimed as his own, suggested that Kracauer use the *Errettung* (rescue) of external reality in the subtitle of his *Theory of Film*. Whenever I read another piece on Benjamin by someone else, I'm struck by the waffling on the synonyms: salvation, saving, rescue, redemption. That Benjamin preferred to use *Rettung* (rescue) for the operations of modern allegory goes back to G.E. Lessing's Enlightenment project of essays composed to rescue authors from misprision and oblivion: *Rettungen* (1754). Yes, dead religion is our destiny and must be read. But that doesn't mean that Messianism can eclipse the apotheosis of the intrigue that, in Benjamin's argument, rescues modern allegory from re-Christianization through the Devil's return. What rhymes with the intrigue is the work of detection in its reach beyond the rigid priest caste of police work and the seduction of doubling that the evil mastermind proposes. When Kracauer addresses G.K. Chesterton, who replaced the independent detective with the priest, he gave by cautionary contrast with the Christian cop-out reinforcement to his view of the work of detection's overall allegiance to a law of infinite interpretation, not to the contractual book by which the police are the law.

The "writing medium" from the hypothetical milieu of modern spiritualism provided William James with the model of "automatic writing" for study in his psychology laboratory. By

the import of communication with the subconscious or with a secondary personality (or with a ghost), automatic writing staggered the “stream of consciousness” in proximity to fantasizing. The test subject taking dictation would assume a trance state modeled on the “absence” into which a hysteric withdrew when continuing a fantasy. No longer committed to transmuting and covering its sources, A-culture followed suit and folded daydreaming inside the night dream of its *Dichtung*.

Gertrude Stein took her writing lesson directly from James. Through repetition punctuated by rhyming *Blood on the Dining Room Floor* begins with an absence or the end – and the so-called interior monologue sinks in by circling around the drain of its streaming. Although Stein only tried this one time to write a detection novel, she followed throughout her writing the lead of its conceit: the detective story gets rid of human nature and the event, which belong to the era before the story begins. What follows from seeing what can happen when an unidentified (with) murder victim is all you have to start from results, for Stein, in the quintessentially modern novel form. Her attempt at composing a detective story of her own, Stein writes in “Why I Like Detective Stories,” faltered because she was making reference to events that had occurred in her neighborhood: “after all a novel even if it is a detective story ought not to mix up what happened with what has happened, anything that has happened is exciting enough without any writing, tell it as often as you like but do not write it as a story.”<sup>6</sup> What really happened, as Stein puts it, which kept her detection fiction from happening, intruded like a memory damming/damning the stream of daydream. What also really happened was that the attempt was enough. Writing down murder like a jab in her lyrical vein allowed her to break through the writer’s block, the wreckage brought on by the success of *The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas*.

While James studied in the writing medium the flow of consciousness, his colleague at Harvard, Hugo Münsterberg, introduced a cinematic model for the psychology of our second

6 Gertrude Stein quoted in John Herbert Gill’s Afterword to Gertrude Stein, *Blood on the Dining-Room Floor: A Murder Mystery* (Mineola: Dover, 2008), 78.

nature. In the theater, as Münsterberg argues in *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (1918), we supply on our own the association between the overstimulation of adventure holding center stage and the earlier scene of a quieter time back home.<sup>7</sup> This momentum of memory (as well as of the imagination) is projected into the motion pictures themselves:

We see the jungle, we see the hero at the height of his danger; and suddenly there flashes upon the screen a picture of the past. [...] When one deep breath is over we are stirred again by the event of the present. That home scene of the past flitted by just as a hasty thought of bygone days darts through the mind. [...] We have really an objectivation of our memory function. The case of the cut-back is there quite parallel to that of the close-up. In the one we recognize the mental act of attending, in the other we must recognize the mental act of remembering. (37–38)

Imagination, which Münsterberg identifies as expectation controlled by our feelings, is staggered in theater until the last act. That too is intercepted by film: “our imagination is projected on the screen” (38). What he calls photoplay observes the standard of theater. But what interests him is how the original peep shows and photographic playthings that shared the era of the advent of telegraphy could be extended to provide the shaky foundation of this public theater of wish-fulfillment fantasy. The faculties that he sees potentiated from stage to screen are skewered upon Freud’s arc of daydreaming. “*It is as if reality has lost its own continuous connection and become shaped by the demands of our soul*” (38). Münsterberg, thinking in German, uses the soul-word for psyche, like Freud.

If consciousness loops through the movies, then is the wrap double or nothing? The first failure of film is in the art department according to the same standard of mimesis that drama realizes more perfectly. It’s the difference between the wax museum

7 Hugo Münsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (New York & London: Appleton, 1916), 37. Subsequent page references are given in the text.



and the collection of ancient Greek sculpture. “Our own attention and memory and imagination have shifted and remodeled the events until they look as nature could never show them. What we really see can hardly be called any longer an imitation of the world, such as the theater gives us” (53). What we see, as through the *Traumorgan*, is freed from direct dependency upon “*the physical forms of space, time, and causality*” (70). This risk that film takes is its bid for the status of a new art form.

Experimental filmmaker Klaus Wyborny transposed the interior monologue in the first chapter of his (unpublished) novel to the voice-over of fantasizing in his 2002 film *Sulla*. He transplanted the buffering of daydreaming to a medium that is a wrap with its throwaway satisfaction. Wearing his other hat as author of philosophies of film that draw on physics and psychoanalysis, Wyborny shows that when you watch a film what you see is what you forget. Using the projector as model, he singles out the gate as the present tense of projection, the take-up reel as the past, and the feed reel as the future. To illustrate the process between and within each tense he adds the metaphors: “picture particle,” “pool of impressions,” and “raft.”

Whenever a new shot gets into the gate, a “picture particle” is ejected from there. Reaching the brain it hits the pool of impressions with a big splash. Doing this it hits the raft floating on top first. The raft (presenting our memory of the preceding shot) gets destroyed or it at least loses its distinctness, so that most of its structures disappear within a fraction of a second, while some remnants start sinking down. Meanwhile the present particle already works havoc in the memory-liquid, where it modifies and destroys a considerable amount of the impressions deposited there. [...] Having finished its destructive job [...] the picture particle drifts up to the pool’s surface, forming a new raft there, which now floats on a “sea of changed impressions,” getting more and more structure within its remaining projection time – till the next picture particle will be in the gate, by which the present raft will also be destroyed and the pool modified anew. [...] Somehow a pool of those impressions vaguely remains and when the film is over, the remaining pool plus the impressions of the last

shot [...] is what you think you have seen, when you leave the cinema.<sup>8</sup>

*Sulla* allegorizes the film medium's fleeting oblivion and fixation on the now (you see it now you don't) in terms of one man's afternoon spent daydreaming. Whereas the literary stream of consciousness tends to be subsumed by poetic prose and epiphany (the Lacanian *sinthome*), in *Sulla* we overhear the private reserve and plain text of wish fantasy. A tension is upheld between constant wishing at the speed of thought and the historical accomplishments of Sulla. The idiom of making thought concrete goes into this tension span. What we consider Roman architecture was distinguished by its early use of concrete, which the Roman general and consul Sulla introduced. The film covers one afternoon suffused with the audio tracking of daydream. Among his fantasizing forecasts is a building in which he would commemorate his daydreams of sexual relations with a woman he recently met, which he fulfilled by masturbating three times that afternoon. But not all is spent since the allegory of the concrete promotes the film's self-reflexivity, which is the last stand or understanding of remembered film.

Out of introspection, his own film experiences, and media philosophy, Victor Burgin assembled a composite picture of the remembered film buoyed up by forgetting. He gives the run-down of his reviewing of a scene he was stuck on from the movie *Fire Down Below* (1957):

The fragment I saw was all that was required to retrieve this narrative from the archive of the 'already seen.' But already, in memory, the obvious meaning of the film is giving way to obtuse meanings. The 'already seen' of the story hovers like an aura around the sequence of the farewell at the jetty, but already the narrative is fading. The jetty scene is itself decomposing into its component images. [...] What was once a film in a movie theatre [...] is now a kernel of psychical representa-

8 "Transcript of a Lecture by Klaus Wyborny at the Think:Film Congress," *Think:Film*, <http://www.thinkfilm.de/panel/spacetime-i-theoretical-physics-and-film-klaus-wyborny>.

tions, a fleeting association of discreet elements. ... The more the film is distanced in memory, the more the binding effect of the narrative is loosened. The sequence breaks apart. The fragments go adrift and enter into new combinations, more or less transitory, in the eddies of memory: memories of other films, and memories of real events.<sup>9</sup>

Burgin allows that our eidetic memories often emerge out of the flux of forgetting and disremembering the movies. Film about film lays the concrete for a relationship to the screening between fantasizing and the interruption of memory.

### Unmournanimal

Freud wrapped the mortal limit of his corpus in the period leading up to the onset of World War Two by revisiting in *Moses and Monotheism* the fantasy saga of the primal father. At the time, the followers he had kept closest, Otto Rank and Hanns Sachs, were each pursuing the line and lineage of fantasy research that they spun out of Freud's own 1907 reflections on the role of daydream wish fulfillment in cultural production. Coincident with the diagnosis of Freud's cancer, Rank, however, struck out on his own. Rank's earlier work on the myth of the hero's birth looped the Oedipus complex through the storylines of mythology and legend by way of the typical daydream fantasy Freud named the family romance.

In 1924, *Das Trauma der Geburt* (*The Trauma of Birth*) was Rank's ticket out of the Oedipus complex of application. A year following its publication, Rank confided to Marie Bonaparte that his trauma theory had been hoisted by an unconscious wish to be born like Athena from his father's head. The shock of hearing that his scientific father was suffering from an incurable disease delivered the theory in one swell swoop. Was he riding out the swings and sorrows of manic depression, as Ernest Jones claimed?<sup>10</sup> We might take down the history inscribed within the

9 Victor Burgin, *The Remembered Film* (London: Reaktion Books, 2004), 67–68.

10 Ernest Jones, *The Life and Work of Sigmund Freud*, vol. III (New

word the adolescent Otto chose as replacement for his father's name Rosenfeld. The name that stands tall like timber, or in formation like a military unit, also swings round the bend as copious and course growth.

In his memoir, *Freud: Meister und Freund* (*Freud: Mentor and Friend*, 1945), Sachs described the stage left by Rank at the time of Freud's closing act. Marie Bonaparte entered this stage in Rank's place with a work that was a transference gift.

Whenever Freud was unable to work with his analysands during this turbulent period, he dedicated his complete attention to another task. He was translating a small book by Princess Marie titled *Topsy: The Golden-Haired Chow*. In it she describes her change in attitude, her empathy and her growing tenderness for one of her chows, who was afflicted by cancer of the mouth and through a successful treatment could be saved.<sup>11</sup>

In her 1980 preface to a new edition of Bonaparte's book, Anna Freud recalled that what her father prized in dogs was their grace, devotion, and, above all, the absence of ambivalence in their psychic disposition.<sup>12</sup> Addressing Topsy inside her narrative, Bonaparte also turns up the contrast with the mix or mess of human emotional contact: "And then, above all, you do not know these all-too human conditions of mixed feelings, that one can love and at the same time be so hostile. You either hate [...] deeply and without limit. Or you love, as you love me, waiting sadly in front of the door when I've gone away, and jumping for joy when I return."<sup>13</sup>

York: Basic Books, 1963), 73.

- 11 Hanns Sachs, *Freud: Meister und Freund*, trans. Emmy Sachs (Frankfurt am Main: Ullstein, 1982), 164–65. See also Marie Bonaparte's *Topsy, chow-chow au poil d'or* (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1937).
- 12 Anna Freud, "Vorwort zur Neuausgabe," in Marie Bonaparte, *Topsy. Der goldhaarige Chow*, trans. Anna Freud and Sigmund Freud (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag, 1989), 9.
- 13 Bonaparte, *Topsy. Der goldhaarige Chow*, 87. I relied on the English

Healed through the radiation therapy that by her influence Bonaparte was able to secure for a “mere” dog, Topsy’s recovery redresses the earlier death of Bonaparte’s father, whose treatments by the rays did not save him, and, following the arc of wish fulfillment, transmitted to Freud, her scientific father, fantastic get well wishes. The brief text chronicles the princess’s working through the fantasy thicket of wishes to arrive in the clearing at a wishing well. Preemptive ruminations on Topsy’s death alternate with declarations of love that gather together all her love objects. “Because I was in danger of losing her, because I felt [...] that her life, Life itself, was threatened in her, I started to love her fiercely, with an abandon incomprehensible to me.”<sup>14</sup> By anticipating Topsy’s death, which isn’t due in the text, Bonaparte engages open-endedly in premature mourning. There remained an opening for burial in the corpus of her dog story, which Freud’s playful question to Bonaparte touches upon: “Does Topsy realize she is being translated?”<sup>15</sup>

Bonaparte doesn’t hold back her own ambivalence, and one gets the sense that what Topsy protects her against is being struck down in the muddle of her wishes and thoughts by vengeful ghosts. She keeps trying out fantasy scenarios of mixed mood as though in clarity training for big feelings she can stand by. She daydreams her own grieving over Topsy and how she is reproached for it: “People will probably say: that’s too much grieving over a poor dog. But I loved little Topsy as one can only love what is part of oneself, to which one daily and hourly feels close.”<sup>16</sup> But even more than the loyalty to an internal object the transference gift to Freud is Bonaparte’s fantasy of how, in the event she went first, she would return in Topsy’s dreams. We shall overcome the transitive sentencing of loss and the ambivalence of survival: both parties to the loss are lost to each other. “My

translation – *Topsy: The Story of a Golden-haired Chow*, trans. Gary Genosko (London: Routledge, 1994) – but often modified it to match the Freud translation.

14 Bonaparte, *Topsy*. *Der goldhaarige Chow*, 18.

15 Cited in Gary Genosko’s Introduction to *Topsy: The Story of a Golden-Haired Chow*, 2.

16 Bonaparte, *Topsy*. *Der goldhaarige Chow*, 51–52.

shadow will visit you in your sleep [...]. You will let me come back and your stretched paws will twitch in your sleep when, dreaming, you jump up on me."<sup>17</sup>

### Cats and Dogs

When once again invited to visit a USC film studies class, this time in 2002, Pat Hitchcock related that her father had been enamored of *Benji* (1974), which turns on a POV that is the topsy-turvy version of the dead-end given in *Psycho*. The camera repeatedly adopts the POV of the canine protagonist, both as objective perspective and, in flashback, as subjective camera. What's more, the movie as a whole is largely filmed on a level with the dog's eye view of events. *Benji* is one dog movie that ends happily, and without the idealization that packs away the raging problem of animal mortality. The death of the animal in film and TV can never be fictional.

Hilda Doolittle, her nickname was Cat, entered Freud's closing act in 1932 by Sachs's referral. Her first transference dream was a refiguration of Gustave Doré's illustration of baby Moses discovered by the princess among the bulrushes. Freud recommended that she read Rank's 1912 study *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*.<sup>18</sup> The Princess in the dream is Marie Bonaparte. The stage was set.

On one of our canyon walks in the first decade of the new millennium, because my good little girl Elli was lagging, I turned around and clapped my hands to speed things up. But she made that into a repeatable command and henceforth, when I turned to face her and clapped for her to follow she answered by a rush forward, the show of high spirits she delivered on cue. If dogs communicate through their trainability, cats redirect lines of communication through play. When the canine protagonist of *Benji* is kept from taking his routine stroll through the neighborhood one morning, the local cat he usually chases is put out. It

17 Ibid., 98.

18 Hilda Doolittle, *Tribute to Freud* (New York: New Directions, 1984), 120. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

turns out that Benji filled out a role by his trainability, his line of response to the cat's playacting.

The dog waits and watches; the cat looks and looks, which, when it's your turn to be looked at, can be therapeutic or unnerving. The raw nerves bring back the mother of disappointment, whose interest has to be wooed over and again. In her analysis of Poe's "The Black Cat," Bonaparte argues that the cat is a totem of the witch mother.<sup>19</sup> But if your early mother was a dog, you can meet the cat's stare and playful nonlinearity halfway and find the cat mother charming.

Hilda reports that the Professor "always seems interested when I tell him of my animal findings and fairy-tale associations" (136). In puzzling out the meaning of her dream, they play, she writes, "puss-in-a-corner, find one angle and another or see things from different corners or sides of a room" (119). Hilda wanted her gift to be unique and ended up being the only analysand not to give Freud a birthday present for several years running.

The capacity for play comes in good stead when a cat can't think the way back down from the top of a tree or the roof. Cats get caught in tight spots from which the only way back down is a straight line. But often upon being helped to return to the start position, they disown their plight by the ploy of play. Freudchen, my cat in the 1990s, would greet me upon my return from campus standing on the roof over the entrance to our home. Each time it appeared that he was stuck up there. I would walk around the house, which was built into an incline, to the point in the roofline where he could readily jump down (and had probably climbed up). He would high-paw me like the joke was on me, too. Then he would tell me extensively about his day in language that remained enigmatic to me but which followed all the modulations, in emphasis and affect, befitting a narrative between plaint and entertainment.

When Hilda entered the office for her first session, Freud was taken aback that his brand-new analysand took in the setting

19 Marie Bonaparte, *Edgar Poe, étude psychanalytique* (Paris: Denoël et Steele, 1933). The second volume of the German translation, *Edgar Poe. Eine psychanalytische Studie* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), closes with the section on "The Black Cat."

from its various angles and corners before facing him: “You are the only person who has ever come into this room and looked at the things in the room before looking at me” (62). When Freud’s chow comes around the bend of the couch, Hilda, although not a dog person, bends down to greet the so-called lioness. Freud warns her that the dog is difficult with strangers and might snap. But they embrace. Freud barks: “I am an old man – you do not think it worth your while to love me” (ibid.). But she’s wrong, he says; the analyst doesn’t die of old age. “In analysis,” he instructs her, “the person is dead after the analysis is over – as dead as your father” (141).

In *Topsy: The Golden-Haired Chow*, Bonaparte’s summary of the prehistory of the relationship between man and dog can be read as interlinear gloss between two stories, its allegory and translation.

When [...] man, still savage, hunted wild beasts and pursued his prey, sometimes the ancestors of the dogs must have come, once night had fallen, to look for the leavings of this prey. [...] Man, jealous of his prey, if he still caught sight of them at dawn, chased them away. Sometimes he pursued them; but, some day or other, he must have killed a mother by the side of her puppies and have taken them. Then, as they grew up, they learned to hunt with him, to share his cave and his meals. Since then, oh Topsy, how many dogs have arisen, have run in the woods and the steppes, then have laid themselves down forever to mingle their bones with our bones, in this same earth on which you are now stretched! And in how many places! For everywhere on this soil that bears us, where the sole of human feet has left its imprint, the imprint of dogs’ paws has followed. [...] In the bargain concluded in those times between man and dog, the dog sometimes had to pay dearly. For the easier prey, for the daily meal, how many blows? And the death of the dog which did not matter, when the master was tired of it!<sup>20</sup>

20 Bonaparte, *Topsy. Der goldhaarige Chow*, 76, 79. Subsequent page references are given in the text.



Bonaparte recounts that Topsy's ancestors in China pulled sleds and hunted wolves and that on occasion her living kin are still what's for dinner: "in Canton the flesh of the yellow and black chows is eaten, probably also for ulterior purposes related to magic" (36).

The animal medium, as big as lifetime, never drops close contact with finitude, as Bonaparte writes: "Since a dog's life is so much shorter than our own, to have one, to love one, is [...] gratuitously to invite Death into one's house" (48). The animal that in coming close to us lays bare the lifetime we spare also comes back to us out of the transference. Bonaparte ruminates continuously on the end of Topsy, while all the deaths that fit her transferences are brought home. The animal kept close, like a medium at the *séance*, is an open invitation for all one's ghosts. But Topsy is also the safeguard against the backfire of wishing upon the other's itinerary or destiny. "In the nightly darkness of the large garden uncanny forces reside; under the black trees I see the ghosts of my departed waiting for me, my dead mother, who wants her child back, my deceased father, who calls me to his side. When you are gone, Topsy, who will protect me against these ghosts?" (39).

Topsy's recovery spares them both the haunting prospect of Chow Down. Bonaparte is jubilant: "Topsy, when I watch you run now after your cure, the thought that I was able, through magic powers, as it were, to prolong your little dog life, makes me as proud as if I had written the *Iliad*" (71). Her breakthrough affirmation coincides with a break Freud takes from the materials of his Moses genealogy to consider what the heroic sagas of Greek Antiquity drew on and covered up.

During the period at which, among the Jews, the return of the religion of Moses was in preparation, the Greek people found themselves in possession of an exceedingly rich store of tribal legends and hero-myths. [...] With our present psychological insight we could, long before Schliemann and Evans, have raised the question of where it was that the Greeks obtained all the legendary material which was worked over by Homer and the great Attic dramatists in their masterpieces. The answer would have had to be that this people had probably

experienced in their prehistory a period of external brilliance and cultural efflorescence which had perished in a historical catastrophe and of which an obscure tradition survived in these legends. The archaeological researches of our days [...] have uncovered the evidences of the impressive Minoan-Mycenaean civilization, which had probably already come to an end on the mainland of Greece before 1250 B.C. There is scarcely a hint at it to be found in the Greek historians of a later age: at most a remark that there was a time when the Cretans exercised command of the sea, and the name of King Minos and of his palace, the Labyrinth.<sup>21</sup>

Of all the factors that Freud identifies building the momentum for the ultimate ascendancy of the Mosaic god, including unidentified persistence of a kind of memory or the encysted survival of isolated traces, the most compelling, perhaps the catchall, is that of a darkly distorted tradition that continued to be effective in the background: it was the tradition of a great past, a great cause, which had been lost. The poets of Ancient Greece drew on such a tradition involving the loss of Minoan civilization. Later on, historiography took tradition's place, while the artist filled the gaps in transmission with fantasy.

In *Kunst und Künstler* (*Art and the Artist*, 1932), Rank belabors his sense of the advance of Greek antiquity, which, as he already underscored in *The Trauma of Birth*, was the first culture to separate the human from the animal and advance thus from religion to art. The Greeks were the “only culture really to live on the earth and in the light of the sun, which is why a strict border was drawn between the world above and the underworld, in which the dead led a bloodless and soulless existence.”<sup>22</sup>

21 Sigmund Freud, “Moses and Monotheism,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXIII (1937–1939): Moses and Monotheism, An Outline of Psycho-Analysis and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 70.

22 Otto Rank, *Kunst und Künstler. Studien zur Genese und Entwicklung des Schaffensdranges* (Gießen: Psychosozial-Verlag, 2000), 149. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

In the fabled Minoan labyrinth, Rank looked for the metabolic change going into the ascent of Greek antiquity. Since the experts of the day claimed that Cretan prehistory was not verifiable, Rank turned to the evidence of medieval labyrinths in northern Europe. "Certain labyrinthine constructions characterized in the Icelandic saga as animal traps, are identified in England and Scandinavia as 'Troytowns or walls of Troy' (151). Walls of Troy trapped evil spirits encircled by the steps and turns of a dance.

The turning of the dance guided by the structures themselves turns on the labyrinth in which the Minotaur, half human, half animal, could be kept, but only through the proffered intake of human sacrifice. So-called palaces of the intestines in Ancient Babylon turn labyrinthine construction back upon the insides of animals, the prospect that vouchsafed prophecy, but also served to mediate the rebirth of the deceased into the afterlife. A privileged form of early burial, therefore, was the deceased's insertion inside an emptied-out animal skin: the animal used was also reborn within the animal parts of the human organism while the reclaimed human soul, like the treasure the hero brings back from his quest, enriched all the members of the clan (164).

The alternative to burial inside an animal skin was to be eaten by animals or swallowed whole by a very large animal. Rank seizes the possibility that the Minotaur legend was overcome in the Trojan horse.

Instead of the inner intestinal spirals, which in ornaments still dominate the civilization of Ancient Crete, there appears not only the stylized animal body (the horse), but also the human, who frees himself from his animal basis, and ultimately in the idealized human forms of the Olympian Gods, triumphs over the chthonic-animal principle. (158)

Rank's wishful thinking cannot escape the datemark, the race toward, away from, and against Freud's mortality.

It was not the close reading of the metabolic ins and outs of the primal fantasy in *Art and the Artist* that marked his abandonment of Freud's science. Rather it was the conclusion Rank appended to the passages of endopsychic reading like a

refrain. Self-creation, the end-all of psychic processes, is realized in its perfectibility across an arc of wish fulfillment linking Greek antiquity and Christianity. If one brackets out this refraining order *Art and the Artist* remains at the bulk rate continuous with Rank's earlier work as well as compatible with Géza Róheim's folklore studies or Herbert Silberer's analyses of the occult. At the same time, there was another refrain, which, if *missing*, signaled abandonment of Freud's science: the recurring strain of the sexual etiology of neurosis. Freud required the knee jerk of sexuality as bulwark against the mudslide of the occult, as he put it. Is Freud's outspoken rejection of the occult in this instance, given his interest in telepathy and haunting, the defective cornerstone of his science? No. Like Immanuel Kant and Arthur Schopenhauer before him, he was rejecting the so-called spiritualist view of occult phenomena, which disowned our animal relation.

The day before receiving from him the lethal injection of morphine, Freud confided to his physician Max Schur that his final reading selection, Honoré de Balzac's *The Wild Ass's Skin*,<sup>23</sup> had turned out to be a perfect fit, since the story turned on shrinking and starvation. Freud wrote of his father as he lay dying that he was "steadily shrinking towards [...] a fateful date."<sup>24</sup> The span of skin tightens its hold over someone starving in its vanishing act. Rank, who had written long and hard on the overcoming of primal forms of burial, in particular those signaling rebirth, like interment inside an animal skin, died suddenly of an obscure infection within one month of Freud's departure. It was a wrap.

They Eat Horses, Don't They?

Released within eight years of her father's jump out the window, Emilie Deleuze's movie *Mister V* (2003) tracks changes in relationality that commence when Mister V, otherwise an untrain-

23 If you flash on my reading of Balzac's story centered on the philosophy of wishing in volume one of *Critique of Fantasy*, you'll see that a circle is closing.

24 Max Schur, *Freud: Living and Dying* (New York: International Universities Press, Inc., 1972), 528.

able or psycho horse, flexes immense potential by clearing the wall of his pen in one impossible jump. At this point the film identifies with its own medium nature, its own trainability, and gives us a couple of staggered replays of the jump.

Lemoigne, a Belgian gangster, contracted Luigi to buy Mister V. The scheme is to cash in on the insurance value by arranging for the animal's fatal accident. Following the spectacular jump, however, Luigi becomes determined instead to train the talented horse to be a prize winner. But then Luigi is found dead in Mister V's stall. His brother Lucas and widow Cécile decide not to treat the horse's violence against Luigi as intentional. Mister V carries forward Luigi's loss but also exceeds it. The anxieties that accrue to the disposability of this horse crowd out any room at all for Luigi's absence. When they spared Mister V, Cécile and Lucas reclaimed unmournability and raised it to totemic power.

Following a stint of his everyday life in town suspended between lab research and tap dancing, Lucas is called back to the country by messages on the answering machine left in earshot of his responsibility. Lemoigne's messages remind him of his dead brother's debt to the underworld; Cécile's messages ask him to mind that he promised not to leave her alone. When Lucas is back, his niece Clara announces that mummy is expecting him and directs him to the site of Cécile's partially towel-wrapped nude sunbathing. When she signals to him to sit down, the camera takes over, as earlier with Mister V's jump, and replays the gesture, which hovers in the medium.

Lucas's clumsiness and carelessness while trying to bind Mister V make it easy for the horse to corner him in the stall. But this time the horse doesn't kill his human. He bites him instead, whereupon Lucas passes out. It is a scene of identification with the departed, over which Mister V watches. When Cécile points out that the horse could have killed him, Lucas counters: "But he didn't. I saw him." Lucas urges Cécile to stick to her resolve not to kill Mister V: "If we kill him we'll never know." Know? "If Luigi was right." Lucas declares that to help out he will take a longer leave from work, not a vacation but a sabbatical. They embrace, kiss, and the rest is substitution. But it is an interlude of success (and succession) that wrecks Lucas, who must start over.

When Lucas rebukes his brother following the high-rolling purchase of high-strung Mister V, Luigi promises that this insurance scam is just one last turn in the underworld that will free him of a residual indebtedness. Lucas next asks about Cécile, who is in recovery from a bout of depression. “Et Cécile?” Lucas asked his brother, thus placing the short hand over the heart of his longstanding love affair with his brother’s family. Luigi promptly reports to Lucas that daughter Clara is excelling at school. That his brother’s family is a readymade only one murderous substitution away from his understanding and grasp is what the film and horse must circumvent unto the prospect of survival in mourning.

On the morning after, Clara brings Lucas a present from Lemoigne: a needle for injecting the horse. The one-night understanding of substitution and successful mourning cannot get past the relationship to Mister V’s mortality. Lucas moves in with Mister V.

Fantasying follows the beat or measure of fulfillment when Lucas establishes eye-to-eye coordination with Mister V. He stabilizes the horse in the stable, while movement extends the bond unto a fantastic correspondence. Lucas’s modified dance steps are given (or edited) in exchange with Mister V’s matching steps. The dissociation organizing Lucas’s relationship to his own or the mother’s body (which he has projected into the techno science of measuring horses in motion, his profession, and into the art of tap dancing, his hobby or fetish) is re-collected in the relationship to Mister V.

After a visit to his brother’s grave, Lucas informs Lemoigne that the horse will die: “I’ll call when it’s done.” The underworld insurance scam can now be extended to fund new beginnings. The horse farm can go up in smoke, and yield its insurance value, while the senior horse Tiberius can be put to sleep right before the fire and, passing for Mister V, earn the premium insurance coverage.

When Lucas starts to inform Cécile what happened to Mister V, she stops him. “For me he’s dead. I don’t care.” They embrace. We watch, with Lucas, as Cécile, moving away, strokes the back of her neck turned toward us, rubbing the spot we’re in with Mister V. But it is from this spot (or out of it) that Lucas can now

make plans to travel to the location of possible reunions with Cécile and Clara.

Lemoigne says he knew the father of Luigi and Lucas. Batistella, the saving foreign purchaser at the end of the film, who gives shelter to Mister V, recognizes in Lucas his mother's lookalike. At this point of identification – of a loss in his face – all the parties to the film's happy end begin to arrive via a reclamation that at the same time exceeds the doubling logic of the insurance scam and the underworld filiation. While the first figure, Lemoigne, belongs to the murderous underworld of substitution with benefits, the second, Batistella, recrosses the path of the film story stitching together its containment. But when he first appears at the opening horse auction he tries to get Lucas's attention, tries to say "Hi," but is overlooked and passed by. A stray connection left unidentified, without follow up, Batistella is a continuity error. In the medium of every film story, the continuity error is the inadvertent performance of a loss of connection that appears only to disappear or hide out.

Following Mister V's jump, Luigi dismissed Lucas's second thoughts: "For you everything's a problem." But Lucas stands up for his job description: "I test, I analyze." Lucas wants to harness to the art and science of measurement and distinction the stride length of horses and, at a jump, the time between the forelegs coming down and the hind legs pushing off. Lucas's project recapitulates Eadward Muybridge's proto-cinematographic photo documentation of the stride of horsepower. A wrap with his pursuit of tap dancing prowess, his fantasy science project is a simulacrum of one of the film medium's primal scenes. By thus reinscribing the advent of motion in pictures, Deleuze projects her medium as the emotion picture carrying forward the animal relation unto the undecidability of Freud's leading question of priority. Does the totem meal dismantle into measurable doses the primal death of the father or does the primal father's mournable death make it possible for the unmournable animal to be what's for dinner? The inconceivability of Mr. V's loss, which admits only the horse's rescue, gets Lucas past the impasse of unmourning, now the continuity error upholding the happy ending of the film.

## Wrecked by Successful Mourning

When in *Moses and Monotheism* Freud reintroduces the backstory of the Darwinian primal horde, the term he uses for the primal leader of the pack, “Männchen,” literally “little man,” is the zoological term used for the male animal. Both meanings come together in the German expression for the command given a dog to sit up and beg: *Männchen machen*. The trajectory of the primal fantasy also extends through the phrase *Männchen Malen*, literally “to paint or draw *Männchen*,” which means: “to doodle.” It names the daydreaming activity of the older child or teen at school, which inscribes the father whose distant or tyrannical cast is thus lightened and lubed for friendly or indeed oedi-pal identification.

The story of the primal *Männchen* must be told, Freud announces, in grand condensation, “in großartiger Verdichtung,” as though what in reality extended over millennia and was countlessly repeated, took place once.<sup>25</sup> The aggressive *Männchen* drove away all his sons, who in time formed the fraternity that returned to kill and devour him.<sup>26</sup> But as in the practice of *Männchen Malen*, the rebellious consumers of the *Männchen* didn’t purely hate and fear him; they honored him as their avatar and ultimate object of identification.

The terrain of transmission of the primal father fantasy, which Freud demarcates, is scratch and sniff. The traces to follow are not specific to human language. And yet, Freud ascribes the advent of omnipotence of thoughts, the very crux of wish fantasy, to pride taken in the development of language.<sup>27</sup> Enscenced in language lies the primal scene of animation or animism, the identification of the movement of invisible air currents with the breath of life, the first spirit. Man extended the spirit he breathed

25 Sigmund Freud, “Der Mann Moses und die monotheistische Religion,” in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud et al. (London: Imago, 1950), 16:529.

26 *Ibid.*, 530.

27 Freud, “Moses and Monotheism,” 113.



in and out to all of nature. Modern science, Freud adds, was still working hard to de-animate the results.<sup>28</sup>

Upon its posthumous publication, Sachs wrote a review of *Moses and Monotheism*, which he subsequently folded into *The Creative Unconscious*. Sachs tracked the transmutation of Freud's adolescent heroic fantasy set forth in one of the autobiographical passages Freud offered in *The Interpretation of Dreams*, which Sachs quotes. "Hannibal had been the favorite hero of my years from eleven to fifteen [...]. Like many others at the same age I had given my sympathies during the Punic wars not to the Romans, but to the Carthaginians."<sup>29</sup> Freud goes on to connect all the dots between his situation at school with anti-Semitic classmates and the ancient exploits of a Semitic hero. Sachs comments: "We learn here of a wish-fantasy in the form appropriate to the ways of thinking and feeling in early adolescence: To become a fighter, a leader in the war against injustice and oppression" (133).

Shortly before entering the university, Freud dropped his plans for a ministerial position, which would have been the fulfillment of "the daydreams and ambitions of adolescence" (137). He decided instead on a career in medicine and resigned himself to the obscurity of a lifetime of scientific research. Sachs connects two essays by Freud from the year 1914, the one he published anonymously on Michelangelo's Moses and "On the History of the Psychoanalytic Movement," his public reckoning with the departures of Adler and Jung. The highpoint of Moses' implied movement, which the sculpture catches, is the restraint he shows in the face of the infuriating rejection of his teaching by his own chosen people. Sachs sees further restraint placed upon the adolescent fantasy when Freud argued in *Moses and Monotheism* that Moses was not even a Semitic object of identification but instead an Egyptian who selected the Jewish people to carry forward the religion of Aton, which had miscarried in Egypt.

Freud linked the crux of his adolescent fantasy to early childhood experiences, which Sachs unpacks. "Freud does not leave us without information about the deeper, early infantile root of his resentment against oppression. His first playmate was a

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>29</sup> Sachs, *The Creative Unconscious*, 133.

boy, somewhat older than he (the son of his half-brother) who occasionally misused the greater strength which his age gave him. ‘It seems that he treated me very badly at times and that I showed my courage against my tyrant’” (134). The significance of this playmate, John Freud, was charged, animated, Freud discovered in the course of his auto-analytic correspondence with Wilhelm Fliess, by the departure in early childhood of his younger brother Julius.<sup>30</sup> The ghostly content of transference had all along been brought home to him in the serial making and breaking up of his same-sex friendships, which recycled the split-level structure of denial of Julius to and through the forget-together with John. When at last in London, Freud was able to conclude *Moses and Monotheism* and thus put to rest, as he wrote, an unquiet ghost.

The identification with lost causes that moves teenagers and whole nations is a manic defense against the inner reality of the wreckage of success. The poetic historiography of Rome, perhaps the most famous instance of the niche market of the confederation of lost wars, undergoes an update in *Macbeth*, which Freud’s reading of the Macbeths among “those wrecked by success” underscores.<sup>31</sup> While Freud admits that he could not give a satisfying answer to the question why Lady Macbeth collapsed after her success, he announces that with his next exemplary protagonist, Rebecca West of Henrik Ibsen’s *Rosmersholm* (1886), he will be able to penetrate the enigma of another mood swing. A split second after jubilating over the longed-for success of her plan to become Rosmer’s second wife, Rebecca projects suicide instead, her only alternative to the sudden resolve never to accept the marriage proposal.

By her own background, Rebecca is an ill fit with the conservation of family values in Rosmer’s lineage and estate. She is the only child of an unwed mother, a midwife. When she died her colleague, the freethinker Dr. West, adopted and raised Rebecca.

30 In my first book, *Aberrations of Mourning: Writing on German Crypts* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), I sought to rewrite German *Kultur* upon a series of crypts, in the first place the one underlying Freud’s Julius Caesar complex.

31 See the chapter “Identification with Lost Causes” in my *Germany: A Science Fiction* (Fort Wayne: Anti-Oedipus Press, 2014).

After Dr. West's passing Rebecca found employment with Rosmer and his invalid wife Beata. Falling for a new father figure, Rebecca contrived an extensive plan for replacing Beata in the wife position. What's missing in the home is offspring. Rebecca makes sure that Beata will find a medical manual spelling out that reproduction alone is the rationale for marriage. She insinuates that Rosmer's change of faith in religion and politics follows her own views. Finally, she lets Beata know that she, Rebecca, will have to go away to conceal and carry to term the outcome of her illicit intercourse with Rosmer.

Motivated by the new rationale that Rebecca has inculcated in her that she must get out of the way of her husband's happiness, now inseparable from the future of the family line, Beata drowns herself in the stream that bisects the Rosmersholm estate. This is the prehistory. The drama commences one year after the suicide, at the end of a relatively happy period of Rebecca and Rosmer's cohabitation in ideal friendship. Gossip about their status compromises the friendship at the same time that Rosmer begins to doubt that his wife's suicide can be dismissed as symptom of her chronic depression. It is to counter the uncertainty that besets them that Rosmer proposes marriage to Rebecca, in other words the wedding night, whereupon she turns out to be another striking example of one wrecked by success.

Rebecca's diffuse rationalization that in coming under Rosmer's influence her ruthless will has weakened is not so much wrong as an elaboration on another instability, which Rebecca's subtraction of one year from her true age reveals. That she is one year younger is her best defense against the claim of Beata's brother that Dr. West was her biological progenitor before he became her adoptive father. But he knows better that the good doctor was in town for an extended visit the year before he moved in with Rebecca's mother. The literalness of her incestuous relations with Dr. West, the illicit affair that no one bothered to assume or interrogate, brings home her other primal Oedipal crime, the murderous replacement of her mother.

The prelude to this charged affair was that Rebecca became a free thinker like Dr. West, just as she later became a person of conscience like Rosmer. What turns success into wreckage is not the plain text of incest but what lies between the two stages of

its elaboration: the repeated violence to her mother or, more precisely, to her dead mother and her remembrance.

*Rosmersholm* opens with Rebecca's denial of the existence of ghosts. She and the maid watch Rosmer on his return home avoiding the bridge that marks the spot of Beata's suicide. Rebecca: "They certainly cling to their dead at Rosmersholm." The maid observes instead: "I think it's the dead that cling to Rosmersholm." Rebecca looks at her: "How do you mean – the dead?" The ecstatic cling of haunting is incarnated by the white horses meant originally to run in the drama's title. Their ghostly skittishness conveys the unfinished business of the dead. To deny the ghostly dead means to deny them love.<sup>32</sup> Rebecca's resolve breaks on this declination of denial.

32 This is the gist of Melanie Klein's reading of ghosts in "Some Reflections on *The Oresteia*," in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works*, 275–99.



## Once Upon a Time in California

### Wish Upon a Star

According to its subtitle, *Adorno in Neapel* (*Adorno in Naples*) aims to show “how a landscape of yearning was transformed into philosophy.” It was, however, already getting late in the book before a formulation really grabbed me and showed me the way. The author argues that in his jazz essays Adorno declared that the constellation, the wrap for his work and the problems under investigation, had been stolen.<sup>1</sup> By the time Adorno finished his essay “Notes on Kafka” in 1953,<sup>2</sup> it was restored.

Already prior to 1942, the onset of work on his Kafka essay, Adorno shared with Benjamin the recognition of Kafka’s inscription of prehistory upon modernity. In his essay on Kafka, Benjamin spells out the constellation comprising the hybrid Odradek:

- 1 Martin Mittelmeier, *Adorno in Neapel. Wie sich eine Sehnsuchtlandschaft in Philosophie verwandelt* (Munich: Siedler Verlag, 2013), 176. Karl Kraus faced the rise of National Socialism with a similar proprietorial awareness that his satirical strategies for letting the abuse of language in our journalistic Sensurround bleed and read had been coopted by the literalness of the Nazi violence in word, indeed.
- 2 Theodor W. Adorno, “Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 10, pt. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 254–87.

In Kafka's work, the most singular bastard which the pre-historic world has begotten with guilt is Odradek. "At first sight it looks like a flat, star-shaped spool for thread, and it really seems to have thread wound around it; to be sure, this is probably just old, broken-off bits of thread that are knotted and tangled together, of all sorts and colors. But the object is not just a spool, for a small wooden crossbar sticks out of the middle of the star, and another small rod is joined to it at right angles. With the aid of this latter rod on one side and one of the extensions of the star on the other, the whole thing can stand upright as if on two legs."<sup>3</sup>

Writing to Benjamin on December 17, 1934, about the essay "Franz Kafka" pre-publication, Adorno jumps on the formulation of guilt to make a point he drives home:

Doesn't he have his place beside the father of the house – is he not the father's care (*Sorge*) and danger, is not the overcoming (*Aufhebung*) of the creaturely relationship to guilt prefigured in him – is not the care (*Sorge*) – truly a Heidegger put back on his feet – the cipher, indeed the most certain promise of hope, precisely by the overturning (*Aufhebung*) of the house?<sup>4</sup>

With Kafka, then, Martin Heidegger stands on his footnotes and Goethean-Faustian *Sorge* is on the same page with Freud.

While reading Augustine on love under the covers with Heidegger, Hannah Arendt situated the liminality of creatureliness between the "no longer" (*nicht mehr*) and the "not yet" (*noch nicht*).<sup>5</sup> The formulation is set on St. Augustine's own

3 Walter Benjamin, "Franz Kafka: On the Tenth Anniversary of His Death," in *Selected Writings*, ed. Michael Jennings, trans. Harry Zohn (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 2.2:810–11.

4 Theodor W. Adorno and Walter Benjamin, *Briefwechsel: 1928–1940*, ed. Henri Lonitz (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1994), 2–93.

5 Hannah Arendt, *Der Liebesbegriff bei Augustin. Versuch einer philosophischen Interpretation* (Hildesheim: Georg Olms, 2006), 6.

oeuvre, which spans like the onset of allegory a pagan education and the after-the-fact impact of the turn to Christianity.

In her 1946 review, “No Longer and Not Yet,” Arendt activated for the first time extramurally her key formulation of creaturely temporality in characterizing the impasse following the First World War. Where did the transition/tradition binding the loss in generations to the continuity of high culture go? “Hume once remarked that the whole of human civilization depends upon the fact that ‘one generation does not go off the stage at once and another succeed, as is the case with silkworms and butterflies.’ At some turning-points of history, however, at some heights of crisis, a fate similar to that of silkworms and butterflies may befall a generation of men.”<sup>6</sup> In pitching the advent of a third option, which Arendt associates with Kafka, she reintroduces her timing of the creature. “Between the generations, between those who for some reason or other still belong to the old and those who either feel the catastrophe in their very bones or have already grown up with it, the chain is broken and an ‘empty space,’ a kind of historical no man’s land, comes to the surface which can be described only in terms of ‘no longer and not yet.’”<sup>7</sup>

According to Adorno, Kafka saw the Nazi death-wish factory realize the creaturely estate according to a malignant superegoic model of a punishing fulfillment without rescue or hope. “In the concentration camps [...] the line of demarcation between life and death was erased. They produced a liminal state, living skeletons and the decaying, victims whose suicide fails, Satan’s laugh at the hope of an end to death.”<sup>8</sup> Adorno’s emphasis in his essay on a Freudian infrastructure in Kafka’s works offered a stay against the forwarding of all unidentified liminal states to philosophy’s new “uncanny” address. The Odradek story (“Die Sorge des Hausvaters”) was published the same year as Freud’s analysis of the uncanny. A few years later, the *Enge* (“narrowness”) that is the etymon and strait place of *Angst* (“anxiety”) is

6 Hannah Arendt, “No Longer and Not Yet,” in *Reflections on Literature and Culture*, ed. Susannah Young-Ah Gottlieb (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 121.

7 *Ibid.*, 122.

8 Adorno, “Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka,” 273.



for Heidegger a misapprehension of the embarrassment of possibilities we lag behind. We take flight into “fantasy worlds” from *das Unheimliche*, our literally “not being at home,” which is our situation or condition.<sup>9</sup>

“Notes on Kafka” opens with the author’s dissatisfaction that the work enjoys such a great popularity with those seeking it out as their “information desk” for the insider knowledge that allows them to reduce untenable situations to what’s already known, seen through, and throwaway. “But it is the false fame (*der falsche Ruhm*), the fatal variant of forgetting, which Kafka wished for himself in bitter earnest, and which compels our insistence before the riddle.”<sup>10</sup>

If Adorno was able to retrieve the theft of his constellation by the time of publication of “Notes on Kafka,” then he found a third option that plagiarism cannot breach. It’s easy to overlook that Kafka, one of the bestselling authors of high *Kultur*, was posthumously rescued from the realm of the unread. Tested by the prospect of annihilation, its own holocaust, the work is uniquely free of proprietary influence. The fit Deleuze and Félix Guattari found with the flow charts of their pre-Oedipal, I mean Anti-Oedipal, manifesto-theory allowed them to be, not unlike Adorno within his constellation, in alliance with Kafka. In Kafka, it’s not “Steal This Book!” It’s “Just Try Stealing inside the Burrow to Claim It”: “Only the principle of multiple entrances prevents the introduction of the enemy, the Signifier and those attempts to interpret a work that is actually only open to experimentation.”<sup>11</sup>

Adorno went back to the scene of his wartime work on the reversals of psychoanalysis to revisit the culture industry’s theft of his critical praxis, the constellation. You go back to achieve the best formulations of your retired inquiry. Adorno’s essays on television came out of this replay of his sojourn in the under-

9 Martin Heidegger, *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1986), 5–95.

10 Adorno, “Aufzeichnungen zu Kafka,” 254.

11 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 3.

world. The third one, “How to Look at Television,” was written in English. His main effort during this return engagement was *The Stars Down to Earth*, the analysis of an LA astrology column that he began studying in 1952 and also wrote down in English. At the time, he was contemplating residing in California indefinitely. His wooden English might have been the best reason for his return to the German-language world. He was back in time for publication of “Notes on Kafka,” which launched Adorno’s postwar West German career as famous author whose essay collections were on every bookshelf.

The horoscopes that Adorno began studying in 1952 offer non-sequiturs, so-called “blanks,” which the reader can fill in emotionally so as to believe.<sup>12</sup> A practical aspect aids in rationalizing these blank desires as recreational contact: “The semitolerant integration of pleasure into a rigid pattern of life is achieved by the ever-recurring promise that pleasure trips, sprees, parties and similar events will lead to practical advantages. One will make new acquaintances, build up ‘connections’ that prove helpful for the career” (65).

Because the columnist addresses their “fondest hopes,” the readers are “temporarily prepared to accept the most improbable promises” (78). What is compelling about the forecasts, however, is the status quo’s authoritarian grasp, which force-fills in the irrationalism gap, its corollary, with good sense and direction. “The common-sense advice itself contains [...] many spurious ‘pseudo-rational’ elements, calling for some authoritarian backing to be effective” (24). The nimbus of down-to-earth counseling in the forecasts falls into the gap: “the law according to which the reasonable attitudes are applied to ‘realistic situations,’ is arbitrary and entirely opaque” (39). Freedom means

12 Adorno analyzed the LA astrology column while back in California for a 1952–53 stint of research. What he uncovered at the Hacker Institute in Beverly Hills led to the monograph published five years later. Theodor W. Adorno, “The Stars Down to Earth: The Los Angeles Times Astrology Column. A Study in Secondary Superstition,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 9.2:78. Subsequent page numbers are given in the text.

volunteer for nothing else to do: "there is in astrology an implicit metaphysics of adjustment" (28).

Adorno analyzes the wrap of fantasy in reality, the flight to reality, within the B-genre that reaches for the stars:

This wide-spread fad may owe its tremendous popularity to its ingenious solution of the conflict between irrationality and common sense. The science fiction reader need no longer feel ashamed of being a superstitious and gullible person. The fantasies of his own making, no matter how irrational they are, and how much projective content of either individual or collective nature may be implied, appear no longer as irreconcilable to reality. (85)

Science fiction both updates Christianity and denies the provenance, defending against the depressing prospect with the fantasy-ring of reality: "Thus, the term 'another world' which once had a metaphysical meaning, is here brought down to the level of astronomy and obtains an empirical ring" (85-86). Contrary to the law of convergence, which holds that the development of life even on distant planets would be more or less continuous in terms of enabling conditions and outcome, science fiction follows out instead a "secularization of demonology" to bring back entities of "olden times" but "treated as natural and scientific objects coming out of space from another star" (86).

In these borderlands of fantasy and science fiction, notions of soft and hard science add up to the "bill" that astrology presents "for the neglect of interpretative thinking for the sake of fact-gathering" (114-15). In the half-educated gathering, the "facts" of stellar movements and well-known psychological reactions contribute to "the readiness to relate the unrelated" (116). Fact-based "wild constructs" arise, while "the spuriousness of the links goes unacknowledged" (115-16). The gathering that thus arises draws consolation from "fatality, dependence, and obedience." The "will," that is, "the will to change," is reduced to private "worries" for which the column promises "a cure-all by the very same compliance which prevents a change of conditions" (117). But the reduction must be an internal adjustment supervised by the reader's own insight: "Meekness towards the more powerful

seems to do less damage to so-called self-esteem if cloaked as the outcome of higher insight either into oneself or into those whom one obeys" (90).

The irrationality of astrology is not that of a dream world but in its processed form is comparable rather to what the so-called dream factory assembles (34). "The message of the dream, however, the 'latent dream idea' as promoted by motion pictures and television reverses that of actual dreams" (46). The promotional idea that the dream is seen to transmit is the wish – for controlled release, to be controlled. "It is an appeal to agencies of psychological control rather than an attempt to unfetter the unconscious" (ibid.). Adjustment works because it allows you, too, to roll off the assembly line: "The semi-irrationality of 'everything will be fine' is based on the fact that modern American Society [...] succeeds in reproducing the life of those whom it embraces" and grasps (43). The pitch to adjustment, reasonableness, and so on, is the hitch by which "threat and help converge" (46). The comforting trust conveying that in due time everything will come out all right corresponds to a child's fantasies of what will happen when grown up (58).

The column deploys a timeline in its counseling that dispenses "with contradictory requirements of life" by "distributing these requirements over different periods mostly of the same day" (56). A pseudo-solution results that swaps first–next sequences for the either–or impasses of life: "Pleasure thus becomes the award of work, work the atonement for pleasure" (58). The flight trajectory of fantasy is thus stuffed inside the twenty-four-hour span of time to give it all the illusion of quality time – like the boon for signing up with the Devil. "Sexuality itself is being desexualized, as it were, by becoming 'fun,' a sort of hygiene" (65). The infernal rear view of power is staggered in fits and starts: "Encouraging 'behind-the-scenes' activities is an inconspicuous form of conjuring up such tendencies usually projected upon out-groups. [...] The advice to finagle is countered – undone in the psychoanalytic sense – by interspersed reminders to keep within the realm of the permissible" (79).

The omnipotence in wish fantasizing that pumps up outer reality makes the adjustment to a greater power that calls the shots: "The pleasures ordained are no longer pleasures at all, but

really the duties as which they are rationalized, the rationalization containing more truth than the supposedly unconscious wish” (66). The culture industry turns around the relationship between wish fantasy and poetry into how-to rationalizations for adaptation to the practice of wishing well: “The idea of the successful, conforming, well-adjusted ‘average’ citizen lurks even behind the fanciest technicolor fairy tale” (46).

These are the moments Adorno strung together under the slogan or rebus “psychoanalysis in reverse,” which he applied both to the culture industry and National Socialism. Pivotal to a reading of the mass-media psychology going into National Socialism, the provenance of the phrase lies in the benign plagiarism or teamwork among the Frankfurt Schoolers in exile. That Leo Lowenthal is occasionally given the credit means that it was, biographically speaking, an occasional formulation that subsequently, however, grew like a rumor in meaningfulness.<sup>13</sup> We can also find it cited in Adorno’s second essay on American television, “Fernsehen als Ideologie” (“Television as Ideology,” 1953). Before he gives the phrase (in quotes), he unpacks its sense in the setting of a TV story: “Psychoanalysis, or whatever type of psychotherapy is involved, is abbreviated and concretized in such a way that not only is the praxis of such a procedure mocked, but its sense or purpose is even turned around into the opposite.”<sup>14</sup>

By its extension to the relationship between wish fulfillment and B-culture, Freud’s 1907 analysis of the structure of daydreaming shows, in effect, how liminality or uncanniness can be reshuffled and reedited by the culture industry. “The Poet and Daydreaming” is either a wrap with the culture industry or it gives the outline for production. Freud also argued that every daydream bears, just the same, the datemark of its triggering in the present going on recent past, whereby a portal opens to the

13 In “How to Look at Television,” written at the time of his astrology study, also at the Hacker Foundation, Adorno writes that Lowenthal coined the term “psychoanalysis in reverse” (223). *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television* 8, no. 3 (Spring 1954): 213–35.

14 Theodor W. Adorno, “Fernsehen als Ideologie,” in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 10.2:528, 526.

underworld of the fantasy in history. It is one of those moments of breakthrough in analytic theory that can be seen as giving the how-to for proper conduct of psychic reality. In your daydream, however, as Freud argues, the fantasy arc jettisons the wish from an idealized past directly to the future of fulfillment. This can be taken to be owner's manual instructions for imagineers. The reversal of psychoanalysis is the gist of Adorno's plagiarism by the culture industry.

Edmund Bergler was one psychoanalyst who claimed expertise in understanding plagiarism. However he had to treat it more carefully than, for example, writer's block. Intellectual property theft can only be looked at closely, he admits, and case by case. Only historically does it come into focus at all. It is at once a byproduct of "publicity" and a "privilege" of the limited set of people pursuing scientific, literary, or artistic vocations: "other persons have little opportunity to plagiarize even should they want to."<sup>15</sup>

That plagiarism is a privilege of publicity makes it the tour de farce of the wish to be an author. Ernst Kris may be best known by now for his dismissive treatment by Jacques Lacan (in "The Direction of the Treatment and the Principles of Its Power") in regard to his interpretation of plagiarism.<sup>16</sup> Kris undertook the second analysis of a patient afraid of plagiarizing. The first analyst, with whom Lacan seems to side, was Melitta Schmideberg, Melanie Klein's acting-out daughter who specialized in the correction of adolescent acting out, and yet in a manner so antipodal to Winnicott's treatment of the asocial tendency that Lacan strikes two rivals with one championship.

According to Schmideberg, her patient's tendency to steal in his youth was so successfully corrected that by adulthood, because he could not risk the crime of plagiarizing, his research was utterly blocked and his livelihood threatened. But then Kris discovers in his follow-up treatment that in the research team to which the patient belongs, a more established member was exercising his

15 Edmund Bergler, *The Writer and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Doubleday, 1950), 184.

16 Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2004), 27–28.

prerogative and recycling the younger man's research. When the patient saw his senior colleague's recent publication, rather than remember and recognize his own input, he felt an illicit desire to steal the other's work, which set off the phobic chain reaction. This leads to Kris's analysis of the patient's failed adaptation to the team setting of academic communities: "Finally, the distortion of imputing to others his own ideas could be analyzed and the mechanism of 'give and take' made conscious."<sup>17</sup> In the food chain of teamwork you only steal what's already stolen

The other amazing tidbit of give and take that the patient offered Kris in session, which Lacan cites with glee, is that for some time now upon leaving the analyst's office he likes roaming among restaurants like a ghoul searching the posted menus for his favorite meal: fresh brains. This is one rare occasion when Lacan hears a "daydream." A patient anxious about being a plagiarist who in session with his author-analyst says that he likes to eat brains strikes out against the recording agency of the case study by a literal fulfillment of the analyst's wish for recognition.

Lacan concludes that Kris's analysand was afraid of stealing "nothing." But Lacan steals away from a spot of oblivion in their presentations. Kris prominently referred to Helene Deutsch's case example of a patient who suffered oblivion in the present to cover and enable his plagiarism. Although Kris admits he forgot all about the article he is sure that it influenced the strategy he was following in his analysis of the patient with a similar disorder. Deutsch's patient forgets the scientific literature that he was just reading and then all his own pages of research in progress. Because it is the present moment that he forgets, Deutsch makes the fantastic intervention of asking her patient to bring his current research to session.<sup>18</sup> She is taking a short cut through his intellectual pursuits, usually a diversion in analysis from the problem at hand. A close friendship with a colleague is part of

17 Ernst Kris, "Ego Psychology and Interpretation in Psychoanalytic Therapy," in *The Selected Papers of Ernst Kris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), 247.

18 Helene Deutsch, "A Discussion of Certain Forms of Resistance," in *Neuroses and Character Types: Clinical Psychoanalytic Studies* (New York: International Universities Press, 1965), 251-52.

his workspace. It is only by bringing his scene of writing into the sessions that she discovers that not forgetting but plagiarism (of the friend's work) is the presenting problem. Indeed, oblivion seems always to attend plagiarism, even its study, which is tantamount either to admission of guilt or to the untenability of its transitive charge.

Bergler's revision of the Oedipus complex as "no more than a desperate inner defense developed in the desperate inner battle of passivity"<sup>19</sup> no doubt qualifies as one of the many subtypes of plagiarism he identifies by letting the charge roam. But plagiarism, by the account of Bergler's theory, offers the best defense against writer's block. By manifestly defending against plagiarism, which is just as plainly a first defense against the deepest wish, to be refused, ignored, and unread, plagiarism cuts to the quick of every case of writer's block. One of Bergler's cured author-patients recognized the slip he had given the block when he recognized "burglar" in his treating analyst's name.<sup>20</sup>

### Medleys

The constellation, which was the import of his relationship to Benjamin's *Origin of the German Mourning Play*, grew on Adorno. In their correspondence, whenever Adorno calls Benjamin to account on the turf of the allegory book, he scores winning reformulations of "their" insights, although his friend seems to have forgotten his share. A strong example is Adorno's memo to Benjamin that the recent past remains the time zone that lurches back into the present catastrophically as prehistory (August 2-4, 1935).<sup>21</sup> Adorno takes the dream out of Benjamin's equation with the dialectical image in order, he says, to bring the friends back to the constellation hovering between the *Origin* book and his study of Søren Kierkegaard. The constellation gives allegorical form to their respective readings in the debris of fan-

19 Bergler, *The Writer and Psychoanalysis*, 66.

20 *Ibid.*, 262.

21 Adorno and Benjamin, *Briefwechsel: 1928-1940*, II. Some time ago I emblazoned this passage, an Adorno "original" dispatched between friends, on the banner of my own work.



tasying, waking dream states, and media – the hell of civilization. The nonrapport between the cosmic design of constellation and its representatives on earth was another form of legibility in gaps that cannot be filled (or fulfilled).

Adorno's 1928 essay "Schubert" enters the lost-and-found department of a bowdlerized reception to hoist upon its retard his first constellation in which the truth of the lost work shines brightly. The essay opens on a volcanic landscape that commands Adorno's reverie. Suffering a shiver of horror (*Schauer*) as he crosses the threshold between Ludwig van Beethoven's and Franz Schubert's death years, Adorno glimpses the landscape rise up out of the ashes.<sup>22</sup> If Schubert's music doesn't flex the will that is the focal point of Beethoven, it still ends up in the same chthonic depths out of which the will emerged – and sits under the same stars that shine beyond all eager willful grasping.

But then Adorno enters upon new landscaping befitting smaller views, like those on postcards. He starts over inside a fairground, lowering his sights. Artworks aren't creaturely or organic. They are like targets on a fairground booth's shooting range, which the visitors aim to hit. If the right number flashes, then the target falls over and reality shines through (19–20). "The unveiling of the image remains the work of man. [...] The image of truth, however, stands at all times in history. The history of the image is its decay" (20). Truth steps out of the ruination of the image. This "movement" is reprised several times in the course of the essay, each time adding an element, which counts that round as fundamental.

The targeting reduction shrinks what blocked our view of the spellbinding landscape (21). Like a hinge, the Biedermeier-genre postcard allowed Adorno to open up the essay's own landscape horizon. What next falls into place is the relocation of Schubert's music to the "inadequate world of the medleys (*Potpourris*)," which, however, granted the music a second life (21–22). No accident that the medley came to be introduced in the nineteenth century as a surrogate for musical form. It is on

22 Theodor W. Adorno, "Schubert," in *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2003), 17:8. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

one continuum with the miniature landscape, another bourgeois commodity in its many variations, including the picture postcard (*Ansichtskarte*) (23).

Adorno appears to be reading Schubert's music at its weakest point. But it is through its "depravation" in the setting of the song medleys that the music still plays and can yet be heard, more "eloquently" in fact than the music of his contemporaries (24). It is this depravation that brings the music closer to its origin and truth. "In the medley the traits of the work, scattered through the decline of its subjective unity, move together into a new unity, which cannot legitimate itself as such, but which directly confronts and illuminates the uniqueness of the traits" (22). While rigor mortis befell the opera medleys of the nineteenth century, with Schubert the themes press onward without the medusoid recoil (*ibid.*).

The interchangeability of every thematic unit indicates a simultaneity of all events, which lies outside history. "Out of this simultaneity one can yet discern the contours of the Schubert landscape, which it otherwise infernally mirrors" (*ibid.*). That the infernal foe is yet kept in check by the landscape perspective pushes the origin of the depravation back inside the music itself.

Every truly legitimate depravation of aesthetic contents is inaugurated by artworks in which the unveiling of the image has gone so far that the power of truth in the image shines through, not stopping in the image but penetrating reality. That transparency, for which the artwork pays with its life, is suited to the crystalline Schubert landscape. Here fate and reconciliation rest together undivided; their ambiguous eternity is shattered by the medley so that it can be recognized. It is the landscape of the death before (*zuvor*). (23)

The death before is an object relation. We are approaching mournfulness, the ultimate addition to the movement reprised unto the essay's conclusion.

The depositing of death runs deep inside Schubert's landscape: "but not in order to resolve itself in the affect of the individual, but rather to rise up rescued following the descent out of the musical form of mourning" (25). A qualitative change has

thus occurred. “But change is only possible in that which is most small” (ibid.). On the larger scale death reigns, reining in the relations with the dead, blocking mourning. Upon introducing the wanderer as allegorical reader on the track of the dead, another turn of the perspective reveals the constellation in the landscape. “The eccentric construct of that landscape in which every point is equidistant from the center is revealed to the wanderer passing through but never advancing” (ibid.). The last and first steps are equally near death.

If this is timelessness, then it’s the mood (*Stimmung*) that swings. Because citation cannot be simultaneous, the mood has a certain momentum (27). As we swing around in the oscillating musical structure or “landscape” of the degrading reception of Schubert’s music in Schubert’s music, we are at the portal again to decline, but now mourning is added, and in the first place, which changes everything. “The affect of death – for the affect of death is imitated in Schubert’s landscape, the grief (*Trauer*) over men not the pain in them – is alone the gate to the underworld, through which Schubert descends” (29). Grief attracts the infernal foe: “thus the mirror of the *Doppelgänger* sentences man on grounds of his sorrowfulness” (30). Just the same, grief opens the other pathway through Schubert’s music, the parallel universal alongside depravation’s track, which it leaves behind. Now we begin to recognize the liberated music of a mankind transformed. How sad that we yet fall short of these utopian prospects. It doesn’t matter if mere sentimentality jerks them out: our tears let us see better “the ciphers of ultimate reconciliation” (33).<sup>23</sup>

23 I’ve underscored in the first volume the welling up of tears arising with the eucatastrophe’s joyous anticipation and deferral of an ultimate ending. The direct hit of music appreciation reflects and deflects a lost and found specific emotional situation. Now Adorno reads in musical tear jerking the inscription of a far-out reconciliation. A guaranteed party-pooper, Edmund Bergler identified happy tears as the insignum of an author’s defensive illusion of autarchy, his self-consolation. These tears are self-produced and self-given. “Paradoxical Tears – Tears of Happiness,” in *Selected Papers of Edmund Bergler, M.D. 1933–1961* (New York and London: Grune & Stratton, 1969), 906.

In the study of Kierkegaard, to which Adorno applied himself right after the musical rehearsal of the constellation in “Schubert,” the opening up of a landscape of yearning is hard pressed to ally itself with and within Kierkegaard’s philosophy. In his 1933 review of the book, Benjamin summarized the reversal of perspective Adorno undertook to dislodge Kierkegaard’s philosophy from its receiving area in Existentialism:

Here Kierkegaard is taken not forward but back – back into the inner core of philosophical idealism, within whose enchanted circle the ultimately theological nature of his thought remained doomed to impotence. [...] Nowhere does Wiesengrund’s insight go deeper than where he ignores the stereotypes of Kierkegaardian philosophy and where he looks instead for the key to Kierkegaard’s thought in its apparently insignificant relics, in its images, similes, and allegories.<sup>24</sup>

By the conclusion, Adorno is able to secure the constellation of fantasy through the images printed on sheets for children to cut out. “Yearning does not end in the pictures, but rather lives on in them, just as it stems from them” (199). The *Ansichtskarten*, the miniature views that inspired Adorno to find the affirmation of Schubert’s music in its very devaluation, its fragmentation in the medleys, are on the same page with Kierkegaard’s image sheets. That we are also on the same page with Winnicott’s analysis of the dissociated daydreamer, which we followed in the first volume of *Critique of Fantasy*, is owed to the import Adorno grants the miniature in or as childhood in establishing and sustaining visual literacy, a capacity he later called sublimation and judged evacuated – washed and watched out – in the TV viewer. Was it a daydream or night dream on which she awoke that saw her cutting out a pattern for a dress? Patient and analyst were at a border dislodging the opposition that Winnicott was plying between the devaluation of fantasizing and the symbolism, even poetry of

24 Walter Benjamin, “Kierkegaard: The End of Philosophical Idealism,” in *Selected Writings*, ed. William Jennings, trans. Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 2.2:703–4.

the night dream, and that consequently required new thinking and language. The third option for the analysis, then, became a fantasizing of fantasy, admitting in the patient's fantasizing new approximations to dreaming, waking, and living

Adorno underscores Kierkegaard's fascination with the picture sheets and shows how the exception that the philosopher thus makes heads off at the impasse the melancholic core of interiority decoration he dwelled on and in. "If *Seligkeit* itself, around which wish and cipher of all images gather, knows no images, then Kierkegaard's discourse is delivered of a 'burden of hope'" (194). *Seligkeit* is the word for a happiness still borne that extends to (or ends in) the "bliss" one prays is the lot of the blessed departed (as Freud elaborated its ambivalence in his reading of Daniel Paul Schreber's *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*).<sup>25</sup> "Undialectically the images are to him finite goods that block the infinitude of *Seligkeit*" (194). But through his elevation of pictures on sheets for children to cut out, the philosopher's "modesty (*Unscheinbarkeit*) signifies not only the annihilation of appearance (*Schein*) in death but rather its ultimate extinction in truth, which, for once corporally present, would let the images disappear, in which it however has its historical life" (193).

What Adorno lets stand in Kierkegaard's words is the identification of posthumous works as ruins, the appropriate haunt for the retired, secluded, or dead. What the philosopher Kierkegaard would like to get across, Adorno interprets, gains through art the effect of posthumous works. Art manifests a pleasure that is never present, but in which a moment that is past always inheres, a pleasure that enters consciousness but as already passed (198).

The cutting out of the pictures outlines the fantasy in the fragment. "If the history of guilty nature is that of the decay of its unity, then it moves the decaying toward reconciliation, and its fragments carry the fissures of decay as ciphers of promise" (198).

25 Sigmund Freud, "Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XII (1911–1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), 30.

Fragmentation (cutting out, sorting through, collecting) can circumvent the impasse, for example between improvement and controlling interest, by reducing the scale of change. Adorno's concluding line: "For the step from mourning to comfort is not the biggest but the smallest one" (200).

The slightest elaboration through fantasy brings rescue. "The model for this realization Kierkegaard [...] found in the behavior of the child cutting images out of a picture sheet" (196). While fantasizing a dream of cutting out a dress Winnicott and his patient discover that the dissociated daydreamer's "childhood environment seemed unable to allow her to be formless," creative, and so she could not accede to the transitional object.<sup>26</sup> Winnicott and his patient must make the cut of starting over and by potentiating the fantasizing push back her suicidal impasse of daydream dissociation. Adorno wants to get past Kierkegaard's thoughts of sacrifice by underscoring the moment of respite that lies between the lines of cutting out picture sheets, throwing them away, and letting them rebound as prehistory.

"The moments of fantasy are the holidays of history. As such they belong to the free, liberated time of the child, and their material is historical like the picture sheets themselves" (197). The situation of the people and the commonplace, the "concrete images of their wish," hit home and secure access to images by a wish fulfillment that is free of sacrifice (200). "If fantasy cannot grasp the ultimate images of despair [...] then this incapacity is not its shortcoming but its strength. [...] The unimaginability of despair through fantasy is its guarantee of hope" (196).

### Team Player

Freud allowed that the screening of the primal scene (all over town) as false memory made it hard to reconstruct. But he also stressed in his case study of the Wolfman the all-importance of the scene's priority.<sup>27</sup> By setting reality (realization or fulfill-

26 D.W. Winnicott, *Playing and Reality* (Hove: Brunner-Routledge, 2001), 34.

27 Sigmund Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund*

ment) before the wish, the scene places fantasizing on a schedule of racing to catch up with but never overtaking the deadline of realization.

In Dick's *Ubik*, all devolution of commodities, the allegorization of half-life, stops at 1939. Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok lodged their notion of the crypt in a *language* of cryptonymy that added syntax to the images used by the survivors of the death camps: "the homeless dead," "missing grave," "the imitation corpse."<sup>28</sup> The Holocaust doesn't discount other atrocities in history but places them on a schedule of legibility with its priority in the reality and realization of the death wish, with, in other words, the priority of the reality of fulfillment over the wish. The heft of realization in the construct of traumatic history's primal scene is rehearsed in the *mise-en-scène* of déjà vu between doubling and fantasizing.

Adorno identified the new setting of the *Doppelgänger*, the daydream milieu of déjà vu, as the other future that Kafka's writing foretells: "Perhaps the secret aim of his writing in general was to make déjà vu available, technical, and collective" (263). The resemblance to the night dream and its pre-logical logic is so ubiquitous in Kafka's works that Adorno sees the dream factor unthematized and excluded. Kafka addresses our second nature as daydreamers, but under the aegis of déjà vu, the false memory that keeps android doubles going. Like memory, déjà vu interrupts fantasizing: Haven't I been here before? Don't I know you? But the *interruptus* that coincides with the triggering of the fantasy, which passes for or into "memory" in order to keep the untenable wish concealed, is at no point recognized by or shared with anyone else. The Kafkan text addresses the daydreamer in the reader: "Each sentence says 'interpret me,' and none will permit it. Each compels the reaction, 'that's the way it is,' and with

*Freud, Vol. XVII (1917–1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955). It is best to use the index in tracking Freud's fraught attempt to wrest priority for a scene so readily discounted, by him too.

<sup>28</sup> Henry Krystal, ed., *Massive Psychic Trauma* (New York: International Universities Press, 1968).

it the question, ‘where have I seen that before?’ The déjà vu is declared permanent” (263).

In his essay on Kafka Adorno lined up in a row both scenes of psychoanalysis, the primal and the double. That also means, as touted in *Adorno in Neapel*, that the Holocaust, which Adorno was reading like science fiction extrapolated from the present-going-on-recent past in Kafka’s works, in effect restored the constellation that the series of reversals of psychoanalysis had stolen. That Kafka imagined collecting his early stories in a volume titled “Versöhnung,” literally, almost, “becoming a son,” fits a charge not against the fathers, but against the sons, the bargain haunters in the stricken world of late capitalism.

Freud argues in “The Uncanny” that déjà vu looks like the return of an early animistic belief that mankind (or the adult) was so convinced had been already and definitely overcome.<sup>29</sup> But on this occult track we might lose sight of the bottom line of Freud’s déjà vu analysis, which is the death wish. To lose sight of what we nevertheless fill in: this gives the gist of Adorno’s critique of the occult in the contemporary setting.<sup>30</sup> In his earlier analysis of déjà vu, Freud found compelling the case example of a patient overcome with the sense of having already been there while visiting two school girlfriends in their home.<sup>31</sup> The continuity shot was that their brother had recently succumbed to the

29 Sigmund Freud, “The Uncanny,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVII (1917–1919): An Infantile Neurosis and Other Works*, 247–48. For a thorough account of the history of anticipations and forgettings going into Freud’s formulations of the psychological significance of this psychic state, see Peter Krapp, *Déjà Vu: Aberrations of Cultural Memory* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004).

30 Theodor W. Adorno, “Thesen gegen den Okkultismus,” in *Minima Moralia: Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben, Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 4 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003), 273–80.

31 Sigmund Freud, “Fausse reconnaissance (‘Déjà Raconté’) in Psychoanalytic Treatment,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIII (1913–1914): Totem and Taboo and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), 203–4.



illness from which her brother had recently recovered. Yes, we're in the environs of the death wish, but we are brought before its fulfillment first, leaving the wish to catch up in the span of a near miss.

Robert Altman's *The Player* (1992) got past the verdict upon the California culture industry that Adorno was also able to get over. Adorno's culture industry crisis, however, inspired Michael Tolkin, like a "wild" Frankfurt-Schooler, to write the judgmental novel. In their altercations during filming, which were legend, Altman assured Tolkin that the screenplay revisions would be to the author's credit. The novel like its sequel tells the story of an "American Psycho," whose criminality proves to be business as usual.

In the film, the protagonist, Griffin Mill, is a Hollywood producer faced with the loss of his inheritance. A rival, Larry Levy, has arrived by invitation of the paternal head of the production department. In regular receipt of death-threat postcards from an unidentified screenwriter, Griffin is an anxious reader of omens. When Larry the rival successfully crashes a cocktail party at the home of Griffin's lawyer, getting a contact "Hi" out of everyone there, Griffin asks the host: "So the rumors are true?" "Rumors are always true." "I'm always the last to hear about them." "You're the last one to believe."

In American slang "a player" is a seducer; he can "play" people to his own advantage. But in Southern California it is also an ellipsis for "team player." The teamwork of the Hollywood producers to which Griffin belongs digests authorship. Everyone writing for Hollywood talks about the ideas that were stolen piecemeal in the course of being passed around among the members of a team. The protagonist's surname is also an ellipsis for this situation he would disavow: the rumor mill. Every member of the team wins for the team as a whole but also wins for keeps (for him or herself only). The hierarchy of inheritance shadows the teamwork of the Hollywood studio, a contradiction between player and team that neurotically incapacitates Griffin.

That the new rival for the position of heir is one reverb in the greater figuration of a malignant superego becomes manifest when David Kahane, the screenplay author Griffin has sought out on the chance that he likes sending upsetting postcards,

starts speaking in the name of Larry Levy, elaborating the rival's threat as his own. But before they meet up, Griffin stopped by the Kahane home and placed a call watching through the window. If it was telephonic, then it was only platonic. But that can also mean that what Griffin sees is primal. A woman answers; it's David's partner, June Gundmundsdottir. When Griffin gives his name, she recognizes it and innocently repeats David's nickname for him, "the dead man." She tells him David is out, gone to the movies. She never goes, she says: life is too short.

Griffin follows his screenwriter suspect to a theater that's showing *The Bicycle Thief*. While references to European art cinema have been making the rounds to demarcate in terms of cultural difference the impasse between the Hollywood-only producers and the middlebrow authors pitching entry into development heaven or hell, this happens to be a film that redresses stealing by showing it to be an inadequate synonym for losing.

When he figures how Griffin knew where to find him, David calls June "the ice queen." We are reminded that in the game of chess the queen mother is the son's best ally in checkmating the king. When David begins spouting the words of the rival and then, push coming to shove, knocks him over, Griffin fantastically rallies and attacks back. Griffin undergoes the attack like a convulsive episode. Subsequent scenes with the police, which are surreal, reinforce the sense that the murderous "attack" screens a wish fantasy. In his essay on Dostoevsky Freud argues that the author's epileptic seizures were the p-unitive reversal of wishing the father (inside and out) dead.<sup>32</sup> His gambling compulsion was a similar enactment. Gambling to lose enacts the double hand job of the father's punishment and the child's masturbation.

To conclude his essay Freud turns to a story by Stefan Zweig, "Twenty-Four Hours in a Woman's Life," in which a young man, a gambling addict, meets an older woman who offers a night of lovemaking to counter and contain the compulsive schedule of

32 Sigmund Freud, "Dostoevsky and Parricide," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXI (1927–1931): The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 182–84.

playing. The fantasy that the mother should initiate her son into sex to stop the harm he does himself by onanistic playing was thus fulfilled. While Zweig's protagonist breaks his promise the very next night and is again lost to gambling, the fulfillment of the wish fantasy elucidated by Freud does illuminate Griffin's happy end. Griffin drinks mineral water only, which means he is on a schedule with addiction. An afflicted player enjoys a wonderful life but just can't get through the day. Not to be a loser for twenty-four hours means a good deal.

Griffin's relationship with Bonnie Sherow, another member of the production team, fits a couple that is secondary to the group passing through it. But with the woman who is both the mother on the chessboard and by her unpronounceable name also "daughter," which means she doesn't double a son's hatred for the father, Griffin can uncanny-proof the wish to kill the father. If there's no remorse, the mother-daughter says, well then, there is no crime. He ascends within the team to the player position of the "man of steal."

The conclusion that Fritz Lang or Thea von Harbou chose for the 1922 film *Dr. Mabuse, der Spieler* (*Dr. Mabuse, the Player*) shows the gambler or player defeated, lying low in an underworld he shares with his victims. By his multiple identities a superhuman team of one, Dr. Mabuse runs his criminal schemes like a terrorist organization in thrall to an idea, which can therefore forgo what crime after all does pay. While the novel by Norbert Jacques that Lang and Thea von Harbou adapted closes with the detective rescuing his love interest from Dr. Mabuse, who then falls from the sky to die, the ending on screen suggests that there is a supernatural ready position available for his return.<sup>33</sup> Identification with Nietzsche's superman turns the time to come into the future of wish-fulfilment, but that future is right now. To block the identification, Freud proposed in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* that the superman in fact belongs in the past. The superman was the primal father,

33 In 1932 the doctor returns to deliver a "Testament," the significance of which Siegfried Kracauer adapted for his psychohistory of German cinema.

whom we murdered, devoured, and mourned. That we are still in recovery is good news.<sup>34</sup>

The “ice queen” told Mill that the ex, the dad rival, had not believed in happy endings. At the end of *The Player*, we witness the Enlightenment right to pursuit of happiness (like in a Mozart opera) attain apotheosis via the most negligible and least respected plot point in cinema. There is a happy end, however, that is an end in itself, marking the convergence of the pursuit of happiness with Kant’s imperfect duty to oneself, one’s talent and potential. The Christian and utilitarian happy ends intercept the end in itself, forging a means to the happiness of the majority inheriting the earth. However, even for Tolkien, there can be a work of fantasy only if the ultimate happy end is kept out of the fiction. The affective impact of the work of fantasy resonates within a gap between the postponement of the redemptive end-all and the story’s eucatastrophe, which wishes and hopes because the resolution of the work remains out of reach.

*The Player* only looks like a satire on Hollywood. Instead it is more like a guide to the film industry, even a how-to manual for those who would make a career of it. As big as Hollywood, but pulled through the fantasy of a happy end unto the utopian prospect of reconciliation with our omnipotent wishing, it was Altman’s Hollywood blockbuster.

California Susan<sup>35</sup>

To know Susan Sontag was to know her disappointment each time she put another new non-fiction publication out there. Her

34 Sigmund Freud, “Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVIII (1920–1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 123.

35 “California Susan” was also the title of my lecture/essay commissioned for two events in Germany held during the ten-year anniversary of Sontag’s death in 2014. The paragraphs on Sontag here and in “My Camp” are taken over largely intact from the essay, which appeared in the original and in German translation in Anna-Lisa Dieter and Silvia Tiedtke, eds., *Radikales Denken. Zur Aktualität Susan Songtags*

signature essays, in which she had given thought to every line she wrote, fell short of the words of Walter Benjamin. Like Josephine the Singer, however, she expected the declarations of her friends and fans to the contrary while she scoffed and sobbed. But she had been very lucky to secure a fallback position that she could occupy. For every niche in which she couldn't join Benjamin or Kafka there was always the cozy corner of diehard identification with Thomas Mann in the thicket of his inner object relations. This free gift that came with her adolescence in Southern California helped see her through the career she made out of the wish for it.

There is one sustained autobiographical account of Susan Sontag's adolescence in California, a 1987 *New Yorker* article titled "Pilgrimage," about an audience with Thomas Mann in Los Angeles, forced upon her, as a kind of dare, by a slightly older friend, who in this account goes by the name Merrill.<sup>36</sup> The Sontag who graduated from North Hollywood High School at age fifteen might be characterized, like the subtitle to *Gidget*, as the little girl with big ideas. Little, however, in the sense of young: Sontag was the tallest girl in her class. Just as Kathy Kohner a.k.a. Franzie Hofer a.k.a. Gidget was mediated as somewhat laughable, though charmingly so, through the midlife criticism of her father Frederick Kohner, who, as the author of the 1957 coming-of-age book, mimicked and ventriloquated her, so teen Susan, as recalled by Sontag from the other shore of fulfillment of the

(Zurich: Diaphanes, 2017). The Gidget allegory has grown from a dash into a rich filling.

36 Susan Sontag, "Pilgrimage," *The New Yorker*, December 21, 1987, 8–54. Subsequent page references are given in the text. I am returning to a footnote I gave this essay in *The Case of California* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991) in the closing section on Thomas Mann and the decision he reached in Southern California to come out with the posthumous publication of his diaries. In the same book, Gidget was implicit in phrases like "gadget goes." The Gidget novels came out in German translation with the heroine bearing the name April. When I pointed out that this was the reason there was no German word for *gadget*, two German friends jumped up and down exclaiming "April, April!," the German version of "April Fools!" I rest my case.

wish to be an important intellectual author, is a touch ridiculous for the purity of her aspiration to become the big-ideas version of herself.

According to “Pilgrimage,” Susan was a close consumer of the émigré culture in Southern California always in the company of one of her two special friends. Peter, whose parents were refugees from Nazi Europe, was earmarked for her romantic involvement in the near future because taller than Sontag, her early requirement for mating. The other best friend was Merrill, a surfer type who consumed philosophy, in other words: a typical surfer.

Cool and chunky and blond, he had all the trappings of “cute,” a “dish,” a “dreamboat,” but I, with my unerring eye for loners (under all disguises), had promptly seen that he was smart, too. Really smart. [...] Merrill was the only one of my friends I doted on. I loved to look at him. I wanted to merge with him or for him to merge with me, but I had to respect the insuperable barrier: he was several inches shorter than I was. (40)

That he is recalled as an object of merger, at once downsized and off-limits, strongly suggests that he is already inside her.

Peter appears in diary entries in 1949 and 1950 but, with her first lesbian affairs in the ascendant, he’s already on his way out. Merrill is not accorded a place, at least not in name. Is he perhaps E, one of two persons who accompanied her on the Mann visit, according to a long diary entry from 1949? “E, F, and I interrogated God this evening at six.”<sup>37</sup> In an earlier entry, the characterization of E’s intelligence and of Susan’s closeness to him make him at least a likely ingredient in the makeup of Merrill: “Yet the only tangible good I have gotten out of the summer is my closeness to E, whose intelligence I genuinely respect” (47).

While parked in a car on the rim of Mulholland Drive, according to the 1987 memoir, Sontag and Merrill didn’t join in the local mating rituals, but instead, on the outer rim of identification,

37 Susan Sontag, *Reborn: Early Diaries, 1947–1963*, ed. David Rieff (London: Penguin, 2008), 56. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

even internalization, passionately discussed modern music, which was the main medium of their joint engagement with European high culture in Los Angeles. Sontag admits that the duo felt compelled to admire the “ugly” work of Arnold Schoenberg or John Cage but sincerely loved only Igor Stravinsky’s music (41). At the highpoint of their commitment to each other, they shared the waking fantasy of their joint sacrifice of years of their lives to add to Stravinsky’s lifetime. After Sontag discovered *The Magic Mountain* and passed it on to Merrill, the duo revered two gods of contemporary high culture, Stravinsky and Thomas Mann. These recollections are at once charming and unrepentant. The tinge of the infernal that attends their bargaining with lifetime bears association with the middlebrow milieu Mann thematized in *Doctor Faustus*, ironically at his own peril.

Closer to the real time of her adolescence than her 1987 reminiscence, Sontag diagnosed as the hallmark of SF movies of disaster, a Californian teen staple, the absence of an adequate emotional response.<sup>38</sup> She doesn’t supply mourning. Instead she registers the loss we are at in these films, the loss, ultimately, of our own affective relation to the traumatic histories of the twentieth century. In “Pilgrimage,” Sontag underscores an emotional response in her own adolescent milieu, which is hard to call adequate: it seems intransitive and intransigent, abject and illegible. Though triggered by the recollection of meeting Mann, it covers her own sojourn in the B-genre of Californian adolescence. It is how the *New Yorker* article begins: “Everything that surrounds my meeting with him has the color of shame” (38).

The Indo-European root meaning of shame is cover. Has a wrapping been thrown over the absence of an identifiable emotional response? At the conclusion, Sontag again tugs at this shroud: “I never told anyone of the meeting. Over the years I have kept it a secret, as if it were something shameful” (54). The lines that follow seem to modify “something shameful,” but stand out as a foreign-body non-sequitur: “As if it happened between two other people, two phantoms, two provisional beings on their way elsewhere.” Yes, she is pairing off Mann, soon to return to

38 Susan Sontag, “The Imagination of Disaster,” in *Against Interpretation and Other Essays* (New York: Picador, 1966), 225.

Europe, with herself, who too would soon depart, in her case to realize her wish to be a big ideas author. However, a third figure is suddenly no longer accounted for, “melted” as Sontag writes in her diaries of her relationship to E, whose “unstruggling emptiness” reverberating inside her renders him the poster boy of the absent response (55).

According to Heinz Kohut, shame reflects not a disparity between the ego and an excessively demanding ego ideal but the “flooding of the ego with unneutralized exhibitionism.”<sup>39</sup> The exhibitionism of the grandiose self goes unadmired, unapproved, unmirrored. One of Freud’s few accounts of shame, in the case study of the Ratman, interpersonalizes the failure of admiration as betrayal. The older boy who wants to be Ratman’s best friend in childhood, dumps him once he gains admission to the household as tutor; he was interested only in Ratman’s sisters.<sup>40</sup> According to Sontag, it is to Susan’s relief that Merrill does all the talking during the Mann visit, but it is at this point that the new situation of the wish to mirror or merge counted two, not three.

When she recalls Thomas Mann asking them about their studies, trying to find the same page on which he and the two teens might meet, Sontag starts splitting: “Could he imagine what a world away from the Gymnasium in his native Lübeck, where fourteen-year-old Tonio Kröger wooed Hans Hansen by trying to get him to read Schiller’s ‘Don Carlos,’ was North Hollywood High School, alma mater of Farley Granger and Alan Ladd? He couldn’t, and I hoped he would never find out. He had enough to be sad about – Hitler, the destruction of Germany, exile. It was better that he not know how really far he was from Europe” (50).

The homoerotic souvenir she gives as the measure of their cultural difference shows that Susan unconsciously clued or cooled, as Gidget might put it, the wooing going down without

39 Heinz Kohut, *The Analysis of the Self: Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders* (New York: International University Press, 1971), 181.

40 See my discussion of shame in *The Psycho Records*, 49–51, in the reading of *Peeping Tom*, which belabors the same Ratman reference.



her. According to his diaries, Mann only kept under cover and in another place his ongoing homoerotic appreciation of life is a beach, of his being a teenager at heart, just as in "Pilgrimage" Sontag kept her adolescence alongside her as her fellow teen thinker, in the separate bod of a surfer object.

Prior to Merrill's dare that they go ahead and visit Mann, Susan had already rehearsed merger with the fictional character Hans Castorp via the author's tenderness toward him: "I loved the tenderness, however diluted by condescension, with which Mann portrays him as a bit simple, overearnest, docile, mediocre" (42). She sees through his condescension, and thus through his irony, also because she applies it in this retrospective account to herself. Following "mediocre" in the list of Castorp's attributes, Sontag inserts a parenthetical interjection or introjection: "what I considered myself to be, judged by real standards" (ibid.). As she builds up the identification that will see her through the Mann visit, she leaves this niche of emotional response empty.

Shame tends to be linked in the clinical literature to the sense of being a fraud, an impostor, typically in adolescence and psycho-pathologically in adult borderline disorders. As Gershen Kaufman summarizes: "The impostor syndrome is one of the important *cognitive signs* of shame affect."<sup>41</sup> While there is the passing sense of one's own fraudulence in adolescence, the impostor as syndrome builds on an organization by identification that isn't single-occupancy. The admiring audience is a requirement, according to Helene Deutsch's profiling of the impostor, even if secured by sending out pseudopodia into the hard shell of its simulation. The impostor's success lies in the eyes of the projected observer: "As one's ego ideal can never be completely gratified from *within*, we direct our demands to the external world, *pretending* [...] *that we actually are what we would like to be.*"<sup>42</sup> The impostor is the group shoved into an individual format, like teenagers packed inside a telephone booth. According to Lionel

41 Gershen Kaufman, *The Psychology of Shame: Theory and Treatment of Shame Based Syndromes* (New York: Springer, 1989), 180.

42 Helene Deutsch, "The Impostor: Contribution to Ego Psychology of a Type of Psychopath," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 80, no. 4 (2011): 1023.

Finkelstein, whose study of the impostor applied the composite picture Phyllis Greenacre shot and assembled in the 1950s, those who have studied impostors (and, he adds, homosexuals) “often comment on how many can be observed once one has become aware of their existence.”<sup>43</sup>

Greenacre argues that the impostor is a special case of the day-dream fantasy known as the family romance.<sup>44</sup> The wish fantasy that someday one will be delivered of one’s parents by the evidence of true blue progenitors goes into what Otto Rank identified as the birth of the hero – for better or worse. Oedipus benefits from the family romance only as long as he enacts it without knowing it. Oedipus started out a baby left out to die because the father sought to undo what he was foretold, namely that an heir would be his undoing. Oedipus, rescued and entrusted to foster parents, hears the same prophecy in adolescence, whereupon he loves and leaves the only parents he knows. But young Oedipus, grown strong enough to act on his wishes, walks straight into the prophecy’s fulfillment. He kills a belligerent stranger, his father. Did the altercation between young Oedipus and the older man qualify the murder as homosexual panic? As a young man, Laius, the father of Oedipus, kidnapped the teen son of his host and raped him. Sometimes a pun that seems to come from nowhere or is too close to home doubles as a direct hit: Kenneth Burke’s “riddle of the sphincter” upends the saga like a spoiler.<sup>45</sup> There’s more on all fours than babies.

In “Pilgrimage,” Mann, too, is contaminated by the shame. “What I was obscurely starting to mind was that (as I couldn’t have put it then) he talked like a book review” (48). That Mann’s reliance on phrases recycled from his public interview persona

43 Lionel Finkelstein, “The Impostor: Aspects of His Development,” *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (1974): 85. We have strayed into the environs of my reading of the impostor in *The Case of California*, 270–77.

44 Phyllis Greenacre, “The Impostor,” *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (1958): 363–64.

45 Burke repeatedly made recourse to this punning image. See, for example, his *Language as Symbolic Action: Essays on Life, Literature, and Method* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1966), 338.

made his pronouncements sound like review writing communicates across the decades with Sontag's own engagement in cultural journalism. From the more tolerant vantage of her grown-up career, she identifies the embarrassment of her adolescent riches as a gap folded deeply in memory, the scream memory of shame:

Years later, when I had become a writer, when I knew many other writers, I would learn to be more tolerant of the gap between the person and the work. Yet even now the encounter still feels illicit, improper. In my experience deep memory is, more often than not, the memory of embarrassment. (ibid.)

There are few indications in Sontag's diaries of the shame attending her Mann visit. Alongside Mann's observation during the meeting that the relationship of *The Magic Mountain* to his personal experiences before WWI was metapsychological, there is a marginal jotting of disappointment, which, even without the editor's corroboration, no doubt hails from a later date, perhaps the time of composition of "Pilgrimage": "The author's comments betray his book with their banality" (58).

In her diary record of the visit, Mann talks about *Doctor Faustus* and refers to the English translation as concluded in the recent past. By backdating the 1949 session in "Pilgrimage" to 1947, Sontag remembers herself in the sweet high-school phase of the wish to be someone important, which by college age can already begin to circle around the drain of unfulfillment. But most important, the book *Doctor Faustus* (in English translation) is removed from the foreground of the encounter. Susan's relationship to or through *Doctor Faustus*, discernible already in the soul-murder pact with Merrill, runs deep in her diaries.

Somewhere, in an earlier notebook, I confessed a disappointment with the Mann Faustus... This was a uniquely undisguised evidence of the quality of my critical sensibility! The work is a great and satisfying one. (19)

In the course of an autobiographical rundown from 1957 titled "Notes of a Childhood," Sontag's diaries register a one-line recol-

lection, which counts after all as the single and strong reference to the shame of her 1987 reminiscence: “Being caught at the Pickwick Bookstore for stealing *Doctor Faustus*” (113).

There is no sign that Susan stole compulsively; rather we have Sontag’s word for it in “Pilgrimage” that, given her puny allowance, she bought when she could but occasionally stole when she dared. However, something like compulsion is registered when she allows that she didn’t even think of going to the library. Buying and stealing become at some point interchangeable: “I had to acquire them, see them in rows along a wall of my tiny bedroom. My household deities. My spaceships” (39).

That Susan’s book collection was her alternate network of good object relations is indicated by her express powers as “demon reader” over and against her parents: “to read was to drive a knife into their lives” (38). By her merger with Hans Castorp, or rather with Mann’s tenderness toward him, Susan fleshed out the inner recess into which she followed the rapport between Mann and Merrill. But there was one disturbing thought as she contemplated the extent of her identification with Castorp, namely, that she could be a Goody Two-Shoes, the appalling accusation her mother once hurled at her (42).

How does one learn to steal or cheat in adolescence or go out on a date and make out for that matter? Libidinally benign peer pressure. But what commences as initiation rite into a new milieu that recruits you and issues the group license can also end up, through the pressure cooker of internalization, the main sexual outlet. Stealing is already the extra step inside. It is a clandestine operation of appropriation of items, which must be treated as already and always there. I don’t know how they got into my purse. Hence the psychoanalytic view that one steals or steals back only what belongs to one: the true mother, not the faux one currently getting in the way of her daughter. In *Playing and Reality*, D.W. Winnicott interprets stealing in a grid of internalizations, elements he names by gender. In a final note appended at the end of his case presentation of the male patient who was containing a girl (which we discussed in the first volume alongside the case of Oscar Wilde), Winnicott asks what in stealing, which the male element tends to carry forward, corresponds to the female element in boys and girls: “The answer can be that in

respect of this element the individual usurps the mother's position and her seat or garments, in this way deriving desirability and seductiveness stolen from the mother."<sup>46</sup>

### Sloburbia

The father/daughter relationship celebrated on the stage of the bourgeois *Trauerspiel*, not only during the Enlightenment but in all that era's introjects and rocket ships, is the other mainstay of the Oedipus complex. Without it there is no father function. In its postwar modern iteration this relationship of authorship and invention works through the heir pocket of homosexuality, which more and more was hiding out in the open. In "Valley Girl," Frank Zappa's biggest single hit, his fourteen-year-old daughter Moon Unit, his collaborator on the song, talks us through a school scene in which the beringed male teacher ogles all the boys in class. It's a new high point in the lingo, because the midlifer's breach of the teen setting of recruitment gags her with a spoon. But the term that rides the waves breaking between coasts and generations is "bitchen" – the defiant condensation of life's a bitch and life's a beach. The Hollywood counterpart to Manhattan's dismissal of the bridge and tunnel crowd (coming into the city for the weekend) is the beach and valley crowd. And yet the innovation – the lingo – of California's Teen Age folds out from under this arc and projection like its datemark.

In *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, every gesture of transgression fits inside the protagonist's ambivalent relationship to psychoanalysis, including the transgression to which the book owed its publication, at least according to the story told together with the publicity photos when the book was released. Fredrick Kohner had written down the teen discourse of his sixteen-year-old daughter largely by listening in on her phone conversations. Wanting reassurance about his daughter's involvement with those beach bums, the fictional father asks son-in-law Larry, a psychoanalyst, to probe Gidget for the truth. She gets to listen in on the extension phone when Larry reports back the outcome of their meeting. What she couldn't possibly have recognized

<sup>46</sup> Winnicott, *Playing and Reality*, 85.

or imagined is what Frederick Kohner alone could have mixed up out of his memories of psychoanalysis in Germany. The Californian analyst “sold” his father-in-law “a double size of Freud and Adler, well mixed.”<sup>47</sup>

For the fictional world of the Gidget novels, Kohner remade himself as Professor Hofer, who teaches German literature at the University of Southern California.<sup>48</sup> Kohner wasn’t without academic credentials, having studied literature in Vienna and Paris, concluding his graduate education with a thesis titled *Film ist Dichtung* (*Film Is Poetry*). The Hofer family into which the psychoanalyst married is educated, cultured, and travels in an orbit that skips the East Coast. Waiting for her flight to Hawaii, Gidget makes a new acquaintance, a girl from the big apple, who just can’t believe she doesn’t know what “the Village” is. But the Californian rallies (in earshot of Gertrude Stein on Ezra Pound). Swapping their addresses at the destination, the New Yorker says she’ll be staying at The Hawaiian Village: “Brother. She was a real expert on villages.”<sup>49</sup>

After he left Berlin in 1936, Friedrich Kohner became Frederick Kohner and continued working as screenwriter in Hollywood, joining his older brother who had since his 1920 career move established himself as a prominent Hollywood agent. *Gidget*

47 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget* (New York: Berkley, 2001), 77. Subsequent page references are given in the text. That one of her boyfriends at college was a Jungian – in the sequel *Cher Papa* – completes the German triangle of eclectic psychotherapy central to the Göring Institute in Nazi Berlin. While there are residual traces of the Kohner family system in the *Gidget* novels, there seemed no one there backing Larry the analyst (until now). There was, however, a psychoanalyst in the extended family. Gottfried R. Bloch, the brother of Hannah Kohner, Walter Kohner’s wife, was the author of *Unfree Associations: A Psychoanalyst Recollects the Holocaust* (Los Angeles: Red Hen Press, 1999). Pancho Kohner pointed this out in an email dated August 22, 2019. I was also in email contact with “Gidget.”

48 Sometimes he teaches modern literature, at one point he refers to his Old High German field, at another station stop he appears to be teaching at UCLA.

49 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian* (New York: Bantam, 1961), 16.

was Frederick Kohner's big success. He sold it as book and as a film within one week. His writing scheduling adapted itself to the alternating momentum of *Gidget* versions between media. The same year that the movie adaptation was released, Kohner published the first sequel, *Cher Papa*. He also wrote novelizations of the two subsequent films, which didn't adapt his novels. The second novelization, *Gidget Goes to Rome*, appeared the same year as another of his own efforts, *The Affairs of Gidget*. The next in line, *Gidget in Love*, appeared in sync with the first year of the TV show.<sup>50</sup>

That Frederick Kohner remade his daughter as the next generation of émigré culture in Southern California was displaced to the background by her status as dream teen. To express that she could just drop dead in *Gidget Goes Parisienne*, the Californian teenager asks to be buried alongside her great-great-great uncle Heinrich Heine. That's about as close as we get to her Jewish background.<sup>51</sup> In *Gidget Goes Hawaiian* we learn that the ten-years-older sister Ann was born in Berlin.<sup>52</sup> In the finale, *Gidget Goes New York*, our heroine steps out of the paperbacks into life's hardcovers, her father notes with approval, after she meets UN Ambassador Arthur Goldberg: "he looks a bit like my old man. Very *sympático*."<sup>53</sup> Shortly after she arrives in New York, this is her first time outside the California/Europe orbit, Gidget stands across from Jewish-American ethnicity in the person of the waiter, who "talked in a flavorful Jewish brogue" and "permitted himself one of those double-something looks that would have done credit to Groucho Marx" (42).

50 He wrote other non-Gidget novels, too, but whatever was fulfilled through the fictionalization of his relationship to his daughter it wasn't his wish to be an author.

51 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget Goes Parisienne* (New York: Dell, 1966), 14.

52 Kohner, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, 1. A match with Kathy Kohner's older sister Ruth.

53 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget Goes New York* (New York: Dell, 1968), 29. Subsequent page references are given in the text. The father's blessing of his daughter's decision in the tidy packaging of authorship is on page 35. Gidget uses the same analogy on her own toward the end of *Gidget Goes Parisienne*, 149.

Any details of the Kohner family history get lost in the eight Gidget novels, where surfing, skiing, or being a So-Cal teenager, however, come to share a lexicon with an eclectic interest in high culture. The elective affinity between the academic father and his precocious daughter on the basis of cultural reference first takes off in the novelizations. In the first novel, Gidget is at a loss when Cass (a.k.a. Cassius or the Great Kahoonaa) calls her Undine (27). Oddly she's also never heard of a faggot or a flit, terms the surfers use as warning labels to protect the impenetrable homoerotics of their lifestyle. The Great Kahoonaa is the slightly older leader of the surfer pack, a primal father, to be sure, but without the backend deal.

Susan Sontag was grateful to her stepfather for her distinguished signature name *sans* the diversion of obvious ethnicity. Kohner turned his daughter Kathy into Franzi Hofer, aka Gidget, who isn't obviously Jewish while showing all the trappings of belonging to a secular assimilated So-Cal Jewish family. Franzi's parents like Kathy's were originally Austrian, and when her father adopts the lingo in their repartee she finds the German-accented result deplorable, which could be another overlap between fact and fiction. In time, Gidget's patois starts bouncing around the *Gestell* of the academic father's learning and culture, probably an invention and an upgrade.

In the first novelization of the first sequel to *Gidget*, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, the So-Cal teen dabbles in the lexicon of high culture, as when she realizes she can't find solace in her reveries:

I knew then there was no use pretending or trying to cajole my mind into silence or contemplating the stars which might have been okay for Immanuel Kant or Albert Einstein – but not for me.<sup>54</sup>

Or again, finding analogy for the sounds her car makes: “The old Nash started rattling and coughing and gasping like Mimi in the last act of *La Bohème*.”<sup>55</sup> When our heroine watches senior citizens wobble toward the surf and then come alive in the ocean

54 Kohner, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, 103.

55 *Ibid.*, 93.



she's reminded of the painting of the fountain of youth that hangs in Berlin.<sup>56</sup>

In the second novelization of the second sequel on screen, *Gidget Goes to Rome*, the heroine counters her insomnia by counting cultural references and looking forward to living them: "In a few hours, you're going to walk the same cobblestones that old Julie walked and Marcus Aurelius and Michelangelo and Napoleon and Keats and Shelley and old Johann Wolfgang and Casanova and Vitorrio de Sica (about whom I'm specially kookie)."<sup>57</sup> Or again, thinking with the lilt of literary reference: "Both Marcello and the jeweler exchanged looks that bespoke a complete short story by de Maupassant."<sup>58</sup>

While references to WWII are few and far between, and often steeped in adolescent ahistoricism,<sup>59</sup> the Cold War setting that both Kathy Kohner and Franzie Hofer visited in Berlin holds together history in the making. As Kathy Kohner Zuckerman tells it in an interview in the magazine *Jewish Woman*,<sup>60</sup> she turned to the quest of surfing upon her return from the family's two-year sojourn in West Berlin, where her father had found employment with a local film company (in the novels Professor Hofer had been on sabbatical leave). Europe or her experiences there had changed or displaced her and she couldn't find the point of reentry with her peers. That's why when Gidget again meets close-up one of the figures on the beach in Hawaii who had reminded her of the painting in Berlin, she recognizes in the hale eighty-three-year-old a Berlin analogy stripped of high-cultural reference.

56 Ibid., 34–35.

57 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget Goes to Rome* (New York: Bantam, 1963), 23. The adventure begins with the father tutoring Gidget to be culturally prepared for her Rome experience. However she not only takes to the prep work, she outflies it.

58 Ibid., 72.

59 I give an account of the German history inscribed within the *Gidget* novels in *Germany: A Science Fiction* (Fort Wayne: Anti-Oedipus Press, 2014), 122–25.

60 "Gidget," *Jewish Woman*, 2002, <https://web.archive.org/web/20020711083557/http://www.jwomag.org/articles/03summer/p38.asp>

Her body above the waistline looked rather depleted while everything below still had the vigor and freshness of youth. It was like Berlin, Germany. The Eastern Zone hoary and decrepit, the Western still full of juice and vinegar.<sup>61</sup>

Since early childhood when her mother tried to stretch her short daughter at least beyond the midget limit through a regimen of rigorous swimming, as Kathy Kohner Zuckerman continues in the conversation with *Jewish Woman*, she was athletic and aquatic. “By learning to surf, I could do something physical and prove something. It took practice and perseverance but, of course, it was fun – and there were all these good-looking guys.”<sup>62</sup>

In *Gidget: The Little Girl with Big Ideas*, our heroine identifies the significance of the setting of her surfing quest right before she shoots the curl: “This was the final testing ground that I had picked for myself” (148). In “Pilgrimage,” Sontag introduces us to her adolescent obstacle course of testing grounds in LA. Accompanied, she writes, by Peter and Merrill, she proceeded to the subsequent stations in her bildungsroman. “I [...] studied philosophy, and then, and then [...] I went on to my life, which did turn out to be, mostly, just what the child of fourteen had imagined with such certitude.”<sup>63</sup>

The realization of the fantasy carries forward unambivalence, the flip side of the shame hanging over “Pilgrimage.” In *The Affairs of Gidget*, the heroine takes time out from her relationship to psychoanalysis by marriage, which is not so different from Sontag’s own personalized sojourn in psychoanalytic theory, to get past ambivalence:

In trashy books and stories, you always read about the ‘confusion’ of emotions. Well, fans, let me tell you that there is no such thing as mixed emotions. It is quite impossible for a person to have more than *one* emotion at a time. And mine was of shame.<sup>64</sup>

61 Kohner, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, 46–47.

62 “Gidget,” *Jewish Woman*.

63 Sontag, “Pilgrimage,” 53–54.

64 Frederick Kohner, *The Affairs of Gidget* (New York: Bantam, 1963), 47.

To enter the testing ground of fantasy is to separate out in the mix and mess of wishes crossing the mind at the speed of thought one emotion at a time, and to make it each time a big one. Daydream fantasizing can mean to be in training for big ideas and big feelings.

### Going Steady; or, the Other Walking on Water

Adolescent psychology is girl psychology, but for boys, too. As documented in the *Gidget* novels, the teen milieu is neither intolerant nor tolerant of homosexuality. An applicant for a modeling job in Paris, the heroine of *Gidget Goes Parisienne* is asked by the designer, Pierre, to strip down to her underclothes. She hesitates, until she recognizes the significance of what Pierre is wearing: “my eyes fastened on something dangling on a silver string around his neck: a medal glued to a piece of leather. The sure sign of the fagel.”<sup>65</sup> While she goodnaturedly thinks of her hairdresser, after he builds her elevating bouffant in record time, as an “Italian flit,” and in paraphrasing the school director’s pitch for the suitability of progressive education to all kinds of students automatically slips in “the high I-Queer,”<sup>66</sup> when Gidget admits that a female friend she’s having trouble with attracts her, she refuses the identification: “I know I’m not queer or I am and don’t want to admit it.”<sup>67</sup>

Faggots and flits are available to those already in the band, which means they are off-limits to a dynamic of recruitment in which one can be straight or gay for a day. The teen deems sexual identity, especially the marginal kind, an unacceptable limit

65 Kohner, *Gidget Goes Parisienne*, 44.

66 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget in Love* (New York: Dell, 1965), 19, 30.

67 Kohner, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, 51. At the high point of their altercation, Gidget suggests that the New Yorker’s problem is that her parents didn’t practice birth control (62). Writing about Wonder Woman and her lesbian gang, Fredric Wertham adds to his infamous reading of Batman and Robin spice that’s not nice: “Their attitude about death and murder is a mixture of the calousness of crime comics with the coyness of sweet little girls.” *Seduction of the Innocent* (Laurel: Main Road Books, 2004), 193.

and limitation on the pleasure to be had through the trials of free membership. If a gay teenager is a contradiction in terms, then the contradiction runs deep inside psychoanalysis. Based on compatibility with group ties, homosexuality is noted most likely to succeed in groups.<sup>68</sup> The strong ego of the pervert makes him an outsider, who can fit in, however, by manipulating the teen milieu of likeability.<sup>69</sup> However individualist or different the leading idea in adolescence may be, when it comes to the all-important group bond of likeability, what is important is that one should remain uncomplicated and open to enlistment.

The teenager works hard to align going steady with her membership in a milieu of recruitment. Since the first novel, *Moondoggie* or Jeff Griffin is Gidget's true love. When distracted by snorkelling in the first novel, Franzie strayed too far out where the waves broke and was out to sea. *Moondoggie* hauled her onto his surfboard and brought her to safety and into the surfing group. He gives her the name Gidget, a mix of girl and midget, a free gift that comes with in-group membership. Owing to what she repeatedly calls her ambivalence, however, and because Jeff's away in the military or she's away at college, Gidget finds herself falling for the others she has not yet forsaken. But it all remains a near miss never going all the way to betrayal.

It turns out that bouts of falling or being in love aren't the same as loving Jeff. This beam or board that she holds onto was the curb appeal of the series. Frederick Kohner was running the risk of overinvolvement in the father/daughter relationship. That's why at the end of the first novel his daughter's surfing triumph throws a shadow of doubt on the reality both of her true love and her first near miss affair: the former was just a dream and the latter reflected curiosity alone. Because of the gap between his family setting and her teen milieu of dating, the father/daughter

68 Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," 141.

69 Sigmund Freud, "Fetishism," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XXI (1927-1931): The Future of an Illusion, Civilization and Its Discontents and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1961), 152.

relationship sidled up to center stage through mergers in lingo and sensibility, and even let slip a reversal in the narration.

The sequel, *Cher Papa*, introduces Professor Hofer as protagonist and first person narrator thinking about and conversing with Gidget. In the novel that crossed the line, he performs the wish for his elective affinity with his fantasy daughter: “Did I establish a mutual admiration society of which we two were the only members? I did.”<sup>70</sup> She’s fallen again for the near miss from the first book, now a ski bum at the resort where she’s working for a term off from college. More than understanding his daughter the narrator father contemplates the “long amorphous photo gallery of other ‘dreamboats’” (10) that had knocked true love Jeff aka Moondoggie out of the running. Who’s falling for the near miss when we read first person that “he was Diogenes, Lord Byron, and Heathcliff all rolled into one” (18)?

To keep it parallel and not perform the body switch of incest, Professor Hofer enjoys the company of the near miss’s ex, who arrives at the resort odd woman out. “A hundred sensuous delights started pervading me, seducing my mind, transporting me back to the days of my youth” (27). Through the midlife elation their roles reverse and Gidget is parentified. The ex is an ex-gun moll, now the merry widow of a dead gangster’s ill-gotten fortune. To ensure a level playing field, Gidget does something really unimaginable, she reports the woman’s cash carrying extravagance to the FBI (83–84). The nasty teen, however, redeems herself through a rescue operation that stops the reunion of near miss and ex, but also leaves her alone with Papa.

Edmund Bergler notes that an author’s second work following a success the first time around is the testing ground for the array of defences against the wish to be refused.<sup>71</sup> Dropping Jeff from the equation or telling his father/daughter story outside his bit part in her first-person narration just didn’t work. He was carrying a girl – not his daughter – who demanded a full-corpus shot at fame fictionalization. The two films scripted by other

70 Frederick Kohner, *Cher Papa* (New York: Bantam, 1960), 5.

Subsequent page references are given in the text.

71 Edmund Bergler, “The Second Book and the Second Play,” *The Psychoanalytic Review* 42, no. 3 (1955): 293–97.

authors, each of which he studied closely and novelized, kicked “his” Gidget back inside the story lines. Aligned again Gidget works her way toward the end in the dead end, the inner reality she manically defends against, which is her father’s delegation, until she makes it to the end in the happy end. Let’s say it leaves the father fantasizing fantasy about contact with the reality of adolescent or group psychology on Germany’s other coast via his fictionalized dream-teen daughter.

Each of the follow-up novels wraps another near miss. There are three of them in *The Affairs of Gidget*, in part because her father urged her at its start not to limit her sentimental education. It’s not good to be pinned down by her absent boyfriend while attending college. Far worse would be elopement, he says: he has seen among his USC students too many early marriages end in early divorce. Throughout the series, however, Gidget’s more serious near misses are with older men. While warming up to oldtimer Marcello in *Gidget Goes to Rome*, Professor Hofer’s daughter notes: “I even began to judge my own father with different eyes.”<sup>72</sup>

In *The Affairs of Gidget*, Franzie Hofer’s English Lit professor makes moves that she is more than prepared for by transference. He uses their shared special interest in contemporary literature and philosophy to bring her in for testing at the recruitment center. “They say one falls in love. Well, fans, let’s say I had stumbled into love.”<sup>73</sup> The first stumbling block is the stack of books she must remove to sit down in his office: *Sex Histories of American College Girls* (19). His chief strategy is to teach Existentialism, which allows him to bring up his open marriage. “I was to find out soon why he insisted that I read *Justine*” (25). The harassment charge has not yet been formulated, but if his morals are found wanting he could lose his job. When he asks that she have enough *savoir faire* to keep his pursuit of her under cover, she is appalled. “The whole Existentialist façade collapsed before my eyes” (33).

72 Kohner, *Gidget Goes to Rome*, 73.

73 Kohner, *The Affairs of Gidget*, 18. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

Unlike California Susan, Gidget has no career-size wish to fulfill. She comes closest at the end of the first novel when standing alone on her board she's too "jazzed up" to care "whether I would break my neck or ever see Jeff again" (148). What sends her into the surf, the final testing ground, was, however, the "pinnacle" she reached upon recognizing that Jeff indubitably loved her back (147). To qualify as a coming of age novel, *Gidget* has to sign off with the heroine's attainment of an epiphany of her own. But who can separate the surfer from the surfing?

In the series of novels, Gidget wants true love and must work through the ambivalence that keeps her hovering between in-group recruitment and the couple. While she is a good mimic of her father's knowledge, Gidget often seems really only to know the names and the titles and some of the plot and a few lines from many sources. At least that's the story in *Gidget in Love*. To show up Jeff's doubts about her seriousness of purpose as a college student, Gidget, still a junior, gets a job teaching literature at a So-Cal progressive high school. She convinces the director, a petite heavily accented woman, who like her father comes from the old country. Gidget goes down her list of names and titles and repeats something she remembers reading: teaching is love.<sup>74</sup> Ja! Ja! They are like two California antibodies in a pod.<sup>75</sup>

The ambivalence that Gidget likes to cite hides out in wish fantasy. When she's making up with Jeff at the end of *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, she gives the happy-end reckoning: "Everything up to now that had ever happened to me had a dash of make-believe, a sprinkling of wishful thinking."<sup>76</sup> With Jeff she over and again finds a reality "that didn't need any fixing up from me."<sup>77</sup>

In *The Affairs of Gidget* her courtship of the local dentist, about the age of her first near miss, the Great Kahoona, sets off

74 Kohner, *Gidget in Love*, 22.

75 The setting in which Gidget uses her paternal inheritance spread thin to challenge Jeff "had a peculiar haunting charm, à la Brothers Grimm. The only outward sign that this edifice harbored a school and not Boris Karloff was a plaque with the legend: 'Learn to live, and live to learn'" (19).

76 Kohner, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, 115.

77 Ibid.

a spiritualization that seems to make room for friendship without group-membership benefits. This is a variation on the near miss that recurs in the series, always auguring a peaceful inner separation from Moondoggie and ending as an embarrassment of riches (with nowhere to go, send, or spend).

The affair with the dentist offers a full cardiogram of the spiritualization of the near miss, the ultimate paternal fantasy. While waking up from the anesthesia following extraction of her wisdom tooth she thinks she sees Jeff in the fog and kisses the dentist: "it was like Cloudsville. Like *Last Year at Marienbad*."<sup>78</sup> Cloudsville means spiritual, because it's what she feels even though she knows their lips touch. The dentist reflects, however, that the kiss can be explained away but how did she know to call him by his name, Jeff? Kismet.

During the postop visit while he checks her wound "the hi-fi was playing the 'Liebestod' from *Tristan and Isolde*" (91). She already administered the love potion by her drug-addled mistake. Geoffrey invites her into his private quarters to listen to Schubert's *Unfinished* on tape. Unfinished? No kidding.

"You know I had certain reservations about asking you in here."

"Did you?"

"Yes. You see, I have a pretty clean record around college."

"I don't understand."

"Well – my patients are mostly recruited from the student body. Or should I rather leave out the 'body' part?"

He smiled. I got the drift in a flash. (93)

He didn't leave out the recruitment part. What she takes from the "wordless communion" (96) that follows while they listen to the tape is that their relationship is "spiritual," a welcome change: "Usually I'm torn between the old flesh and the spirit" (99). She becomes his confidante: "Cloudsville, fans" (100). "I'm constantly renewing my emotional virginity" (99). She's thankful for the spiritualization and accepts Geoffrey's invitation to

78 Kohner, *The Affairs of Gidget*, 84. Subsequent page references are given in the text.



share Thanksgiving dinner with him and his daughter Muffie, visiting from his divorce.

The death potion is, after all, served. Muffie innocently addresses the fantasy of making wishes with a bird's bone:

"I wonder if birds can make a wish – with their wishing bone."

"It's possible," said Geoffrey.

"No, it isn't," Muffie said, seriously. "Because when they find it, the birds are already dead." (103)

Cute can kill. At least Gidget concludes that if she did take the substitute seat, next to the adorable daughter she'd be as good as nothing, just like the dead bird (*ibid.*).

She sends all the erotic yearnings that her spiritual friendship metabolized or denied "straight into the deep freeze" (104). The wishbone is no longer connected to the boner. She can now turn down Geoffrey's subsequent proposal to start dating officially and seriously and she does so in the name of her surfing prize, Jeff a.k.a. Moondoggie. Remembering lines by Walt Whitman she whispers goodbye to her fancy (109).

In *Gidget Goes New York*, just when our heroine is convinced that she really is through with the ghost of Jeff a word denied casts her back. It belongs to Jeff's sentence and sentencing that made her a peacenik working at the UN. Won't he be in Greenland forever far away from the Vietnam War?

"No such thing as forever," Jeff said. "They're sending them out every day."

Again he gazed in my direction and my heart made some sort of erratic movement. I guess it was the word "forever." It is fraught with mystical meaning.<sup>79</sup>

There is a Chinese saying that comes up repeatedly throughout the Gidget series, because it made her Jeff's lifelong responsibility when he saved her life. It comes up again in *Gidget Goes New York*: "Screwy, but that's the mysterious Orient for you" (16). In

79 Kohner, *Gidget Goes New York*, 103. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

this final installment, we enter the discourse of the mystery via Gidget's best friend at the United Nations, Minnie Chan, whose father is in the business of manufacturing fortune cookies in Reading, no kidding, Pennsylvania. Minnie has contributed a few proverbial prophecies and indeed speaks in fortune-cookie phraseology. Where do all those fortune sayings come from, Gidget wants to know. They can't all be quotations from the sages of the ages. "People send them in,' Minnie said. 'They love to have them printed. Makes them all writers'" (65).

At each bad turn in the renewal of contact with Jeff, Minnie has a phrase of fortune that keeps Gidget on course. Minnie takes over from Professor Hofer who sent his daughter off to the UN with a blessing fit for a cookie: "Life offers usually only one great experience, and the secret of life is to repeat that experience as often as possible" (36). When she came to his office for a debriefing following her first involvement with peaceniks on campus, he helped her recognize that her "subconscious" wanted something else and that she was drawn to the cause of peace because she wanted to protect Jeff (25).

In the first novel she dreams at night that she and Moondoggie are in love (56). There is no conscious residue from the day that motivates the dream, no daydreamy thought or wish that's being fulfilled. Gidget realizes the "spirit" of her dream of living and loving over and against mere fantasy fulfillment, in other words, the "old flesh" of the father's/author's fantasy life.

Frederick Kohner cultivated his wish for fame and success by fictionalizing his relationship to his daughter's idiom and libido. He couldn't use his own ticket to the Teen Age washing up onto the beach from Germany, not after the success of the ventriloquist act. The fictional Californian daughter knows that when her mother "goes to the opera in the intermission she reads such stimulating stuff as the *Sorrows of Werther* – and I kid you not."<sup>80</sup> That she mentions next to this souvenir of her mother that it's more her father's speed to look through a copy of *Playboy* attests to the ongoing reversals, backflows, and adjustments that keep the hybrid of the fictionalized father/daughter relationship up and running.

80 Kohner, *Gidget Goes Hawaiian*, 25.

There is a glancing thought at the start of *Gidget in Love* that Frederick Kohner kept living up through the Gidget figment: “Most kids I knew would simply die to have something mystical like Moondoggie happen to them.”<sup>81</sup> The end in sight of the father/daughter writing fantasy is Gidget’s forever. “He was tanned all over and had exciting grace in his legs and limbs.”<sup>82</sup> Gidget’s surfer bond/bod is what Sontag carried inside. That he was her inner gay’s object of delectation had consequences for her career as a writer of fiction. But it allowed her to score realization of her wish to be a successful author of big ideas in the medium of midlife criticism and teen journal-ism. Shoot it Susan!

### My Camp

According to the 1910 psychoanalytic consensus, as summarized by Freud in his essay on Leonardo da Vinci, the homosexual finds a way out of the incestuous bond with his mother not via repression or substitution but by identification. He loves his objects as his mother loved him. He was young then; his objects are as young now. The gay relationship to youth is an inside job. In her diaries, Sontag records the following lines of her dinner partner: “The past is completely unreal to me. I live only in the present + the future. Is that why I look young?” Sontag’s caption to the swish fantasy: “Dorian Gay.”<sup>83</sup> Inside his attachment to youth, Oscar Wilde was forever, in relation to the youths he worshipped, the younger, less developed boy with both feet still in latency. What carried his identificatory desire forward was his recruitment, in reality or fantasy, by an older boy.

Falling victim to homosexuality is part of the act. In a 1962 diary entry, Sontag notes her partner’s “fantasy of conducting, or more often, submitting to a medical examination – where the point is not to show sexual excitement as long as you can” (304). It is a fantasy in explicit contrast to the heavy breathing of

81 Kohner, *Gidget in Love*, 11.

82 *Ibid.*, 10.

83 Susan Sontag, *As Consciousness Is Harnessed to Flesh: Diaries 1964–1980*, ed. David Rieff (London: Hamish Hamilton, 2012), 428. Subsequent references are given in the text.

the “American idea of sex,” as she calls it, in other words heterosexuality. A few months later she resists “love as incorporation, being incorporated” (307). But then, five days later, the medical exam fantasy is on her list of “sex fantasies of losing autonomy” (309). It’s hard to know whose fantasy it is. But for sure it is an afterimage of the counsel she received from the two slightly older teen boys with whom she visited Thomas Mann. In a 1949 entry, Susan writes that she heard it from F that he and E knew already the year before that she was probably a lesbian. It’s important that E, the object of merger, is absent but cited and summoned in what follows. Because next F tells her what to do before it’s too late.

“Go out with a couple of men at the same time. Park and let them feel you + have their little pleasures. You won’t like it at all at first, but force yourself to do it [...] it’s your only chance” (44).

The in-group groping for a response against the reign of sexual identity imparts to Susan a hands-on object lesson. This ambiguously straight milieu of recruitment is reborn with Susan as the inner world that would carry forward unto successful realization her wish fantasy of being an author of big ideas.

By the slight alterations that Sontag adds to her souvenir, we are also inside the fantasy flashing on an identification-driven amalgam. In his diaries, Mann notes that three Chicago students stopped by to interview him about *The Magic Mountain*. It was an interview with young intellectuals, not a conversation with high school kids. No libidinal impression was left behind for all their college professionalism. He may also not have been available for E’s surfer charm because during this holiday period he was so distracted by son Golo’s boyfriend “Ed.” Several months later, he would be all over the pages of his diaries about the cute waiters in Switzerland. Some have the legs of Hermes, another he immediately falls in love with.

As a kind of prelude to her first well-received novel, *The Volcano Lover*, Sontag renders in 1987 by metonymy and absence an unshared fantasy of teen heartthrob in the parlor of the eternal/internal adolescent. The Mann diaries were already out.

Sontag played it straight with the other items of her memoir. The tender misunderstanding that attends the distance between Hans Castorp and North Hollywood High School graduates Farley and Ladd picks up heat between the lines. Both were icons of ambiguously straight attractions. While Ladd as Shane is as gender nonspecific as Lassie, beloved by all the children going into adolescence, Farley's role in *Rope* is that of the straight enlisted by the more explicit or forthright friend.

The foundation of an inner world must reach into early childhood. We saw that like Norman Bates she fantasied stealing and wearing the mother's raiment, her very appeal. Then there was her missing father. While her mother didn't tell her that it had happened until he was long gone, both parents were often gone to China, to the exotic place that would remain for Sontag the first address of fantasy. That the cause of his death was withheld so long from her, in part because tuberculosis held shameful associations, is identified (aptly I think) by Sontag's German biographer Daniel Schreiber as the traumatic point of return for her study of the rhetoric of illness and the crux of her dedication to *The Magic Mountain*, the model for *The Volcano Lover*.<sup>84</sup> Sontag's childhood inability to mourn her father's disappearance amounts to the derealization, nonrealization of his death.

In *The Volcano Lover*, the following passage refers to lost objects in the protagonist's collection, but the inability to mourn is writ large upon a whole life:

To begin to mourn, one must get past the feeling that this is not happening or has not happened. It helps to be present at the disaster. [...] Whatever does not happen before our eyes must be taken on trust. [...] The Cavaliere mourned for his treasures. But a mourning that begins so posthumously, and under such conditions of doubt and disbelief, can never be fully experienced.<sup>85</sup>

84 Daniel Schreiber, *Susan Sontag. Geist und Glamour* (Berlin: Aufbau Verlag, 2010), 15–17.

85 Susan Sontag, *The Volcano Lover* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1992), 254–55. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

Upon this melancholic foundation that Mann told to the mountain rests an assemblage of charming confidence teens, like Felix Krull, the protagonist who followed more directly Mann's elaboration of the infernal contractual deadlines internal to an artist's success. The good fortune of the impostor inherited the fateful aspirations of Faust.

When she first reads Kafka, Sontag confides to her diary in a binding flash of insight, that her former gold standards, Mann and André Gide, were now relegated to the inflation of mere reputation. But then she came down off the high (not in her critical standards but in her literary orientation). The lessening she learned, her badge of shame, gets sublated in fictionalized or internalized retrospective and, in her most successful novel, prospectively revalorized as collection (another name for an oeuvre driven by cultural journalism).

In *The Volcano Lover*, Sontag identifies her protagonist's dedication to collection as allegory of her own developing realization, which allowed California Susan to raise the consumerism of culture to the power of composition while drawing her own early antisocial attachment to books (and her murderous raging against her mother) through the loop of melancholia staggered and redeveloped unto art.

However, if he is to obtain at auction what he must have and without feeling ripped off, the collector must "perform a whole theatre of being a little interested, but not immoderately; intrigued, yes, even tempted; but not seduced, bewitched. [...] So the collector is a dissembler, someone whose joys are never unalloyed with anxiety. Because there is always more" (71–72). That he must get the next piece of his puzzling out of culture at any price reveals that the collector–impostor nevertheless remains in touch with a more basic impulse: "Every collector is potentially (if not actually) a thief" (73).

Early on in her diaries, young Sontag anticipated an academic career as the best security for the life of a serious writer. But then a somewhat older Sontag scrawled across the entry: "Jesus!" This teen impatience with academia is, in the US setting, a remarkable refusal for an intellectual, a denial, in fact, since there is no intellectual life in the United States off campus. This was brought home by the so-called structuralist controversy, which took place

at the Johns Hopkins University in 1966. Twentieth-century European thought was henceforward no longer an introductory offer, nor the trauma of a year abroad. The earlier niche market of representing European developments to a US readership, which Sontag shared with Frederick Kohner and Paul de Man, was soon beside the point. While the grafts of Foucault and Lacan, which had been applied beforehand, also benefitted, “deconstruction in America” was in the ascendant. At one point, Derrida declared Southern California the seat of deconstruction. What happened in America didn’t stay there. Only four years after the 1966 convening of poststructuralism, Roland Barthes’s reinvention of his method in *S/Z* reflected nothing closer to home than deconstruction in America. In her book-length studies, Sontag did not adjust to the new proximity of European thought and thus her major works remained outside the ken of deconstruction. But off and on campus Sontag continued to score as cultural journalist.

Before the retrospective of shame and only a few years after the charge that SF movies testified to an emotional failure, Susan Sontag discovered in “Camp” an alternative affective response to the sliding scale of high and low culture in a post-apocalyptic world. Her 1979 article on Hans-Jürgen Syberberg’s *My Hitler* provided the appropriate emotional response she had earlier found wanting in SF movies, but it was grief in the mode of distancing, internalization, and ironization, which in the meantime she had discovered for or inside herself in Camp. In writing “Notes on ‘Camp’,” she summoned her inner gay, the one once buoyed up by Thomas Mann’s tenderness toward Castorp urging merger with Merrill. The ready position that she introduces at the start of “Notes on ‘Camp’” to justify and protect her ability to read the sensibility of an in-group, what she identifies as a taste in emotion, goes to the position beyond ambivalence, but not for the shame of it: “I am strongly drawn to Camp, and almost as strongly offended by it. That is why I want to talk about it, and why I can.”<sup>86</sup>

When Sontag reveals as essential camp the “ambition on the part of one man to do what it takes a generation, a whole culture

86 Susan Sontag, “Notes on ‘Camp’,” in *Against Interpretation*, 275–76.

to accomplish,”<sup>87</sup> she identifies the hard shell of her inner correspondent, the fantasy of teen prematurity, of genius-insight independent of reservation or confirmation over time. In other words, there is success in inevitable failure, a tender feeling, as she notes toward the end, which turns up the contrast to the more adult condition of being wrecked by success, together with its mass psychology of fateful identification with lost causes. Camp gets across not only as charming but also as “winning.”

That Sontag wonders out loud in her 1996 afterword to a new edition of *Against Interpretation* that no one had as yet written on the camp phenomenon when she seized the chance thirty years before defers to the inner recruiter who remade adolescent journal writing into lucky art journalism. I once heard one of Sontag’s gay art journalist peers in New York express envy that he hadn’t written the Riefenstahl piece first. By the identification that brings about a reversal in time, the inner-outer gay transmutes scooping out the mother’s creativity into omnipotent scooping and scoring of deadlines.

Sontag’s first novel, *The Benefactor*, opens a season of internal metabolization of gay enrollment through the protagonist Hippolyte’s relationship to the writing of the novel itself. It all turns on his relationship to dreaming, which he commences revisiting and extending into daytime programming through his exchanges with a bona fide author, Jean-Jacques, who is also commercial gay trade. At one point Jean-Jacques even enlists Hippolyte for the one-time one-night stand. To the extent that his dreams are continuously summoned within waking fantasy, they drive the novel’s composition like the realization of daydream fantasies. Realization rather than fulfilment is the identificatory rapport with fantasy. As Hippolyte reflects: “The bridge which I built between my dream and my daytime occupations was my first taste of an inner life.”<sup>88</sup>

In a 1972 diary entry, Sontag introjects parenthetically the history of her own initiatory seductions: “By the age of 16 on, women found me, [...] imposed themselves on me emotionally

87 *Ibid.*, 284.

88 Susan Sontag, *The Benefactor* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Company, 1963), 4.



+ sexually. [...] How grateful I am to women – who gave me a body, who made it even possible for me to sleep with men.”<sup>89</sup> And even made it possible for her, at least according to the legends of her early liaisons in New York, to sleep with gay men. Over time, same-sex seduction into a body, her integration of psyche and soma, let the gay man out and about.

In 1963 diary entries, Sontag reflects on her writing at the time of the appearance of her first novel: “My writing is always about dissociation” (319). Her novel, in turn, is a meditation on “dissociative faits accomplis, their hazards + rewards” (ibid.). And again: “there are no people in what I’ve written. Only ghosts” (320). Sontag generated her second novel, *Death Kit*, out of this ghost of adolescence that malingers on in her suicidal midlife protagonist, Diddy:

Diddy, not really alive, had a life. Hardly the same. Some people are their lives. Others, like Diddy, inhabit their lives. [...] Eventually for such a person, everything is bound to run down. The walls sag. Empty spaces bulge between objects. The surfaces of objects sweat, thin out, buckle.<sup>90</sup>

Every time the word “now” appears in the novel, it appears in parentheses, at once a datemark, a trigger, and a site of circumvention.

Only by bedding her with “Alice in Wonderland” was Sontag able to write about Alice James, a true object of identification, odd woman out in a household of male genius, a psychosomatic invalid who ended a cancer patient, an innate talent whose work remained her diaries. At the mad tea party held for the double Alice, the advice of women writers established in history jump starts Alice, bed-ridden by dissociation, on a tour of daydream fantasizing whereby she conjures up a sojourn in Rome.

Sontag confides in the Note appended to *Alice in Bed* that ten years earlier she dreamed up the play from start to finish. Again,

89 Sontag, *As Consciousness Is Harnessed to Flesh*, 370–71. Subsequent references are given in the text.

90 Susan Sontag, *Death Kit* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1967), 2.

she prefers to address the extension of dreaming into waking rumination and reflection rather than daydream fantasy – the “triumphs of the imagination” rather than wish fulfillment.<sup>91</sup> However, when she concludes the Note with the assurance that “the victories of the imagination are not enough” (117), we are inside the frame of reference of waking fantasy. That the relation to a submerged reality, what Sontag refers to as “a real encounter with a representative of the world” (116), nevertheless leaves its mark is a basic feature of the genre of daydream fantasy. This mark of the present is still part of the fantasy, like the idealized past in Freud’s formula. Perhaps it is the ultimate fantasy, as Freud observes of the moment in Jensen’s *Gradiva* when the protagonist’s sense of reality is suddenly restored. As in D.W. Winnicott’s treatment of the dissociated daydreamer in *Playing and Reality*, it is by extending fantasizing to what lies outside, dreaming and living as Winnicott puts it, that Alice could start over in formlessness. What she is free to catch up with, however, is the adolescence of recruitment. Alice fantasies, then, not seduction and fulfillment, but recruitment and realization, and thus pries loose for a captured moment from her dissociated state.

Protest rallies in Winnicott’s patient a dissociated self-reference in fantasizing and sets a limit to the span of Alice’s respite. In Ulrike Ottinger’s 1979 film *Bildnis einer Trinkerin – aller jamais retour* (*Ticket of No Return*) the dissociation of daydreaming seeks a breach by the layering of fantasizing in psychic reality or on screen.<sup>92</sup> Like the turning point in the case of Winnicott’s suicidal patient, however, “protest” guards the dissociated state. The drinker can’t cut away from her protest. In a fantasy series of job interviews and job placements, which begins with the drinker’s performance of the Hamlet monologue on stage, each episode ends in failure, notably her dismissal when she takes her

91 Susan Sontag, *Alice in Bed* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1993), 117. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

92 I wrote on this masterpiece in my study of the Ottinger oeuvre. See *Ulrike Ottinger: The Autobiography of Art Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008). I began this reading of the film as the manifest of a crashed flight of fantasy in summer seminars I taught at European Graduate School.

refusal to stop or hide her drinking to the next level of acting out. Three fate-like allegorical figures of a sociological overview shadow these scenes and run their commentary on the sidelines. They hail from the film that Ottinger didn't deliver, which ironically was her protest against the new norm that protest built. Protest doesn't show up only the drinker's scenes of self-help. It gives all her silent solo scenes the hook.

Ottinger's film opens with the heroine's resolution to live out fully her "wishful drinking" and tour the alcoholic pit stops of split-off West Berlin. She decides to make a heroic effort within her dissociated lockdown in fantasizing and go beyond the figment-future of fulfillment all the way to realization or reality. Upon her arrival at the airport, the internal demand for reality is transmitted out loud through the public-address system. In circumvention of inner reality, the flight of fantasy aims for outer reality. She goes to town from the airport on the bus advertising the travel agency Wahnfried, the Wagner express.

The film follows the heroine's commitment to finding a form for her drinking-thinking. The costumes the drinker wears are too architectural for us to ignore the innovation and invention going into their cutting out and assembly.<sup>93</sup> In certain scenes, notably those in which the dwarf impresario joins the lady, we stand at the border to the poetic night dream.

On her first cab ride at night in Berlin the lady drinker becomes the driver. The transposition is like early film illustrations of daydreaming, which are funny, but here it is a jolting loss of boundary and defense, like the mishaps by bystanders cluttering her path already at the airport. While her immersion in alcoholic self-destruction doesn't leave a smudge on her, she is nevertheless marked as the identified patient of every system she visits. Following the jolt of becoming someone she isn't, the taxi driver knocks over the bag lady's shopping cart – and the drinker-protagonist back into the passenger seat. From there she can see better the depressive position. But it's tolerable even now, fascinating on the human side, and will grow on her, until the two film heroine stereotypes are knocking about together in

93 Tabea Blumenschein, who on occasion acted for Ottinger, was an artist in mixed media, including clothing design.

a relationship that becomes more differentiated in its range of affect than manic overvaluation and devaluation.

After the relay of reality-test fantasies, the camera widens the spacing of its view of unidentified landscapes. It reflects for a spell the pull of the documentary perspective already on the horizon of this art film, a perspective that would ultimately subsume Ottinger's cinema. Ottinger's juxtaposition of untenable exoticisms or stereotypes, pulled largely from the film culture of Europe before the impact or fact of Nazi Germany (like the Countess and the fish wife represented by the drinker and the bag lady), skips traumatization.<sup>94</sup> Ottinger projected her first fantasy feature in 1977. *Madame X: Eine absolute Herrscherin* (*Madame X: An Absolute Ruler*) was a heroic adventure of piracy on Lake Constance and the China Sea unstuck in the grave of history. It was the idealized past gesturing toward the utopian-aesthetic future of fulfillment, but called back to local responsibilities by the trigger in the present. An unafraid tour critical of but not correct about history made in Germany, which we can follow in Ottinger's fantasizing films, cannot get past the protest culture of retraumatization. Entry upon uncharted landscapes in her documentary cinema could, however, proceed without trigger warning.

Winnicott's didactic and moral stance upholding the value of the night dream's symbolism and poetry over against the fleeting fixity of daydreaming and its ongoing risk of dissociation corresponds to the Thomas-Mannian side of Sontag's realizations, her fiction. His patient who guides the analyst down the path of a third term unto a fantasizing of fantasy represents the side Sontag took in her cultural journalism. However, the transferential "mutual-daydreaming" collaboration of both sides in Winnicott's case study meets denial. The very words *daydreaming* and *wish fantasizing* don't appear in Sontag's writing though they are intimated in the recourse made to prolonging night

94 Although she spent her early years in hiding with her Jewish mother in Constance, the closeness was dotting and devoted (the only third person at this time was her other mother or grandmother). Her projection booth in the setting of traumatic history is the cozy corner of this deepened and extended dyad.

dreaming into waking reality. Only in *Alice in Bed* is there an integrated presentation of the two bookends of Sontag's realization of her early wish to be a big ideas author.

In *Alice in Bed*, the disruptive appearance of a burglar in the fantasy of Alice getting up out of bed is the datemark of a present reality, the trigger of the fantasy pressing toward realization. The burglar tells Alice this isn't a dream and asks why she doesn't scream. "What I do is mostly not do things," says Alice (105). But: "Sometimes I have such odd thoughts" (101). The burglar's illegal entry, the encounter with bed-ridden Alice, and his theft with her blessing, comprise the play's climax, as Sontag underscores in the Note. The thief is recruitable by Alice to get a rise out of her dissociative daydreaming. She's not as old as he imagined, the thief tells Alice and acquiesces (92). In her Note Sontag avows: "I have been preparing to write *Alice in Bed* all my life" (117).

In 1949, Sontag used her diary to compile lists of teen code words for gay identification and experience. It concludes the inside view afforded by her 1987 novelization of an ongoing encounter, call it intrapsychic, between the gay European midlifer she would become and her starting position, the ambiguously straight teen surfer with whom she merged. The following exchange, in which, California Susan notes, "real" means "gay," throws a summary loop through recruitment unto realization:

"Are you for real?" "I'll do until the real thing comes along."<sup>95</sup>

### Chances with the Stars

Byrd Hoffman gave dance instruction to young Robert Wilson, which, by pulling his speech defect inside out through his body, provided successful therapy. In her name, Wilson carried forward his newfound access to non-linguistic reserves of language onto the stage of a new theater. While he commenced together with the "Byrd Hoffman School of Birds" first experiments in theater and performance, Wilson also worked as teacher and therapist. Chance or luck guided his early choices. He happened upon the plight of Raymond Andrews, who was being harassed by police

95 Sontag, *As Consciousness Is Harnessed to Flesh*, 42.

as recalcitrant juvenile not realizing, as Wilson recognized, that the boy was deaf. *Deafman Glance*, the silent opera immersed in the trauma time of a mute boy's recollection of his murdering mother, was the result – with Andrews as one of the performers on stage. When Wilson adopted his muse and charge, he resolutely added choice to chance. It was the affirmation he again provided in the case of another discovery, Christopher Knowles, whose autism served as found resource for the poetry of *Letter for Queen Victoria* and *Einstein on the Beach*.

Susan Sontag wrote *Alice in Bed* for Robert Wilson to stage at the Schaubühne in Berlin in 1993. She didn't want collaboration; she wanted regular collaboration. In 2000, she remembers to note the importance of Wilson "though he's increasingly distracting himself with projects like doing the décor for the Guggenheim's Armani show."<sup>96</sup> Sometimes Sontag was really clueless. While in the more distant past it was chance encounters that led Wilson to engage, for example, a Freud-lookalike off the street to perform in *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud*, in time it was the chance of contact with the famous that drew his productions onward. Lady Gaga proposed to Wilson that he be her mentor. When she made contact with Wilson, she was following in the footsteps of her art heroine, Marina Abramovic, who by then had joined those lonely at the top. In 2010, visitors to New York's MoMA swallowed the Abramovic formula: endurance-testing control over the body is the mind's Passion, which the artist imparts to her audience face-to-face. When in 2007 Marina Abramovic commissioned Wilson to stage her funeral, her "death," he agreed on the condition that her "life" also be party to the performance. That three years later, she even played the part of her idealized (and hated) mother belongs to Wilson's therapeutic intervention.

For his 2014 Paris exhibition, "Living Rooms," Wilson made a series of video portraits of Lady Gaga, which reenacted artworks in the Louvre's collection. In one gallery space, there were eleven video portraits based on the severed head in Andrea Solario's

96 Charles McNulty, "Sontag in Wonderland," *The Village Voice*, October 31, 2000, <https://www.villagevoice.com/2000/10/31/sontag-in-wonderland/>.

“John the Baptist on a Charger” (1507) and a single Ingres reenactment. Lady Gaga as “Mademoiselle Caroline Rivière” (1805) was not chopped or cropped in close-up, but the face was accorded its due. What is faced in Ingres’s portrait is the adolescent girl’s death the following year. In another gallery – in the midst, this time, of the old masterpieces regularly on display – was a video portrait of Lady Gaga reprising Jacques-Louis David’s painting “The Death of Marat” (1793). The role of Marat seated expiring in his bath was a performance her face carried off above the single breast slipping out into view.

In the beginning of her career, Lady Gaga masked her face, but then tended to displace the face-to-face through exhibition of her body, at once “perfect” and throwaway, just like a blank used for replication. Just add a face. According to Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of faciality (in *Mille Plateaux*), the “aspect” that ranges widely across bodies or landscapes is ultimately the face of Christ. But Wilson’s face-saving intervention underscores that before the deposit can be thus redeemed what we face-to-face is an object of identification dangling in the nothingness of finitude.

A living room is the stage on which we stand, sit, and stretch out, among other conjugations of “being.” Just as the word “standing” (for example) is historically related to “being” in Indo-European languages, so “mourning” in the same lexicon means to “to fall down” (in identification with the dead).

The fall also rises in accord with the repeated throws of chance that initiate in the moment the itinerary or understanding of change. Wilson threw one Lady Gaga portrait out of the loop of reenactment into the center of “Living Rooms.” Wilson reconstructed his residence at the Watermill Center in the Louvre as stage set for displaying a large sampling from his private collection. In the “bedroom,” there was an unidentified flying object, which turned out to be another Lady Gaga video portrait, one that did not refer to a work in the Louvre, however, nor did it belong to the Watermill collection.

What we saw was her body articulated through shibari, the Japanese art of rope-bondage. Is the occluded face not re-inscribed on this “foreign” body lifted up from itself – like the view of her abdomen and womb that Baubo framed when

she pulled her dress up over her head? The flashing of the face on the exposed female body, the punch line whereby Baubo delivered Demeter from the stuck place of her melancholia, can be seen, Freud allowed in “A Mythological Parallel to a Visual Obsession” (1916), as the humorous aside to the infamous prospect of Medusa, the face-to-face that turned some into their own gravestones, but also signaled heterosexual desire’s stiff competition. The bondage portrait dangled before us the prospect of a fall upward, which, like the throw of chance, like the body’s own tumescence in sexual arousal, reverses the pull of gravity (or grave).

The night of the vernissage, Wilson’s *Lecture on Nothing* opened the series of theatrical events at the Louvre, which framed and supplemented “Living Rooms.” John Cage’s 1949 “Lecture on Nothing” is a beacon that Wilson followed early on in his own theatrical reclamation of disconnection (for example, speechlessness) as another form of connection. For a 2012 tribute to Cage exhibited at the Akademie der Künste in Berlin (at the time the production of “Lecture on Nothing” was in the works), Wilson contributed a page he inscribed with a recollection. The composer let him know following a performance of *The Life and Times of Sigmund Freud* that they were pursuing divergent paths. But disappointment gives way to reparation as Wilson writes on with affirmation that Cage’s *Silence* was his greatest inspiration. In the course of his performance of “Lecture on Nothing,” Wilson focused on the irritability Cage admitted in passing: “If we are irritated, it is not a pleasure. Nothing is not a pleasure if one is irritated.” In Cage’s lecture, irritability was absolved by affirmation of “the pleasure of being slowly nowhere.” By turning up the volume on the irritation invoked and denied in the lecture, Wilson accorded ambivalence (“Yes and No”) to Cage’s outright dismissal of their affinity.

Surrounded by excerpts from the lecture handwritten on banners, Wilson took Cage’s express invitation (that bored audience members should go to sleep) to bed on stage. Otherwise the staging made room for daydream association, ranging from an audio excerpt of Cage reading his lecture to the photo-based video images by Tomek Jeziorski of Cage and Alexander Rodchenko. At one point the other live actor (Tilman Hecker) looked over



stage and audience through binoculars from on high, no doubt a reference to Cage's bird watching, but equally a seafaring image of finding the moment on the map. In an interview at the University of Iowa in 2008 Wilson noted: "My work has always dealt with a kind of space that allows one to daydream."<sup>97</sup>

In "Lecture on Nothing," Cage narrated his decision to compose music out of deregulated sound in terms of taking the call he followed on a heroic quest. "Noises, too, had been discriminated against; and being American, having been trained to be sentimental, I fought for noises. I liked being on the side of the underdog."<sup>98</sup> That Cage makes Kansas the place name on the map of identification with the excluded suggests that it is the fantasy trajectory of *The Wizard of Oz* and not that of the competition from the same year, *Gone with the Wind*, that beckons for a chance, a change.

Both the heroic quest into the inner world and the fairy tale of development from primary narcissism to genital sexuality provide captions of legibility to daydream fantasy. Jean-François Lyotard's reading of Hamlet's active unfulfillment of every Oedipal task is the allegory of Shakespeare's composition out of curtailed death wishes, in other words upon the crypts of his dead father and dead son.<sup>99</sup> Mourning defuses the death wishes that melancholia projects, inverts, and staggers. One can add slowly being nowhere to this list of ways of disrupting the consumerism of wish fulfillment to make room for a "wishing well" in daydreaming.

97 Since the 2014 events in Paris, Wilson staged *Faust I* and *II* at the Ensemble Theater in Berlin. In the legendary translation scene, Goethe allegorized the advent of a German literary language through the momentum of Faust's free translation of logos, moving on from the literal and historical options to arrive, fourth try, at the wished-for *Tat* (act or deed), which triggers the arrival of Mephistopheles. Wilson pulls out of the scene four Fausts (and three Margaretes), making it clear that "the wish" reaches further than "desire."

98 John Cage, "Lecture on Nothing," in *Silence* (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1973), 117.

99 Jean-François Lyotard, "Jewish Oedipus," trans. Susan Hanson, *Genre* 10 (1977): 395-411.

Wilson included in his staging of “Lecture on Nothing” a repro of a letter to Cage mis-sent to his own address. We could see that his assistant back then scrawled across the envelope: “Bob, I thought he was long dead.” If the letter always arrives at its destination, then the death wish always comes true. In contrast, the ancient apparatus of *I Ching*, which Cage commenced applying to his compositions at the time of “Lecture on Nothing,” organizes “nothing” as coming attraction between chance and choice.

In the light of the *I Ching*'s augury of chance and change, P.K. Dick looks at the local condition of schizophrenia as the *Trauerspiel* of integration. Klein tied the open end – the incompleteness or fragmentation – of integration to a sense or direction of irretrievable loss, the melancholic destiny of being broken up, lonely, but lonely together with one's lonely parts and partings.<sup>100</sup> In “Schizophrenia & *The Book of Changes*,” however, Dick situates the dis-appointment with integration ineluctably within adolescence:

A human child, at birth, still has years of a kind of semireal existence ahead of him: semireal in the sense that until he is fifteen or sixteen years old he is able to some degree to remain not thoroughly born.<sup>101</sup>

Entry into the shared world is the free gift that comes with going out on dates. But the earlier membership in the unborn state, which the pre-schizophrenic personality can't let go, renders “asking out” already an unspeakable burden. The doomed personality defers the date request and instead gazes upon the cute prospect “for a year or so, mentally detailing all possible outcomes: the good ones go under the rubric ‘daydreams,’ the bad ones under ‘phobia’.”<sup>102</sup>

100 See my reading of the lonely parts club convened in Klein's “The Sense of Loneliness.” *SPECTRE* (Fort Wayne: Anti-Oedipus Press, 2013), III–12.

101 Philip K. Dick, “Schizophrenia & The Book of Changes,” in *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick: Selected Literary and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Lawrence Sutin (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 175.

102 *Ibid.*

Like the precog's ability to view the near future of scientific hypothesis as a bank of monitored futures, the *I Ching* presents not what's coming soon but the operative forces that determine the future. As such it intervenes at the limit of temporal experience, which Dick personalizes as that of the schizophrenic: "The schizophrenic is having it all now, whether he wants it or not; the whole can of film has descended on him, whereas we watch it progress frame by frame."<sup>103</sup>

While trying to reconstruct the chances and choices that led to the Lady Gaga video portraits, I kept running up against "James Franco." I was following the throw of another link – to Mona Kuhn, whose photograph of a seated male nude seemed to promise illumination of the importance of "the sitting" within the conjugation of Being in Wilson's "Living Rooms" – when I discovered, among the countless images available for searching, a spread of photographs Kuhn took of Franco, in which the first color photographs of Marilyn Monroe showing her intellectual aspect in the setting of her sex appeal shimmered through. I was at the art of wishing well. The report that Abramovic was making a film of Franco's life, however, pulled up short before the asocial reservation of the daydream. But the Web, like the *I Ching*, neither tells the future nor fulfils wishes. It presents by throws of links the operative forces that determine the future.

103 Ibid.

## White Nights

### Melanesio-Futurism

On election day 2016, the faculty at the Academy of Fine Arts Karlsruhe voted not to renew my contract. The Germans have no idea of the law but only of the contract, the *Guten Tag* you have to pronounce and exchange right away before getting on to the business at hand. The dependency on the contract might be another reason why the allegory of German history tends to be Faustian, in other words infernal. Without a contract or a *Guten Tag* the German is free to jump into your face and lose it. I had been promised the same ten years my predecessor Klaus Theweleit had taught there, but no, not in writing. Who needs writing when buoyed up by the *fluidum* of heartfelt affability, the German version of/aversion to friendliness? But then the warning light “SILENCE” turns on over the door and you are left out of the production.

To be fair, I was no longer interested in the Academy, which was undergoing a downgrade to teacher’s college in the course of adjusting to the Bologna educational reforms. We were a year into the irreversible transition that was being administered by a newly appointed colleague in pedagogy, a specialist in applying the reforms, who had pacified several schools already before moving on to Karlsruhe. Formerly a visual artist, she was in the meantime a Ph.D. proclaiming and performing in class and special conferences the creativity of teaching. The administration of the Bologna reform has reversed the stigma that academics teaching content courses at art schools were unable to obtain univer-

sity positions by making it the requirement, forever separating the university from arts education.

When a colleague in art history pointed out hopefully that the new appointment should be OK since she wrote not only academic papers but even fiction, I remember the alarm going off in my head; those who are adept at keeping apart fiction and non-fiction are the worst. I guess performance holds the parts together like some naive belief in vitality.

The outside world really doesn't understand upon watching Hitler give a speech how anyone could have fallen for him. Since we outsiders watched the German recent past on a small screen monitor in the classroom, Marshall McLuhan relieved us of the tendentious distinctions of national character study by arguing that if the Germans had watched the Führer on tv the spell would have been neutralized. But since then I've observed that a style of performance reminiscent of Hitler's stumbling fumbling arousal to the occasion of speaking, reversing, and preserving castration for all to see and believe, continues to impress the Germans.

Amateur hour attends every ideological changeover in educational institutions, something that has befallen the German system in rapid succession. This time it's not National Socialism or Soviet Communism but a syndication of political correctness in the States that's doing the changing. I was wondering why German colleagues had not reached for their own version of the so-called trigger warning since, although it introduces into the setting of teaching occupational therapy for psychotics, it also guarantees academic freedom. That's when I recalled that Germans are excellent foresters and that any institutional change (for example in the pay scale) is never messily introduced across the board but resolutely put into effect in the new generation. It lessens the likelihood of protest.

The new German educators are in training to protect a post-historical utopia already realized in theory, in therapy. A student at the Academy in training to be an instructor at German high school in a few subjects, including art, for the first time brought me into contact with the new model of education, which at the time was kept out of the Academy proper by sending the prospective schoolteachers to attend the required coursework

at other institutions. I assigned him a research topic involving Jensen's *Gradiva*, Freud's reading of the novella, and Hitchcock's *Vertigo*. He reported back to me that he had found the Gradiva Complex so fascinating because so alien. He couldn't even imagine a time when patriarchy was so dominant.

In class, after I showed *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane* (1962), I tried to stimulate discussion by suggesting that the Bette Davis role could be read as the artist figure and received in exchange vituperative reckonings with the plain text of child abuse. Like artists were never abused in childhood? When the press asked Bette Davis for a few words *in memoriam* of Joan Crawford, whose death was in the news, she pondered for a time and finally said: She was always on time. Honest thinking is cleaner than correct thinking.

Already at the onset of harassment investigation at the American university in the late 1980s, I argued that calling what was really *therapeutic* correctness "political" was misleading, certainly with regard to the kind of politics being advanced. What I witnessed at the Academy in Karlsruhe, then, was the establishment of a new politically correct generation of secondary school-teachers, for whom a distinction like that between amateur and professional is to be dismissed as elitist.

The closing scene of Michael Haneke's *Caché* (2005), in which the sons of Georges and Majid meet and shake hands in the schoolyard, reflected not the shooting script but the director's post-production decision to give a final twist that's a twist-off forever concealing the agency behind the surveillance. The students are speaking dialogue that Haneke wrote, but then decided not to publish, even enjoining his actors to keep their lines forever secret. It was at this point that unconsciously on or off purpose Haneke situated the film within the schoolyard of the Bologna reforms leading European education into the light of "transparency." Haneke translates transparency, a naively benign surveillance concept, into the self-reflexivity of a film hovering between forgetting and the full stop of memory.

Why is surveillance always plotting with thriller intrigue? Is it because belief system surveillance, as big as global-latinization, leads us though a controlling interest in evil into the light of redemption? The reversal of surveillance from the perspective of

its operator to that of the one observed gives the gist of Francis Ford Coppola's *The Conversation* (1974). The protagonist, a surveillance expert, is sidelined into crime detection when he listens in on a couple (= primal scene) conversing before a mime show. The latter is a reference to Michelangelo Antonioni's *Blow-up*, a resolutely Freudian film that concludes on an affirmation of play over wish in art making. In *The Conversation*, the Freudian subplot leads the technician to uncover the crime in a hotel room cleansed of its traces. But when he flushes the toilet out comes a body's worth of disposed offal, a reference to *Psycho*, the first movie to show a toilet flush.

His discovery of the crime scene cuts too close and goes nowhere. Now the surveillance he operated reverses itself and proves unstoppable. The ending shows the technician sitting in the ruins of his apartment, which he demolished to undo the surveillance that was turned around upon him. Everything he sees (through) sees him, too, and everything he talks through is an open mic that's always on. The conclusion qualifies as eucatastrophe in the philosophical version of Christianization. It's a scene of Heideggerian laid-backness about the uncanny. Under the condition of being unhoused that's as basic as being, the protagonist plays the saxophone, his greatest pleasure, for the first time not wearing his plastic slipcover raincoat.

Haneke's express concern with how the individual works through historical crimes carried by society is more meticulous than that. The closing scene is formatted like the unidentified surveillance footage that opens the film and regularly interrupts it. From the turning point of the playback of the first encounter between Georges and Majid, the surveillance is not only without borders but even coincides with the overriding perspective of the film.<sup>1</sup> The second encounter isn't recorded; Majid wanted Georges to be present at his suicide. But when he becomes the image of a mouth spurting blood, we follow the logic of a dream. Like the photographer's snapping of pictures in *Blow-up*, the surveillance perspective looks into the middle distance, at times

1 See Todd Herzog, "The Banality of Surveillance: Michael Haneke's *Caché* and Life after the End of Privacy," *Modern Austrian Literature* 43, no. 2 (2010): 25-40.

seeming to foretell what follows with a heft of wish fulfillment. What triggers the night dreams are the drawings from childhood delivered together with the surveillance tapes. Daydreamy amping up of reality as a revelatory environment alternates with the evidence of trauma in night dreams.

There are epic fails (like the flexing of a death wish) in every childhood, which can be repurposed by and for the mystery of a secreted-away historical act of violence, in *Caché* the 1961 police beating and drowning of hundreds of French Algerian demonstrators in Paris. Majid's parents, who worked as farmhands for Georges's parents on the family estate, were among the fatalities. Was it to make amends that Georges's parents decided to adopt Majid? Georges, intent on being the only child, did what comes naturally, and blocked the orphan's adoption. Did he lie or amplify and take advantage of a cultural difference? In the "memory" or dream, we see Majid who just killed a rooster bullying Georges with the axe. How would the six-year-old Georges have come up with the lie that he saw Majid coughing up blood? Haneke's insistence that he wanted to leave the moviegoer alone with his or her conscience offers a stay to the explainathons preferred by institutes for ideational correction.

On the evening of November 8, when I learned the local results of the faculty meeting, it was already clear that Donald Trump was winning in the States – and it crossed my mind: it's the night of the evil clowns. It was a thought prompted by the closing pages of my text, "Leitmotif Siegfried," or rather by the anxious facility with which the audiences on my US lecture tour had applied the reading of the clown to the candidate Trump. That in 2020 the incumbent ended up the loser but supported by over 70 million votes means that we should stop clowning around if we consider this the end of the Trump Movement.

The American billionaire's clownishness, however, was his inconsistency, the hallmark of American freedom that he monopolized for a term. I've known an ultra-conservative grand dame who, although otherwise intent on reversing Civil Rights, was given to remember with pride and affection the day her high school elected a Black class president. That's how it works: Americans are inconsistent in their racism. Germans are consistent.



One inconsistency that quickly occupied the foreground was, given his social position, Trump's openly admitted libidinal sketchiness, which is the clown's joke on the counterculture. The puritanism of the Me-Too Movement is an inevitable adjustment in lieu of the old hippy standard, a meaningless counter to Trump. That it is an available adjustment is something you can read up on in Henry James's novels, in which the American expats are morally superior to their European hosts. And yes, barring the inconsistency he monopolized, Trump was the most European, in fact German, president in US history.<sup>2</sup> His only consistency was the wish to undo the EU. It takes one to annul one, as Gertrude Stein argued in *Wars I Have Seen*. The eighteenth century was embodied and destroyed in Napoleon, the nineteenth century in Hitler.<sup>3</sup> And the twentieth century was going down with Donald Trump.<sup>4</sup>

The prevailing legacy of the twentieth century, its quintessence, was by all accounts neo-liberalism, the policy that established at the end of history the gated community of a continuous "European" civilization. The showdown between Hillary Clinton and Trump marked a high point, the first time the powerful directly entered the ring forgoing their puppets. Although they were both unelectable, one of them had to win. That Trump surprised himself by winning gave him the career

2 In 2016 Mark Featherstone proposed in "Trump, A Psy Fi Story: On American Germanicity," *CTHEORY*, December 9, 2016, that rather than apply Frankfurt Schoolish readings to the rise of Donald Trump it was possible through my work to proceed more directly to the introjection of American Germanicity for which Trump is the poster boy. "Trump's relation to Nazism is not simply inferred, or based upon the application of psychoanalytic ideas to his own peculiar pathology [...], but rather rooted in a long cultural history of what Rickels calls *bi-coastality* or the movement from Germany west to the land of the free." Available online at <https://journals.uvic.ca/index.php/ctheory/article/view/16675/7054>.

3 Gertrude Stein, *Wars I Have Seen* (London: Batsford, 1945), 8–9.

4 Stein's reading responded and belonged to the machine age. More than another war, therefore, something like the COVID-19 pandemic is the kind of game changer that better suits the digital era.

idea that this was the first blow dealt neo-liberalism by one of its illuminati.

Trump's other consistency, his hatred of his predecessor Barack Obama, can be lumped together with all the above. Obama gave "European" neo-liberalism a hermetic embodiment which Trump calls on its face value as pretty and sexless. Trump besmirches neo-liberalism's face-saving by bringing back the old counterculture, which he paradoxically embodies, but in reverse, inside the mainstream overflowing as charged by Me-Too proponents.

Wasn't there a rumor that Trump located with Putin's help the Moscow hotel bed Obama had slept in and spent the night there pissing on it with his whore? True or not, it is the primal scene of the Trump Movement.

In analogy with tax evasion charges against the mafia, Me-Too tracks down sexual indiscretions that can be reinterpreted as harassment to get at those otherwise protected by their positions of power. But the Jamesian sophistication of the moral charges can be a reach and the same plain-text attitude that Me-Too advertises in calling abuse abuse can topple their claims. Consider the 2018 controversy around Trump's candidate for the empty seat in the Supreme Court. The counterculture's harassment charges were welcome to the Trump supporters, because they could be treated as throwaway simulacra of the candidate's more serious legal trespasses. Charged with date rape at college, Trump's candidate was of course appointed.

One era's denial is the next era's weapon, and what goes for sex goes double for the digital relation. Although the Obama years coincided with a mass culture openly metabolizing the inroads of digitization, neo-liberalism was too fascinated by the end of history to recognize the historical changes the digital relation had already brought to bear. Stowaway in Derrida's rereading of haunting in *Specters of Marx* as the return that returns was the premier reception of the digital relation. All the names and events of history were returning, but as entries in the digital archive. Whatever is back is recognizable but is no longer immersed in the aura of the old oppositions.

A tv show like *True Blood* proved a syndication of the United States in the news with a Black president and an insurgent

Christian Right, among the many parts that seemed together again in a crowd of return engagements. Obama's election was not so much the realization of the Civil Rights struggle, the resolution at the end of the opposition for and against integration, as it was the return of that era in the midst of all the other returns. The era of hope didn't imprint its liberal purpose upon the end of history. To view that which comes last or the last thing that happened as that which will last is a pre-digital fallacy.

The prospect of Vladimir Putin undermining US elections through manipulation of the Internet is an atavistic non-computerate plot allowed to run for a time so that when the Cold-War thriller was discounted, the legal investigation of Trump and all it stood for could be disqualified too. You have to know something about the digital relation or at least be non-phobic about it to manipulate a symptom of the other side's denial so effectively. Consider Trump's cynical embrace of the Twitter of the gods, which is another first or finality: a US president who can't be held accountable for what he says as long as it echoes within social media. Trump is neo-liberalism and he sees through it, seeking to take it out into the light of digitization, the new night of nothingness.

The return of the return outside the original setting of opposition has consequences for dialectics but doesn't mean that human suffering has given way to buffering. Violence in the US continues, spectacularly targeting Black lives like flotsam atop the tsunami of gentrification. The remainder of my reflections on the meaning of the Trump Movement will be on race, to which end I return to the Melanesian Cargo Cult, which in my first book guided the reading of aberrant mourning under mass media conditions.<sup>5</sup>

5 Tom McCarthy worked the Cargo Cult into his *Satin Island: A Novel* (New York: Vintage Books, 2015), which in conversation he said was inflected by my interpretation in *Aberrations of Mourning*. Another tribute to my first book went into his earlier novel *C*, in which I could make out the amalgamation of my crypt rereadings of Freud's case studies of his totemic patients, Rat Man and Wolfman. But in *Satin Island* I couldn't readily discern my Cargo Cult reading. For one, McCarthy writes explicitly about the John Frumm movement, a WWII

That Melanesians saw in the first white man an ancestor back from the dead was the digest of what was originally a more eclectic and static perception of a possible monster, ghoul, or ghost. The re-setting of first contact on the Melanesian equation between white men and their own ancestral dead merited a primal scene, one that the Europeans too could recognize. Andrew Lattas tells the scene's story through the internal recount of legend.

In 1991 an old man, Bowl, told me how one of his classificatory fathers had been down on the coast and saw, as a reflection in water, the first white man to come into the Kaliai area. Startled by this image, Bowl's father turned to look behind him, and there he saw a German called Master Paris. [...] Seeing the first white man as a reflection in water was significant because tambaran, masalai, and the souls of the dead often reside in water. In the Kaliai area the word for soul, *ano*, is the same word for reflection; this means that from their earliest memories people saw whites as emerging from the reflective space of water, which in traditional culture is inhabited by the dead and masalai.<sup>6</sup>

Through many of the iterations of the white man arriving to boss the Melanesians around, the Cargo Cult reserved a primal language for communication with the ancestral dead: Djaman.<sup>7</sup>

Pausanias revised the Narcissus legend, making it over into a scene of grieving misrecognition to get the motivation right for the image's riveting impact. When the boy sought his reflection in the water, the apparition of his lookalike dead sister

offshoot of the Cult that redirected its call for Cargo away from Europe and Australia toward the United States, the new home of the grateful dead, its otherworldly impression made utopian by the copresence in the US military of Black soldiers. The difference doesn't disappoint, however, but inspires this renewed reading of the Cargo Cult.

6 Andrew Lattas, *Cultures of Secrecy: Reinventing Race in Bush Kaliai Cargo Cults* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1998), 21.

7 Peter Worsley, *The Trumpet Shall Sound: A Study of "Cargo" Cults in Melanesia* (New York: Schocken Books, 1968), 80.

stared back at him. In the primal scene of Cargo Cult, the black Melanesian sees in the water not his own reflection but a white man at the ghostly remove and return of the dead. While the Pausanias revision realigns narcissistic disturbance with an origin in melancholia, the Cargo Cult followers attribute disturbance and retention span to the Europeans blocking contact with the ancestors, the mourned dead.

The Melanesians recognized that the white man's Cargo, his techno-culture, turned on the gist of one single-minded innovation: live transmission. If you can telegraph across long distances in one instant of sending and receiving, then you can communicate with the long distant, the dead. Cargo was the response to centuries of one-way discourse that the Melanesians had prayerfully addressed to their departed. The Europeans updated the system but rerouted all the return messages to their dead letter office, refusing, like vengeful ghosts, to transmit the Cargo to the rightful recipients. The Europeans had brought along the prospect of direct contact of the living with the dead and then taken it all away.

At the same time, some Europeans appeared to the Melanesians as their own recent dearly departed. Lattas gives a cross section of the topography of this ambivalence.

Indeed, villagers have been known to cry when seeing a new white man, for they believe they have recognized a lost relative. [...] The villagers were suspicious at what they saw as Europeans who were not expressing genuine grief at funerals; they also were suspicious of the flowers planted around European houses. Villagers also saw white bodies as similar to corpses. (21)

Unmourning is the fluidum of the Europeans, who like unquiet dead haunt the Melanesians, intercepting the messages and way-laying the Cargo sent from the afterlife.

The return of the mourned dead – or, in Daniel Paul Schreber's lingo, the cleansed and tested souls – yields the nihilistic consequence that goes into Christianity's wrap of resurrection not at the end but as the end of the world. The Cult started setting dates for the arrival of the Cargo-bearing ancestors. In

preparation, the followers had to trash, waste, get rid of all their possessions. To be sure, they had to make room for the Cargo but they also needed a clearing for the oblivion and nothingness of successful mourning. All the above, I argued in *Aberrations of Mourning*, is the Cargo Cult in theory and plain text.

Cargo Cult tells it like it is: we are all the indigenous people of new technologies facing ghosts coming round the bend of the latest mediatic extension of our sensorium.<sup>8</sup> We tend to see a cultural difference when animistic indigenous cultures turn the outward aspects of technology into props for worship and belief. To bring about live transmission, the Melanesians set up posts in imitation of telegraph poles, which they beat while the high priest summoning from his belly ventriloquy by the ancestors communicated with the afterlife in Djaman.

The Cargo Cult's demand for live communication and contact with their dead was corollary to the larger demand for savvy, which of course refers to knowledge but also addresses the interest and cathexis imbuing the whites. When Cult followers dismissed their own pre-colonial culture and beliefs, bringing this world to an end to make room for the Second Coming of Cargo, they were responding in the first place to the perceived lack of savvy in their goods.

Dorothy Billings documents one of the last upsurges of Cargo Cult, the spontaneous decision by Melanesians to vote for US President Lyndon B. Johnson. The 1964 election, which was to prepare the Melanesians for their own autonomous statehood, was just another episode in their schooling by Australians and Europeans. And the Melanesians continued to be frustrated by their missionary-style schooling, which withheld savvy: "Many of men have savvy about English, and what have they done? They know English for nothing, that's all." The performance of a turn toward America was in answer to the question, "Who will show us about everything?"<sup>9</sup>

8 That the itinerary of ghosts tells us how far our mediatic sensorium reaches was Friedrich Kittler's surprising insight. See *Grammophon, Film, Typewriter* (Berlin: Brinkmann & Bose, 1986).

9 Dorothy K. Billings, *Cargo Cult as Theater: Political Performance in the Pacific* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2005), 168. Subsequent page

Through a kind of free association with likely near-synonyms, Billings seeks to identify the Melanesian understanding of savvy. “When I was trying to make sure that I understood what Oliver meant when he said he ‘believed in’ America, he said, ‘Just like, like; it’s just like, like, that’s all’” (168). While America can’t be compelled to respond to or fulfill their wishes, just the same, Joseph, for one, wants to know, “Does America [...] want to love our wish to them?” (169). Billings instructs that in the local culture “public pronouncements concerning one’s wishes are often made [...], and they are considered final. It is expected that what a person wants will be treated as inviolable: ‘Like is a big thing,’ they often said” (ibid.). Liking, wishing, being a daydream believer all suggest that savvy translates as youthful innovativeness and cathexis appeal.

Did the Black Melanesians see in the Black American servicemen the prospect of equality or did they recognize instead that the cool American demeanor, the adolescent energy among peers, the savvy imbuing the group was emanating from the Black men? That Americans are inconsistent in their racism goes into the spread of the foreign body of savvy, which the Melanesians recognized. Oppression and inequality didn’t contradict the pervasiveness of Black savvy.

There’s another reason it was a good war. In the incubator of military service during WWII, being with it and being cool could be transmitted on the edge and badge of courage. Following Norman Mailer, it is possible to see the phenomenon of the American hipster as coming out of the war’s metabolization of what he calls the White Negro. While for some of us it didn’t hurt this much, the gist of Mailer’s exposition cuts close to the truth (perhaps because it implies his castration):

Since the Negro knows more about the ugliness and danger of life than the White, it is probable that if the Negro can win his equality, he will possess a potential superiority, a superiority so feared that the fear itself has become the underground drama of domestic politics. Like all conservative political fear it is the fear of unforeseeable consequences, for the Negro’s

references are given in the text.

equality would tear a profound shift into the psychology, the sexuality, and the moral imagination of every White alive.<sup>10</sup>

The new White Man's Burden in our day is that savvy has either absconded or been cast off. Louis-Ferdinand Céline's plaint that the mixing of races always diminishes whiteness may be true on the palette, but whiteness today is a contact-low contaminating all the non-Black minority departments, from Jewishness and divergent orientation to being of color: brown gets around but doesn't alleviate the malaise. Does the fracking for distinction across gender make it through this impasse? If so, Michael Jackson and his double claim on race and gender should be reassessed as candidacy for sainthood.

Most white Americans no longer retain the neoteny of youthful innovativeness. They grow older, lose the future, and become undifferentiated within the white population that is probably the blandest on Earth. In a Berlin subway car, the co-presence of white Europeans from different countries and cultures still suggests a degree of diversity. In the new world, however, the white immigrants excelled at assimilation unto homogenization. A few diacritical accent marks might denote an American region, but that's all. Hence white resentment toward fellow citizens, who don't let go of the distinction of being hyphenated Americans.

However, those once schooled in adolescence still know how to ad-lib their wish without the projective machinery of fulfillment. Having no script is no problem if they have a common understanding, which in the Trump Cult is that they are bereft of savvy. Neo-liberalism is an alien symbol, one that belongs to the Europeans and educated elites who learned how to function according to a European mindset. Brexit inspired them and

<sup>10</sup> Norman Mailer, "The White Negro: Superficial Reflections on the Hipster," *Dissent Magazine* (Fall 1957): 291. There is much that must be bracketed out in Mailer's essay before one can even read it. The symptom arc is given by the open disdain for psychoanalysis, although Mailer would appear to have been familiar only with its New York headquarters. Knowledge of D.W. Winnicott on the antisocial tendency would have honed his reading of psychopathy, making it less a provocation and more of an intervention.



Trump's efforts seem aimed only when they undermine Europe. In the absurd situation of the celebrated triumphs of the Civil Rights movement, they found it easy to make an absurd suggestion. The vote for making America great again offered a perspective on reality that pleased the Cult followers, and the script grew. They found a way to play all the leading roles instead of the dull parts assigned them by the history of their assimilation and adjustment.

In our time, the rallying of white Americans for white cathexis passed from the awkwardness of the Tea Party movement to the Heil saluting and Heil bringing Trump campaign. How soon we forgot that the last hurrahs of white savvy were made in Germany. Beginning with *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, the Passion of white adolescence has been pitched and tossed in German (Djaman). One current landed in Southern Cal (see *Beach Blanket Bingo*) until the counter-tide of Helter Skelter's projected influence cut in. National Socialism channeled the main current of the lost cause of white savvy, pitching it against the melting plot. Just the same, Nazi ideologues had to adapt to a world of difference that already extended into the constitution of the Axis. So, they acknowledged that there were other races that were equally pure (but not equally equal). It followed that it was possible to be Nazi and to accept former colonial subjects, non-whites, as honorary Aryans. While Aryan was the purest white, "honorary" made it another name for the teen legacy of Werther. The contradiction that couldn't be metabolized goes into literary conceits like the *Schwarzkommando* in Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*.

Watching *Halloween* with German subtitles you can see how indelibly black is deposited in the German folk tradition (in the relative absence of historical contact with Africa). The bogeyman (or boogie man) that the babysitters and their charges refer to appears in German as "der Schwarze Mann." The boogiemans isn't the object of racism. *Funk*, the "spark" adopted for all techno-broadcasting terms in German, has always and already received the African funk by the unconscious rebound of folk etymology. The Aryan-African cathexis, which Dick misrecognized in *The Man in the High Castle*, is a notch on a scale of pure populations.

Leni Riefenstahl wasn't just following her own agenda when she alternated in *Olympia* between the triumphs of Black America and scenes of Aryan jocks getting hot together in the light of Antiquity. Our focus gets blurred when we assume that every conquered populace fraternizes with the enemy and always to the same degree. German women fell for the (Black) American GIs, because they recognized them crossing the finish line of the race that Riefenstahl projected between the agents of Black savvy and the Germans bearing the torch of Greek primary narcissism. By then the Siegfrieds were gone. But while the race was still being run German soldiers were hot properties for the non-German women of Fortress Europe.

*Get Out* (2017) goes one step further than *Frontière(s)* (2007) – the concession to a stopover in melting-plotting with the new brown that fortifies the reproductive strain of neo-Nazi psychos – and treats the Black American as physical specimen pure enough to carry forward for the white folks the diminished lives of their ancestors. Preliminary to the surgical or literal enactment of possession, the TV hypnosis controlling the Black carrier is set on the same ambivalence toward parental guidance that lodged the old folks back home inside their servants' younger Black bodies. When the Black mark hits bottom in the TV hypno-therapy, a depressive position instrumentalized by the white therapist as vacancy for the next white life extension, he begins to heed the need to mourn, which will lead him out of the weekend from integration hell. The white brain lives on in the stolen Black body by enslaving the brain stem that carries and sparks it. The light flash of the camera-phone rallies the stem (*Stamm*, which in German also means tribe or race) to rise up against the white parasite. Each flash episode is short-lived but, when strategically deployed by the survivor at the end, decisive.

What About Blob?

In *Germany: A Science Fiction*, I charted a genealogy suspended between the repression and return of a high point of science fiction: Fritz Lang's double feature, *Metropolis* (1927) and *Frau im Mond* (1929). However, the films were not carried forward, indeed became untenable rehearsals or repetitions once the

Third Reich traded in fiction for science fiction. From televisual live transmission (including video telephony) to *Gleichschaltung*, the alignment and conformity of the *socius*, the future world in *Metropolis* became agenda. Outside the murk of doubling and mass psychology, there was the clear text of the invention and take-off of the first rockets. War over, and the traumatic recent past of a Nazi future came under repression, and the science fiction genre had to start over as a Cold War exclusive. *Blade Runner* took the look of *Metropolis* into the future world it projected in 1982, the datemark of the return of German science fiction to the big screen.

While American culture continued to benefit on a scale from B to A, innovation in production and reception of cultural phenomena was long gone in Germany. After its repackaging in the Third Reich as *superego*, adolescence was hard to relocate in post-war Germany. In the settings of globalization (including animism, on which Joseph Beuys set his interventions), exceptions to the German destiny could still be tried out. However, when Joseph Beuys declared before his German audiences that everyone was an artist, this was his paradoxical intervention in a sorry state.

P.K. Dick first began exploring the bicoastal dialectic between California and Germany within its underworld, the alternate history of *The Man in the High Castle* (1962). The Axis won the war but what occupies the foreground is Japan's colonization of the West Coast. That the Japanese dead are being addressed in the mode of mourning is made clear enough by the Nazi plans to obliterate them (again) with more of the same bombs. Dick's novel engages what was on hold in post-war Germany, mourning, unmourning, and haunting. Instead, adolescent industry was riveted to the economic miracle and the silver-aligning of its production and profit with restitution or reparation, which for former perpetrators of psychopathic violence or their heirs is preliminary to a work of mourning that for the latecomers will be collective or not at all. By showing the remote learning of grieving as the German human condition, Hans-Jürgen Syberberg's *My Hitler* made a dare out of a new reckoning with German history.

D.W. Winnicott saw the atom bombs of WWII withdraw the rationale for preparing youth to close ranks. Effective means of contraception meant that the teens cut loose from military training looked to mass culture to see themselves containing sex and violence even as the sole content of their lives. Winnicott's understanding of the antisocial tendency in its relationship to psychopathy and adolescence doesn't have to be true. But by conditions analogous to those operative in the future post-war worlds of American science fiction, Winnicott's theorization *describes* a world that is explicitly post-WWII.

Winnicott's paradoxical interpretation of delinquent behavior as signaling hope delivered our relationship to psychopathy from the dead end of an ongoing failure of interpretation. Bordering on psychopathy, even passing through it but only to leave it behind, adolescence functions as inoculum. It is the conduit for rescuing the inventiveness of omnipotence from the close quarters of passing cohabitation with psychopathy. The opening era of daydreaming, adolescence is the phase we grow out of (like the past or posting of "dear diary" journal-ism) into the "autonomy" of publication, art or the social relation.

This replay of positions reintroduces *The Blob*, a 1958 American B-movie mixing horror fantasy and science fiction, of which I made an example in *Germany: A Science Fiction*.<sup>11</sup> Like George Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* ten years later, it was an independent production filmed in the Pennsylvania backcountry that proved to be a blockbuster. To sum up quickly its exemplary value: the transitional objective of containing the menace of psychopathic violence through its passing likeness to adolescent acting out falls short of the emergency military solution at the film's conclusion, its displacement and confinement to the North Pole. But the teen protagonist concludes that all's well as long as the arctic cold lasts. Only the Cold War can contain the psycho violence, the blob that rebounds from the recent past of WWII.

Taken together as a staggered series, like Romero's first three living-dead films, the original *The Blob* can be seen to comprise,

11 See my close reading of *The Blob* in *Germany: A Science Fiction* (Fort Wayne: Anti-Oedipus Press, 2014), 38–40.

together with its 1972 and 1987 sequels, a trilogy, in which the topical application of allegory illuminates the changes going into group psychology decade by decade. In the 1972 sequel, *Beware! The Blob* (a.k.a. *Son of Blob*, *Son of the Blob*, and *The Blob Returns*), Robert Walker, heartthrob of American television in the 1960s and 1970s, takes Steve McQueen out on an update.<sup>12</sup> He's the couplified and real popular regular-guy who nevertheless belongs to a counterculture in-crowd, a mutation in group psychology since 1958, which lodged the metabolization of the anti-war movement. Although his girlfriend brushes his offer aside as unhelpful when Walker proposes at one point that they get "wrecked" to assuage her anxiety about the blob, it's not only the hippies and rock-and-rollers in their group who are stoners. She's upset because she walked in on a Black neighbor, Chester, being consumed by the pink goo while watching the 1958 classic on TV.

The film opens inside the suburban home of Chester, who's recently back from his gig in the North Pole working on an oil rig. They struck upon some unidentified substance, a sample of which was entrusted to him to take back for lab testing in California. But why is there a tent set up in the living room? Why is he compelled to re-enact the site up north? A post-traumatic reaction to the time spent in non-US territory tells the other story of the Vietnam War. He's "gone fishing" without leaving the house. His wife is wonderful about humoring him, which attests to the social pervasiveness of welcoming psycho soldiers back home. Chester placed the sample for the time being in the freezer. But while she tolerates his souvenirs in the living room, his wife won't have the ectoplasm of his traumatic recent past in her workspace. She removes the sample from the freezer and places it on the counter. That's right, it's a piece of the 1958 blob gradually thawing out.

Only in the sheriff's concluding remarks before the TV cameras after the menace has been contained is it named "the blob." Seconds later, the lights that the camera team placed on the flash-frozen mass in the ice-skating rink begin thawing it out, a

12 Directed by Larry Hagman, the movie was rereleased in 1982 with the tagline: "The Film that J.R. shot!"

trickle encircling the sheriff's feet. "The End" bears a question mark. While the 1972 version continues to develop the "same" blob that was kept on ice up north, in other words in the setting of the Cold War, now the location from which it is sprung stands for Vietnam and its post-traumatic impact threatens the group psychology that has integrated the adolescent counterculture and the Black couple next door.

A one-time contributor to the *Nightmare on Elm Street* franchise directed the 1987 sequel. The horror fare in the local theater is no longer "spook" movies, as in 1958, but slasher films, to which the pre-teens are in thrall against their parental guidance. But the odd couple of teens in the foreground of this version exchange banter that's a slasher-movie giveaway. For example: "I feel like fucking Hansel and Gretel here." And then the boy mentions the missing breadcrumbs. Usually this fateful line is followed by the couple commenting that it's not a good sign when a third person shows up wearing a mask. This portion is spoken in the slasher film within the science-fiction movie: "It's not hockey season," the guy on screen says to his date about the masked man bearing a chainsaw. "Isn't it late to be cutting the hedges?"

The sister of one of the slasher-consuming preteens, a good girl, allies herself with the "bad" outsider, who is the quintessence of "cool" (a typical 1980s reinterpretation and marketing of earlier protest looks, but without the politics). Their coupling is the fantasy resolution of the split between the "bad" or "cool" delegates of the Teen Age, who are still embodying by their acting out the inoculum with and against psychopathy, and the high-school mainstream that marches cheerleaders and jocks down the aisle of a spousal relation that never forsakes the peer-group milieu.

The good girl, indeed a cheerleader, meets the outsider while on a date with a football star, a date that goes bad. When they find an old man afflicted by the blob, they transport him to the hospital while bad boy, who was also there, is compelled by the jock to come along as witness. In the hospital, the girl, upon witnessing the blob completely absorb the first victim and then her date, escapes with the bad boy, her new friend on a motorbike.

In 1987, the plot doesn't involve outer space but only looks like that for a time. It's a bio-weapons experiment that went awry

in a satellite. When the crashed container cracks open, what spills out, something like the liquid essence of zombieism, starts consuming the locals on contact. From the 1972 to the 1987 sequel, we can follow the bouncing blob like a chip off the old “Black.” The mad scientist heading the squad clad in white insulating outfits that look like updates of KKK attire is Black. In *Night of the Living Dead*, the only survivor, who then ends up collateral damage in the “mopping up” of the epidemic by a posse in earshot of Vietnam, was the Black American Ben, a natural-born leader. This unmotivated conclusion, which was soon a wrap with the assassination of Martin Luther King, prompted Romero to draw the first film through the loop of political allegory, which the two sequels in the trilogy openly addressed. In 1987, according to *The Blob*, integration spells reversal: why shouldn’t the corrupt and powerful now be Black, too? But reversal is also peristaltic, an unending blob-like reversal of reversal.

The showdown with the blob is framed by the words of another Black American, who owns a repair shop where the teen protagonist updating the McQueen and Walker figures as total outsider finds support. There is talk about the unreliability of snow, and the repairman counters that the winter will bring it. You just have to have faith. He repeats the line about faith at the happy end, which the snow-making machine delivers in front of the church that offered the survivors sanctuary. Outside the frame, however, there is a brief spot that keeps open the possibility of another sequel. The psycho priest, who grabbed a sample of the blob earlier on in the film, has become an Evangelist doomsday preacher in a circus tent. Although he is white, his revivalism is pitched to a largely Black congregation. When a member of the flock asks if the preacher can reveal to her when the end is coming, he says “Soon, soon” while gazing at his prized relic, the contained specimen of the blob.

That the movie ends on the prospect of another apocalyptic outbreak fits a tendency in splatter films to evaluate criteria for survival. In Romero’s second and third living-dead movies, *Dawn of the Dead* (1978) and *Day of the Dead* (1985), the outcome is an occasion for terroristic cleansing of the social body.<sup>13</sup> All those

13 See my reading of Romero’s undead trilogy in *The Psycho Records*

outdated by the apocalyptic transformation of the environment, any person stuck on racist, sexist, even proprietary tendencies, qualifies for *exitus*.

In 1987, the blob carries forward this calculation of progress through elimination. When a member of the scientific team proclaims that the unforeseen mutation that the biological weapon underwent means the Cold War is over, another member corrects him: most of the world as we know it will be gone, too. Pre-blob, the late 1980s town exemplified what Freud forecast as the impoverishment of groups: Christian Mass psychology of mutual identification in the absence of object relations in love or mourning.<sup>14</sup> At the end, there is a coupling of self and other, the cheerleader and the bad/cool boy, which is the innovation that's the blob catastrophe's silver lining.

### The Good Ship Wish Fantasy

The term blob designating a new monster was a somewhat random choice in 1958. In the shooting script it was "the mass" and finally, by metonymy, absence, and association, it replaced "the glob," which had been chosen for the title but then discovered to be already in use. Even a throwaway word has an etymology. Blob is linked to blubber, which was historically harvested in whales and, in a word, counted as the ellipsis for whale blubber. American literary A-culture originated in an industry as vast as it was unsung prior to Herman Melville's *Moby-Dick*, the "Great American Novel." To be sure, there was a prehistory of legend surrounding whales and whaling, which Melville documents and speculates on. The novel is at the same time a treatise on, as the subtitle announces, "The Whale." But the jump cut from that prehistory to the mid-nineteenth-century business of digging oil out of countless dead whales for the all-night illumination

(New York: Columbia University Press, 1916).

- 14 Sigmund Freud, "Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XVIII (1920–1922): Beyond the Pleasure Principle, Group Psychology and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1964), 134.



of New York circumscribes a political unconscious in which the prehistory of the Web is also inscribed.

The missing link that pulled up short before the arrival of the digital relation could be glimpsed, as we saw, in the gathering of greater stores of data for research into our cognitive capital, like the investigation of daydreaming beginning in the 1960s via an ongoing collection of questionnaires or like the recording by parapsychologists even of the near misses in telepathy experiments. Although the collections became as outdated as concordances, in each case the data became the medium transmitting new knowledge not by proof but by default.

Perhaps because of the proximity to “hypertext,” online you can find “hypersea” borrowed for marketing certain digital developments. However, the term originally belonged to a supplementary evolutionary theory developed by a couple of scientists, who began the long process of testing and formulation on the campus of UC Santa Barbara. The theory of hypersea posits a geophysiological entity conjoining organisms on land and symbiotic fungi.<sup>15</sup> It allowed the survival of our evolutionary ancestors precariously ascending from the sea to become land based. By hypermarine upwelling the expansion of hypersea led to the increase in the diversity of species and global biomass.

The ease of metabolizing nutrients under water had to find an alternative for the relative complexity of sustaining life on land. The result: life on land displays an extraordinary degree of connectedness. Throughout the *Gidget* novels, the So-Cal teen delves into her negative transference and identifies all the machinations of parental guidance as “fungous.” In the final novel that ends in marriage, *Gidget Goes New York*, our heroine and her co-tenants complain to the landlord about the fungus in the bathroom. He’s also a poet and instead composes at the bar across the street a “Hymn to a Fungus.”<sup>16</sup> The truth arrived at UC Surfing Beach: without fungi, lifeforms could never have come ashore.

15 Marc McMenamin, *Hypersea: Life on Land* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

16 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget Goes New York* (New York: Dell, 1968), 70.

There's the universal problem of excretion: how sustainable is life as the excrement of death? (the Nietzschean question). The hypersea means that life doesn't decompose without at the same time diversifying within its connective network. One of the earliest and largest results of this life process was coal and its role in the history of fuel supplies. The theory of the hypersea adds an ecosystem adjustment to our understanding of natural resources. That cybernetics translated all vital flows into transmission of information is a good reason to look upon hypersea as mapping successors to psychic reality on a scale of evolution based on radically divergent technologies.

In *Moby-Dick*, the conceit basic to science fiction – that the discovery of the new world was the first step toward the prospect of final frontiers in outer space – delves into the other deep space: “the sea [...] an everlasting terra incognita, so that Columbus sailed over numberless unknown worlds to discover his one superficial western one.”<sup>17</sup> That the unknown conduits of new worlds – in other words, the sea and all that it holds – signifies outer space is an ancient equation (which C.S. Lewis plied in his “Space Trilogy”). It belongs to the belief system that Melville's narrator attributes to a Pacific Islander serving under Captain Ahab's command: “not only do they believe that the stars are isles, but that far beyond all visible horizons, their own mild, uncontinented seas, interflow with the blue heavens” (1304). The narrator earlier compared the Pacific Islander's alien situation in New England to that of someone “thrown among people as strange to him as though he were in the planet Jupiter” (847).

*Moby-Dick* drops archival moorings to float its boat in a sea of fantasizing, the underworld of its inspiration: “for here, millions of mixed shades and shadows, drowned dreams, somnambulisms, reveries; all that we call lives and souls, lie dreaming, dreaming still” (1308). The prologue lists the etymologies of “whale” and then proceeds to a compilation of “whale” references from many great books. The whales are also subsumed as books: “According to magnitude I divide the whales into three

17 Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick or, The Whale* (New York: Library Classics of the United States, 1983), 1086. Subsequent page references are to this edition and are given in the text.

primary BOOKS (subdivisible into CHAPTERS), and these shall comprehend them all, both small and large" (936).

In the relay of tomes culminating in Melville's novel, there are two heroic agonists. The titular hero, Moby Dick, is one of the "famous whales" enjoying "great individual celebrity" and therefore "admitted into all the rights, privileges, and distinctions of a name" (1010). The other hero is Captain Ahab, who, outside the mania of his heroic will and purpose, is immersed in another profundity, fantasizing unto dissociation.

Ahab pronounces: "What I've dared, I've willed; and what I've willed, I'll do!" (971). The narrator takes this below when he decides to make a rough draft of his will. It's his fourth time. But he adds, "of all men sailors" are so fond of the "diversion" of "tinkering at their last wills and testaments" (1036). Ahab's will is the way but before they are words (or commands), his thoughts lead a separate existence as wish fantasies or daydreams. Over and again, Ahab "would throw himself back in reveries" (1006) and walk "the deck in rolling reveries" (1346). Thus, when the teen sailor Pip is traumatically split off from his former persona and goes beyond "the joyous, heartless, ever-juvenile eternities" of daydreaming to enter upon "wondrous depths" (1236), Ahab is the one to know one and follows:

"Now, then, Pip, we'll talk this over; I do suck most wondrous philosophies from thee! Some unknown conduits from the unknown worlds must empty into thee!" (1358)

The bulk rate of whaling carries blubber, from which oil is readily extracted, while, as Melville quipped in a letter, he sought to derive poetry from it, which was the more precarious endeavor.<sup>18</sup> The significance of the whale, which begins with its corpse, overflows, very much like a blob, the bookish equations that promote the metaphysical comforts of literary self-reflexivity. The narrator meticulously catalogues item by item all the component parts of the defeated whale, which are preserved, carved, cut out, or peeled off already on board the ship to use or bring home as trophies, souvenirs, or luxury items. One such item, the very skin

18 Melville to Richard Henry Dana, Jr., May 1, 1850.

of the animal, “resembling the thinnest shreds of isinglass, only it is almost as flexible and soft as satin” (1119), slips over the relay of books that would comprise “The Whale.”

I have such dried bits, which I use for marks in my whale-books. It is transparent [...] and being laid upon the printed page, I have sometimes pleased myself with fancying it exerted a magnifying influence. At any rate, it is pleasant to read about whales through their own spectacles, as you may say. (ibid.)

The narrator studies his books on whales and whaling. But the final flourish interrupts his studies by fantasizing.

The influence of magnifying that triggers this bare-bones edition of literary self-reflection bears association with the fire echoing inside the word magnifier and which the magnifying glass in fact produces. In *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*, Gaston Bachelard argued that gazing upon flames is not only a stimulus for reverie but must even count as the primal onset of philosophy and poetry.<sup>19</sup> That fire and water are not opposed but can even be conjoined as in “fire water” was the primal scene of homosexuality’s prohibition that Freud speculated on in his reading of the introduction of the Promethean flame. Men must not follow the innate desire to form a circle jerk and urinate upon the fire, rubbing flame against flame unto the fire’s extinction.<sup>20</sup>

Literary self-reference interlaced with the narrator’s meticulous cataloguing of all the tiny bits of detritus of dead whales also metabolizes the whale in larger format, in a blob-like subsuming modus. Intact body parts recall now Shakespeare’s forehead (1164), now Goethe’s expansive chest (1195). The tilt of the ship brought on by the dead whale strapped to its side must be corrected by adding to the other side a second whale corpse. The

19 It is the introductory premise of *La psychanalyse du feu* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985). I hear the fire in magnifier in earshot of Derrida’s reading of photography in *Droit de regards* (Paris: Minuit, 1985).

20 Sigmund Freud, “Zur Gewinnung des Feuers,” in *Gesammelte Werke*, ed. Anna Freud, vol. 16 (London: Imago Publishing Co., Ltd., 1950). Newcomers to Melville’s novel are often taken aback by its nonphobic acceptance of homoeroticism as fact for life.

narrator compares the balancing to that between Locke and Kant that some minds seem to require. But “throw all these thunder-heads overboard, and then you will float light and right” (1143–44). Only knowledge of the whale counts: “For unless you own the whale, you are but a provincial and sentimentalist in Truth” (1155). A reference to Novalis follows and we are in the eddy stirred up by the German Romantic transmission filling the gaps in UK medievalism and restoring Shakespeare to illusory continuity in English letters.

In *Moby-Dick*, the gap in reception is rerouted as American literature’s claim to the very language of Shakespeare. Among the archival moorings that keep the book on the course of the will in a sea of wish fantasy we find the following footnote to a word, “gallied,” still in use on board this book: “It is an old Saxon word.” It “occurs once” in Shakespeare’s *Lear* (the other mainstay alongside *Macbeth* of the story of Ahab’s will or testament). Otherwise, outside this book, the word is obsolete. “Much the same is it with many other sinewy Saxonisms of this sort, which emigrated to the New-England rocks with the noble brawn of the old English emigrants in the time of the Commonwealth. Thus, some of the best and furthest-descended English words [...] are now democratized, nay, plebeianized – so to speak – in the New World” (1204n). The dispersion of near-extinct mainstays of European A-culture saves the best for what’s going to last: new word literature.

Among the authors referred to in *Moby-Dick* there’s Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1248), who finds his niche as the author of reveries, which roll in Melville’s novel, above and throughout the sea. That François Rabelais is also cited (*ibid.*) attends the blob-like (or zombie-like) consumerism that the image of magnification illuminates. Choice cuts of whale meat are also eaten and it is the successful harpooner’s special request that he enjoy such a steak as his prize.

That mortal man should feed upon the creature that feeds his lamp and [...] eat him by his own light, as you may say; this seems so outlandish a thing that one must needs go a little into the history and philosophy of it. (1112)

But the aside quickly concludes that landlubbers are caught up in the blubber or blob of auto-cannibalism:

Look at your knife-handle, there, my civilized and enlightened gourmand dining off that roast beef, what is that handle made of? – what but the bones of the brother of the very ox you are eating? And what do you pick your teeth with, after devouring that fat goose? With a feather of the same fowl. (III4)

Rescue from this morass comes not with rationalization but swings ‘round “the spine” of the book into wish fantasizing’s last word and origin. The only parts of the whale’s spine that are lost are the smallest ones that the children stole “to play marbles with. Thus we see how that the spine of even the hugest of living things tapers off at last into simple child’s play” (1279). The round trip through the poetics of the daydream is complete. Hitting bottom in the all-consuming blob of self-reference means to rebound from playing in childhood through fantasizing or reverie, its adolescent legacy.

### There It Blows Up

Although remarks and sharks don’t make literature, in Ernest Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* (1952), his ticket to the Nobel Prize, the sharks that in *Moby-Dick* are massacred when they gather to feed on the dead whale strapped to the ship cannot be defeated by the old man alone when they come to feast on the marlin he caught and killed. Sharks undo the triumph of the man’s will and take the story out of heroic fantasy and deliver it to literature, making it the modern heir to *Moby-Dick*. All that remains of the old fisherman’s marlin at the end is the skeleton in the harbor. His catch is lost again in translation when the waiter is misunderstood by an America tourist, who marvels that a shark could have such a beautiful tail.<sup>21</sup>

21 I follow Melissa McCarthy in using the shark as a tool for rereading. See *Sharks, Death, Surfers: An Illustrated Companion* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2019).

What floats the narrative up to the shark attack is not heroic fantasy alone. The old man, more like Queequeg than Ahab, is immersed in animist respect for the animals he kills, a respect that extends to the firmament (but not to sharks). “I do not understand these things, he thought. But it is good that we do not have to try to kill the sun or the moon or the stars. It is enough to live on the sea and kill our true brothers.”<sup>22</sup>

If it’s true that for Hemingway the sharks were the literary critics who had declared him dead in the water ten years before he wrote this prize-winner, then he owes to the shark waters of a mediocre literary establishment the impetus that yielded a short novel so bare bones in its language that it became the disc jockey standard of American discourse. There follows a break in reception, which ultimately delivered a cinematic lineage stuck between the old-timey movie adaptation *Moby Dick* in 1956 and the lost at Bluescreen 1958 movie *The Old Man and the Sea*. When Peter Benchley pitched two ideas for a novel he would write on contract, one of which he based on local reports of shark attacks in the 1960s, Doubleday commissioned the latter and, although the result wasn’t great literature, it was a 1974 bestseller that quickly attracted the movie option in which the projection of *Moby-Dick* would be stowaway.

The bulk rate of Benchley’s *Jaws* can be characterized as a slasher novelization. In the book the local Black boy asks his father for a shark story instead of *Peter Pan*.<sup>23</sup> The all-whiteness of slasher fare retrofitted for beach wear scores the boy’s outsider identification with the killer engine – or Ingin, whose god alone, according to Queequeg, could make sharks (1116). In the 1975 Steven Spielberg movie *Jaws*, the musical score follows the beat of the *Psycho* sound track, but a different bummer. It wasn’t Jack the Ripper we’re told as the music plays; it was a shark. When the sheriff’s young son cuts himself he says or fantasies that he was bitten by a vampire. The switch away from secular horror to occult horror means that on screen the shark, largely unseen and

22 Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea* (New York: Scribner, 2020), 28.

23 Peter Benchley, *Jaws* (New York: Bantam Books, 1974), 106–7.

unknown, will qualify as a metaphysical menace, one that can, however, be destroyed.

Only in the closing section of the novel, when Quint opens a field of combat against the great white, does literary self reflexivity summon the great American novel. Don't know if any of them read the book but I bet Spielberg and his screenwriters, including Benchley, did see the John Huston movie. A scene was planned in which Quint, laughing maniacally, watched the closing scene of *Moby Dick*. Although Gregory Peck vetoed the citation, Huston's film informs the movie *Jaws* throughout, the Spielberg adaptation that reflects as much of Benchley's novel as can pass through its closing Quint section.

The great white shark in the movie is evil incarnate but, unlike the great white whale in *Moby-Dick*, can be destroyed (but only by taking along Quint, which cites Captain Ahab's demise). Quint, however, dies heroically, accomplishing his mission. What that mission looks like fits the prehistory Quint relates in the movie only. During World War Two he was on the good ship that delivered the Hiroshima bomb. But then a Japanese submarine sank it and the crew took a dip in shark-infested waters. Only one third survived. "Anyway, we delivered the bomb."

Sheriff Brody confirms his share in the heroic saga at the end. This arc was established early on in the film by the Dolly Zoom, the visual effect, as we saw, introduced in Hitchcock's *Vertigo* to convey the protagonist's disorder by showing us what he sees when he looks down. In *Jaws* we look through the lurching visual effect at the sheriff staring at the convulsions of the victim and the blood spout concluding the shark attack. It is through Brody that we can identify with Quint. At the end, then, Brody takes over where Quint left off and blows up the shark. This bomb and the atom bomb are not in the novel.

*Jaws* adapts *Moby-Dick* via Huston's film as a fantasy picture with a happy end that coincides with the end of World War Two. *Jaws* was the biggest grossing film in history until (only two years later) there was *Star Wars*. It is possible to read Spielberg's film through the *Heimat* of the blockbuster that George Lucas's movie fully illuminated. In *Jaws* the borderland has been modified. The fantasy heroic saga plays out in a contemporary setting in which World War Two jumps out of the recent past. And the



saga abuts on what it denies, the secular horror central to the novel. The present tense and the secular are otherwise the input of science fiction. The modifications fit the arrival of Melville's *Moby-Dick* across a sea that is a firmament. The movie *Jaws* inherits the Great American Novel by unconsciously repurposing and realigning the temporal paradox of its crypt.

In *Moby-Dick*, the narrator reflects on the sea's tranquil aspect that belies the "remorseless fang" lying beneath, which triggers fantasizing about the Westward-Ho transport across the new world from sea to shining sea:

The distant ship [...] seems struggling forward, not through high rolling waves, but through the tall grass of a rolling prairie [...]. You almost swear that play-wearied children lie sleeping in these solitudes [...]. And all this mixes with your most mystic mood; so that fact and fancy, half-way meeting, interpenetrate, and form one seamless whole (1317).

The narrator gives Ahab the floor. He pronounces that just as there is "a storm for every calm" so "there is no steady unretracing progress in this life" (1318). In the recycling that he charts adolescence is pivotal:

We do not advance through fixed gradations and at the last one pause: – through infancy's unconscious spell, boyhood's thoughtless faith, adolescence' doubt (the common doom), then scepticism, then disbelief, resting at last in manhood's pondering repose of If. But once gone through, we trace the round again; and are infants, boys, and men, and Ifs eternally. (ibid.)

Whereupon Ahab asks: "where lies the final harbor, whence we unmoor no more?" (ibid.). The safe harbor can't be "manhood's pondering repose of If," from which we flash back upon a development already passed through but which this time lacks "adolescence' doubt (the common doom)." The redoubt of fantasizing circling in upon itself between fancy and fact – between "what if?" and "as if!" – lowers its common doom upon the work of publication between wish and will.

But exceptionally, a novel rises up from the blob of this impasse. For if, as Ahab concludes, “Our souls are like those orphans whose unwedded mothers die in bearing them” taking with them “the secret of our paternity” (ibid.), it is a conclusion that turns around again upon the narrator’s sole survival as “another orphan” (the last words of the novel) and as author of *Moby-Dick*, his safe harbor of narration of traumatic history through allegorization of fantasizing’s datemarks.

The wonder and wounding of deep meaning in *Moby-Dick* sets coordinates against a contrast that again calls up the novel’s affinity with the other genre of unknown worlds: “And some certain significance lurks in all things, else all things are little worth, and the round world itself but an empty cipher, except [...] to fill up some morass in the Milky Way” (1253). The ships of the whaling industry explore, like space ships brought down to earth, final frontiers. The whale-ship is extolled as “pioneer in ferreting out the remotest and least known parts of the earth. She has explored seas and archipelagos which had no chart, where no Cook or Vancouver had ever sailed” (909).

One contribution by whale-ships to the charting of the unknown occurred in 1819 whereupon “the great Japanese whaling ground first became generally known” (1267). The mid-nineteenth-century novel announces an opening up of Japan’s harbors coming soon for which the whale-ship was the stimulus: “If that double-bolted land, Japan, is ever to become hospitable, it is the whale-ship alone to whom the credit will be due; for already she is on the threshold” (911).

The ship Ahab commands was once before nearly wrecked in a storm off the coast of Japan and had to be repaired on location. When the narrator first encounters the ship, he chronicles the repair work and then fancies a comparison from another world, another time: “Her masts – cut somewhere on the coast of Japan, where her original ones were lost overboard in a gale – her masts stood stiffly up like the spines of the three old kings of Cologne” (867). The book that turns on these spines charts a “history” like wish fulfillment in fantasizing belonging only to the future it approximates in the mode of an encrypted augury.

The showdown with the great white whale takes Ahab back to the recent past of his ship, which in the repair of its masts

had already breached Japan's double bolts. The recent past is the most repressed time zone. It counts as prehistory, which can only return in the mode of catastrophe. Our hypothetical use of the near future represses it. Encryptment is strung along from a series of recent pasts up through a series of near futures. After penetrating "the heart of the Japanese cruising ground" in pursuit of his whale (1317), Ahab must withstand a typhoon: "It will sometimes burst from out that cloudless sky, like an exploding bomb upon a dazed and sleepy town" (1329).

The ship with the replaced masts makes it through the reprisal of its Japanese history, but the "exploding bomb" is a storm warning issued through the temporal paradox of the crypt. In a novel characterized, perhaps exotically, certainly homoerotically, by utopian race relations, the detonation has no other place to resound. The novel's conscious relationship to Japan is situated between the recent past of large-scale blubber hunting and the near future of its obsolescence. The forced opening of Japan's harbors by the American fleet only a few years following the completion of *Moby-Dick* was propelled by the exigencies of the whaling industry. By then, blubber-hunting had started going into decline. Whale oil was a nearly exhausted resource and fossil fuels, which were becoming readily available, offered an expedient replacement.

While the first era of the imposed modernization of Japan organized itself ultimately around the import of European fascism, the double atom bombing inaugurated a second era organized around identification with American popular culture, the by-product of another forced opening of Japan's double bolts. That the atomic catastrophe did not block innovation in this forced reception has many reasons, no doubt specific to Japanese culture. If we once more look at *Godzilla*, the scenes of the rolling destruction of the monster's "atomic breath" or death, a wrap that, since possible only in the medium of motion pictures, was also a sublime blob of self-reference, we get a sense of acceptance of an event without end or turning point.

From the US perspective, what's wrong about the bombings doesn't involve the tallying of victims. Ask non-Japanese East Asians or Pacific Islanders: their imperialism was so ruthless that the Japanese were, as we say, asking for it. What was of dire

consequence, however, was that the decision to use the weapon against Japan was willy-nilly, a whim outside history. The atom bomb was Germany's bomb; it was developed by scientists in the United States, including German Jews who had escaped, in informed realization that they were engaged in a contest with the weapons industry of the Third Reich, an industry that specialized in weapons as miraculous as the hoped-for final victory. That the Germans surrendered before the bomb could be used against them doesn't motivate the decision to drop the same bomb on Japan. Yes, the war against terror belongs to the symptom picture of this "rogue" decision.

There is a YouTube post, the interview of a bystander – innocent, ironic, or psycho – at an anti- or pro-Trump demonstration. Since topical application marks the onset of allegory we come full loop with his deranged or inspired insistence that "Trump is going to complete the system of German idealism."<sup>24</sup> The only way that would work is by dropping the bomb where it belongs.

### Wanting Bombs to Explode

We don't have the backstory of loss in the case of Spider-Man that we're given in the histories of Superman and Batman. But we have a more thoroughly deprived young person at the start of his superhero career. As low-maintenance charge in the care of an aged couple (Uncle Ben and Aunt May), he's known as Petey.

He flunks all the initiation tests of the Teen Age. Not everyone can be a dream-butt letter-sweater jock like Flash, a.k.a. Mr. Popular, and leader of the in-group. But Petey's a "bookworm" and, since he can't dance, a "wallflower."<sup>25</sup> These are characteriza-

24 I rehearsed my reading of the *Blob* trilogy and *Moby-Dick* in writing about Alexander Nowak's online series *Blob* (my essay appeared in the online journal *KubaParis*). One of the episodes in the series included the post from YouTube mentioned above. A recurring character in a spaceship is the Hypersea Fisherman. This was my impetus for reading up on the theory of hypersea.

25 I consulted the first volume in the collection of facsimile editions of the comic books: *Amazing Spider-Man* (New York: Marvel, 2014). I give the title of the comic book and the original pagination: "Introducing

tions that signal disturbance in relations to the body, that is, to the maternal body (and the body of the group) and demarcate graves secretly kept inside the Peter Parker story.

Upon entering the science exhibit on Experiments in Radioactivity, Peter Parker is “transported to another world – the fascinating world of atomic science.”<sup>26</sup> A tiny spider descends from the ceiling, takes a direct hit of a “fantastic amount of radioactivity” and, “in sudden shock, bites the nearest living thing, at the split second before life ebbs from its radioactive body” (ibid.).

Once he realizes that his body is super he earns an easy hundred by staying in the ring with Crusher Hogan. He arrives in superhero drag, which sparks hilarity. He’s a “little masked marvel” and, thus, a “sucker.”<sup>27</sup> But when he wins (and thus passes a TV producer’s audition), the costume angle is considered great showmanship. Soon Spider-Man is on national television. He overturns the sorry reception of the superheroes in the Teen Age as long-underwear midlifers and losers.

While he says goodbye to the reporters and his fans he sees a thief, chased by a policeman calling for Spider-Man’s assistance. But Spider-Man does nothing to impede the crook passing by him. When the cop confronts Spider-Man, it’s Peter Parker who answers from within the recess he is enjoying from bullying: “Sorry, pal! That’s your job! I’m thru being pushed around – by anyone! From now on I just look out for number one – that means – *me!*” But then Uncle Ben is murdered. Spider-Man is roused to avenge his uncle’s death and tracks down the perpetrator. He recognizes in the murderer the man of steal he allowed to pass.

Peter can support his aunt only in the guise of the Spider-Man who steals the show and walks off with the cash. But now the owner of the theater will pay Spider-Man only by check “so there’s a record for taxes.” This bouncing reality check cannot be cashed. The superhero may be younger now, but his setting develops a more adult profile and it impinges on him.

Spider-Man,” 1.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 5.

The local newspaper magnate J. Jonah Jameson has mounted a campaign to outlaw Spider-Man: a masked identity is a menace. But the bad press gives the teen superhero constant coverage that requires more and more photographs. Now Parker can step in as mild-mannered photographer to benefit from his Spider-Man connection without giving it away.

The headlines of Jameson's campaign call forth a double, Mysterio, who shows up several psychos down the line during Spider-Man's first year. Mysterio starts out committing crimes for all to see dressed like Spider-Man. This doubling hits Parker hard. Could it be that he is "becoming a split personality?? Like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?? Perhaps – Perhaps I did it in my *sleep* – without knowing?!"<sup>28</sup> He is becoming a teenager. His consultation with a psychiatrist in his Spider-Man costume and persona is short-lived. The teen does not trust in or count on confidentiality to withstand the dare to break it.

Press photographer Peter Parker secretly attaches a spider-pin or bug to Mysterio, when the new hero is being celebrated in Jameson's office for delivering society from Spider-Man's juvenile delinquency. Both spider as "bug" and wallflower as "plant" can be reclaimed for the covert operation of tracking down Mysterio's identity.

It turns out Mysterio is a stuntman who constructed his super body and sensorium out of the latest in military technology – radar, sonar, and jamming devices – which he learned to apply to special effect working in television and film. Their showdown in the studio breaks through the walls of one set into the midst of a science-fiction movie in progress.

Spider-Man takes photos and gets the criminal's tale on tape. He obtains money as Peter Parker and vindication as Spider-Man. But then in the Spider-Man persona he strings up Jameson for laughs – and leaves him hanging. "You masked menace!" Jameson cries out.<sup>29</sup> Walking the prank of pleasure, he finds an outlet for his earlier awkwardness on the stage of the teen age.

Spider-Man finds the rub in his rejection as Peter Parker by Mr. Popular, aka Super-teen Flash, currently the president of the

28 "The Menace of Mysterio," in *Amazing Spider-Man*, 3.

29 *Ibid.*, 22.

Spider-Man fan club. At the end of the Mysterio adventure, the joking tension with Flash leads Parker/Spider-Man to imagine telling Flash his identities and watching him “explode.”

Peter Parker’s Flash fantasy is a prospect already detonated “over there.” The bombs code-name-dropped Little Boy and Fat Man made waves and went under, part of our second nature in the 1960s. In the story of Spider-Man, the collateral damage of fallout heightens the Teen Age from the outsider on in, all the way to the libidinal dream bomb. The two atom bombs were sketchily modeled by the gangsters in *The Maltese Falcon* (1941) who are engaged in a tug of war with the heterosexual contingency for one gleaming/dirty prize.<sup>30</sup> “Fat Man,” the nickname of the main gangster, Kasper Gutman, forms and breaks alliances with Joel Cairo (Peter Lorre, a delegate of German science fiction). Fat Man’s young and slight American sidekick and male gun moll doesn’t need a nickname. He *is* Little Boy, the denied partner in a fantasy of or about homosexuality, and the first atom bomb dropped in history. Fat Man, the second bomb, was first tested under the name Gadget.

The detonation targets not sexual identity but psychosexual reality in which there is always a homosexual component, the slack in the primal scene of sexual identification that allows every combo to be imagined or novelized. Freud contemplated the destiny of homosexuality in heterosexuality in the unlikely setting of Schreber’s *Memoirs of My Nervous Illness*. Only wild analysis would see Schreber’s psychotic break as breaking out of the closet. Sex is sexuality for dummies. When released from the asylum with his adult rights fully restored, Schreber continued to contemplate from the safe haven of his marriage the content of his former delusion – that he was the consort chosen for conceiving by divine rays a new survivor species – no longer as happening event that excludes the reality of others but as article of his private faith.

After the stage of heterosexual object-choice has been reached, the homosexual tendencies are not, as might be supposed,

30 See my afterword to James Reich’s *Soft Invasions* (Fort Wayne: Anti-Oedipus Press, 2017).

done away with or brought to a stop; they are merely deflected from their sexual aim and applied to fresh uses. They now combine with portions of the ego-instincts and, as “attached” components, help to constitute the social instincts, thus contributing an erotic factor to friendship and comradeship, to *esprit de corps* and to the love of mankind in general. How large a contribution is in fact derived from erotic sources (with the sexual aim inhibited) could scarcely be guessed from the normal social relations of mankind.<sup>31</sup>

While it is tempting to historicize Freud’s discovery as specific to the priority of same-sex contact with socialization in his own time, you still tend to send yourself and your gender into the heroic sagas that transform private wish fulfillment and open the social relation.<sup>32</sup> There couldn’t be gender dysphoria otherwise.

Melanie Klein’s “Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Tics” was centered on the case of Felix, which under-cover was the case of her son Hans. The physical aspect of fantasizing that is Klein’s topic is flexed by her novelization of the analysis of her own son, which gives rise to the overdetermined gestures of confidentiality pervading the essay. “His mother mentioned only by the way that for some months he had had a tic, which appeared only occasionally and to which she – and for that matter I too, at least for a period – did not attach special importance.”<sup>33</sup>

31 Sigmund Freud, “Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides),” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XII (1911–1913): The Case of Schreber, Papers on Technique and Other Works*, ed. and trans. James Strachey with Anna Freud (London: The Hogarth Press, 1958), 61.

32 This applies to both sexes but with differences that need to be accounted for. I’m focusing on the homosexual disposition in the male. The incorporation of someone of the other gender contains the differences but abridged to fit inside melancholia. That’s how I get around including Melanie Klein without elaborating the vantage point or investment of her gender in her schoolboy reading.

33 Melanie Klein, “A Contribution to the Psychogenesis of Tics,” in *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works 1921–1945* (New York: The Free Press, 1984), 106. In an earlier footnote in the first volume I noted that



In her young patients Klein in fact promoted masturbation over the acting out of repressed masturbatory fantasies, but in the case of Felix/Hans she ruled out its mutual enactment because it was diverting his attention from the analysis. Klein's signature equanimity about incest allowed her to probe instead for her own place in the tic-rebus of fantasizing. Like Ernst Simmel after her, Klein decided Hans was a closet straight. The essay in which Klein first used the term "object relation"<sup>34</sup> came back to haunt her when Hans died a young man in a climbing accident, always a possible cover for undeclared suicide. She fictionalized her grief, trying to give it a rest in theory in "Mourning and Its Relation to the Manic-Depressive States."

In the fictionalized account of her analysis of Hans, Klein sees the preliminary condition of fidgeting enact wishes that the tic condenses. Klein interrupts the analysis of Felix/Hans to address the case of an exogamous patient, Werner, whose fidgeting followed Tarzan.

He told me that he fidgeted about Tarzan's animals. The monkeys are walking through the jungle; in his fantasy he walks behind them and adapts himself to their gait. Associations showed clearly his admiration for his father who copulates with his mother (monkey = penis) and his wish to participate as a third person. This identification, again with both mother and father, also formed the basis of his other numerous "fidgeting" thoughts, all of which could be recognized as masturbation fantasies. (118).

Fidgeting is clear text. In other instances as well, Werner's routines were based on "imitation of certain movements, in this case those of winding up the gramophone and of the needle moving over the disc" (119). Werner: "Fidgeting is fun, but it isn't always fun, you can't leave off when you want to – as, for instance, when

for the sake of my study's focus I am disregarding the distinct spelling (and meaning of) "phantasy." Subsequent page references are given in the text.

34 See Phyllis Grosskurth, *Melanie Klein: Her World and Her Work* (New York: Knopf, 1986), 96.

you ought to do your lessons” (118). The restlessness takes the place of masturbation and masturbation fantasies. When Felix lies, specifically his avowal during a lull that he has completely overcome his masturbatory preoccupations, he doesn’t grow wood but instead the tic returns with increased severity.

Gidget’s night dream of being in love with Moondoggie is the sublime cliffhanger that in the relay of novels is awash with the daydreaming and wish fantasizing that drive the near misses and reach back behind the book covers to the father’s fictionalizing, his fantasizing. The night dream wasn’t triggered by a conscious wish. However her night of feverish dreaming does follow at least three hours of riding the surf “bareback”<sup>35</sup> on Moondoggie’s shoulders.

I rode in on his back and boy, was it a blast. He must have had a great time himself because he said, “Let’s go out again, Gidget.” So we went out again and waited for another good hump and when it came he did another “standing island” – meaning he didn’t spill and I had my hands around his head and felt just great.

The old heat just pounded down on us. My skin started blistering but we went out again and again because you just can’t loll around and shoot the breeze and lie to the sun when a set of waves is going like it did that afternoon.<sup>36</sup>

“Don’t fidget Gidget,”<sup>37</sup> Moondoggie told her before their “bareback ride”<sup>38</sup> folding denial into word play alongside the name that’s his innovation.

The foundation for the fidgeting of Werner and Felix was a narcissistic turning back on the self as a loved object. Klein recognizes the narcissistic turn in Werner’s fantasies of a “Little One” who proves more skilled than a “Big One” (119). “The ‘Little One’ is not only the penis but he, himself, in comparison with his father; and the admiration for himself, which he expressed

35 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget* (New York: Berkley, 2001), 51.

36 *Ibid.*, 51–52.

37 *Ibid.*, 43.

38 *Ibid.*, 51.

in this way, showed the narcissistic disposal of his libido” (ibid.). The turn, prompted by castration anxiety following adoption of a feminine attitude, results in fantasizing that at the same time represents the defense against that attitude. This counter and counter-counter must be hit over and again in the primal game.

Werner produced a fantasy about a jazz band, the sounds of which he imitated, and said that he was “fidgeting” about it. He showed me how the trumpeter plays his instrument, how the leader conducts and the man with the big drum beats. On my asking him what in this connection he was “fidgeting” about, he replied that he was taking part in all these activities. (119–20)

Peter Parker or Petey turns into Spider-Man. Even when undercover, he’s still super powerful on the inside but on the outside the potency fits inside Petey. Sometimes even the superhero is known as Spidey. His super-powerful body secretes the means for advancing swiftly through the city like Tarzan swinging through the trees. Their movement, which follows animals, could be compared to fidgeting. Spider-Man and Gidget are tiny shiny gadgets through which midlifers Stan Lee, born Stanley Lieber, and Friedrich Kohner partake of the Teen Age. While in Rome Gidget notes that her “daydreams” are “slightly soiled.”<sup>39</sup>

### No One Can Know His Name

At the end of the series of radioactive doublings, Peter Parker sets off an explosion in Flash by flashing his own secret name. This is his inner stomping ground: like Rumpelstiltskin he dances around his flaming all the while chanting that no one knows its name. That the queen’s messenger passes by and overhears his name, however, has to happen, like the confidentiality breach Spider-Man equated with the analytic session.

Edmund Bergler addressed the significance of the Grimm fairy tale as “anti-male manifesto” in the setting of the analysis of one

39 Frederick Kohner, *Gidget Goes to Rome* (New York: Bantam, 1963), 61.

of his patients.<sup>40</sup> When one day he asks the patient whether she has dreamed in the nights since her last appointment, she answers that she doesn't recall any but that thoughts of Rumpelstiltskin have been crossing her mind (67).

Bergler prompts her to re-tell the tale as she remembers it. Although she leaves out many telling details, she gladly includes the final castration. He concludes: "The 'condensation word,' Rumpelstiltskin, contained her whole inner conflict in an unconscious innuendo" (ibid.). A "condensation word," Bergler clarifies at the end of the article, conveys a reproach by the superego (70). Obfuscated by the "unconscious ego" through an intermingling of defenses and arrested by the ego in the midst of the word's publication, the result is meaningless and for the ego painless. I would add that the condensation word Rumpelstiltskin also resembles, in the setting of Freud's first system, the alteration of an antisocial daydream preliminary to its going public, stopping at midpoint, like a memory stopping and restarting it, or like joint daydreaming that makes it mutual.

In the fairy tale, a father, wanting to look good, boasts to the king that his daughter can spin straw into gold. It sounds like fantasizing out loud. It's mutual to be sure when the king takes him up on it, locking up the girl in his castle so she can work her magic for him. Twice she is aided by the poltergeist Rumpelstiltskin. The third trial is a charm because the king assures her that they will be wed if she pulls it off one last time. When Rumpelstiltskin again helps her out, he asks in exchange for her first born. She gives away her unborn child and becomes queen.

A year later, she is sitting pretty with a baby on her lap when he returns. She offers anything at all in the realm instead but nothing is as good, he says, as something living. At this point he is phallic power incarnate, Bergler points out, but at the limit; he can make gold or money (= feces) but not a living child (66). The poltergeist either pities her or can't overlook an opportunity to play another round. He offers her a way out, gambling that

40 Edmund Bergler, "The Clinical Importance of 'Rumpelstiltskin' as Anti-Male Manifesto," *American Imago* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1961): 65-70. Subsequent page numbers are given in the text.

in three days time she will not discover his name. She sends an envoy to collect all possible names in the kingdom. On the third day of his mission, he passes by a little man dancing and chanting around a fire and overhears his name. When the next day the queen utters the name Rumpelstiltskin he tears himself in two, a castration, says Bergler, that counts a pair of breasts (66).

The child is jealous of the mother's creativity (65). But in the first place, the focus is on the breasts and Bergler nominates breast envy the bigger one. The girl takes hope by equating her clitoris with the nipple of the breast *in spe*. The boy equates his penis with the breast and adopts a "He-man" attitude that devalues women (*ibid.*). At this point Bergler refers the reader to his book *Counterfeit Sex* on the treatable illness of homosexuality.

The essay on Rumpelstiltskin, published in the year of his death, is Bergler's testament. In the first sentence, he announces that the fine points of the fairy tale have so far been overlooked. His patient has come to him for a second round of analysis. She was analyzed for five years, in part inside a sanitarium, for a presenting problem of depression which she acted out sexually. The first analysis, which Bergler reconstructs, overlooked the fine points of her case.

The former analyst saw her identifying both with her father (who wasn't high fidelity) and his extra-marital women. The outcome seemed successful enough. She married a man many years her senior and had three children in swift succession. But then her husband died in a car accident and she moved with her children to the vicinity of her parents' home, renting a furnished apartment with books on the shelves, including several by Bergler, which she read. She was convinced that she was the poster girl of "psychic masochism" and contacted Bergler, fulfilling for a moment his abiding wish for fame.

Bergler sees that the patient's conflict "in inner reality" was "*pre*-Oedipal, centering around unresolved masochistic attachment to the mother image" (67). The former analyst succeeded in warding it "off with an Oedipal blind" (68). Bergler focuses instead on the patient's recollection that when she was five years old her mother announced that she would have left her philandering husband if not for the existence of their child.

At the sanitarium, the patient's first response to Oedipal explanation was to fill her "half-promiscuous" (67) behavior to the brim. She had affairs with anyone available including the "half-psychotic" inmates (68). She was living out two "curious" defenses. The more emotionally unimportant the men, the more she insulated herself against her real feelings for the father (= analyst). And she hoped to become pregnant because then, she felt, she could commit suicide. When there was improvement after all, she terminated the treatment and shortly afterwards was married.

Bergler's analysis of the patient, like his interpretation of the fairy tale, subsumes the efforts of his precursors as defenses covering the deeper problem, which he alone recognizes. The case, a referral from his books, covers the terrain in which Bergler staked his claim to fame through reversals of standard receptions.

Her analysis clearly demonstrated that the patient had been desperately trying, all her life, to admit to "the lesser intrapsychic crime" (Oedipal) in order to cover up her "real crime" (psychic masochism around mother). (68)

Bergler finds "proof" in the "paradox" that all her affairs left her infertile while in her marriage she was remarkably fecund. He imagines that during her promiscuity she flexed "spasm of the tubes, a well-known phenomenon in neurotic infertility" (69).

The answer to the paradox lies in family history. It turns out there was a scandal older than the father-and-daughter acting-out team. In the father's family an infamous mother flagrantly bore a generation out of wedlock, which I guess means that no one knew the patronymic. The patient's father had compensated for the family blemish by marrying a woman from higher social circles. If the patient had succeeded in becoming pregnant in one of her sketchy liaisons she would have fortified her mother's complaint, proving that the father's family history had forwarded its blemish. But the patient didn't want to give her mother the satisfaction. While a cursory look on this score recognizes hatred of the mother, that's a defense covering the patient's real aim: "to keep the suffering mother in her position as the suffering model for identification" (69).

What then was the mother's "crime," the crime to which the patient, as "innocent victim," became a party? It was *the mother's capacity to have children in the first place.* (ibid.)

The patient's plan while in the sanitarium to conceive bastards and then commit suicide was in thrall to the "unconscious fantasy" that her mother was capable of killing her unborn child (ibid.).

The patient's massive depressions did not pertain to being unloved or rejected, not to her superficial Oedipal guilt. The depressions were shifted to these deposits in order to cover up the real source: masochistic attachment to the mother. (ibid.)

What about the husband, her first dead other? Bergler overlooks his role just as he skips the death wish stirring the depression "deposits" of blocked mourning.

The family blemish goes back, according to Bergler, to the patient's great-grandmother, who had two illegitimate children and stood by her unmarried status, even turning down the father's subsequent offer of marriage. There is a generation, then, that is not accounted for, as in the case of Peter Parker. He is being raised by his uncle and aunt who look old enough to be his grandparents. The name of the mild-mannered wallflower and bookworm cites and summons the well-known tongue-twister, Peter Parker picked a peck of pickled peppers. It blocks access like the scramble-ditty Ben Reich memorized to keep the peepers out of his head in Bester's *The Demolished Man*. The pickled peppers like the stilt propping up the poltergeist's name suggest an abused phallic symbol. In German, spinning (*Spinnen*) is linked to the spider (*Spinne*), a maternal symbol. To say that someone spins in German can also mean the person is a fantast, even crazy. For Peter Parker the lost generation, the underworld that inspires his fantasizing, helps him spin his wallflowers into superpowers. A poltergeist can be an emissary of the dead. In Bergler's case the lost generation symbolizes his own removal of his precursors.

Rumpelstiltskin on his patient's mind was lodged transferentially against him. But that's not all, Bergler assures us. The original superegoic reproach that the condensation word scrambled

was that his patient was wrong to think she had outgrown her masochistic attachment by giving birth and earning the right to devalue men. Bergler lets the superego speak through him: “Nobody wants you for your own sake, but only because you can provide gold (parental wealth). *You* are still – Rumpelstiltskin” (70). So is Bergler: she wants his analysis and gives him her gold because he wrote the books that were lying around, yesterday’s books used for furnishing a rental.

### Space Race

In *More Than Human* (1953), Theodore Sturgeon assembles out of assorted defectives bearing tele-gifts an evolutionary inheritance of the earth. Around the saga of an in-group of five paranormals becoming the Homo Gestalt of the future, Sturgeon’s novel allegorizes disparate themes of “psychic evolution” that cold-war science fiction explored between the limit states of psychosis and psychopathy.

First there was Lone, a telepathic idiot, who “learned very slowly to give ideas the form of speech” because ideas, which “are in themselves formless,” “were transmitted to him directly.”<sup>41</sup> According to the inside view of Lone’s telepathy-enhanced idiocy, it seems rather that he carries a psychotic break that is also the basis for an alternate psychic apparatus.

He lived inside somewhere, apart, and the little link between word and significance hung broken. [...] He carried another thing. It was passive, it was receptive [...]. This was a thing which only received and recorded. It did this without words, without a code system of any kind. (3–5)

The broken “link” hanging in there summons Wilfred Bion, who offered “linking” for thinking about the relationship to function rather than to the object subserving a function.<sup>42</sup> What

41 Theodore Sturgeon, *More Than Human* (London: Gollancz, 2000), 26. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

42 Wilfred R. Bion, “Attacks on Linking [1959],” in *Second Thoughts* (London: Karnac, 1984), 102.



Melanie Klein termed the “paranoid-schizoid” position is home to what Bion revalorized as “attacks on linking.”

If it is borne in mind that the patient has a part-object relationship with himself as well as with objects not himself, it contributes to the understanding of phrases such as “it seems” which are commonly employed by the deeply disturbed patient on occasions when a less disturbed patient might say “I think” or “I believe.” When he says “it seems” he is often referring to a feeling – an “it seems” feeling – which is a part of his psyche and yet is not observed as part of a whole object. The conception of the part-object as analogous to an anatomical structure, encouraged by the patient’s employment of concrete images as units of thought, is misleading because the part-object relationship is not with the anatomical structures only but with function, not with anatomy but with physiology, not with the breast but with feeding, poisoning, loving, hating.<sup>43</sup>

The feeling of “it seems” can stitch up the seams of a new address for structuring functions. That an aggregate can restore function is one of the truths of social media. On Facebook, “friends” overcome public fears like writer’s block post by post, the baby steps that lead from a lonely incapacity into the public sphere of “liking,” I mean linking. The Homo Gestalt inherits the psychotic borderline through its amalgamation into a new unit of tele-abilities that go beyond compensation for shortcomings.

Sturgeon spins his tale of tele in a tight spot. As the pages of *More Than Human* turn, Lone assembles the first Homo Gestalt, a prosthetic conjoining of part-subjects each augmented by various tele-capacities. Janie, a telekineticist, arrives at Lone’s cave together with Bonnie and Beanie, the twin teleports. Lone alternates between the Gestalt and his contact with humans on the periphery of the Gestalt’s formation. Because he flashes on his foster mother’s charity and generosity toward him in the recent past, he can reverse his rejection of Janie and the twins and inaugurate with them the Homo Gestalt.

43 Ibid, 101–2.

Lone makes first human contact with a girl in flight from a household of abuse. "He began to move – he who had never called nor been called, nor responded before. He moved toward the thing he sensed and it was a matter of will, not of external compulsion" (9). But while "the currents of their inner selves surged between them" (16), the girl's father, alerted by her older sister, who can't get enough of his whip handle, catches them, kills the girl, nearly kills Lone, and then commits suicide. A couple discovers the contact-traumatized youth and adopts him. Under the caring conditions at the farm, as he begins to find language and is asked his name, he stammers out "all alone," which is understood as "Lone." Although it looks like he's beginning to recover from the traumatized condition, what's observed is really the onset of his human development. When a baby is on the way, he goes back to the wilderness to spare them the pain of telling him to go.

On a later visit to the farm, Lone discovers that his foster mother died giving birth to a mongoloid baby while the deranged husband barely hangs on waiting for her return. Lone takes the infant to the Gestalt, his new home. Janie, who alone can communicate with "Baby," as he will remain henceforth in name and constitution, recognizes that he is like an "adding machine" (69). Baby explains through Janie that he is "a figure-outer brain" while she is the "body," the twins the "arms and legs," and Lone the "head": "He says the 'I' is all of us" (76). If Baby, who remains always the same, could be replaced, in other words, if he could die and be replaced, then the Homo Gestalt would be immortal.

Lone continues to go to the farm to help his foster father. Because the truck keeps getting stuck in the mud, which stops work when Lone isn't there to help, Baby, on Lone's request, invents a helpful device for lifting the truck's stuck end, which turns out to be a miniature anti-gravity generator. This unlikely overskill gadget hiding out on the soon abandoned farm is the potential catalyst for "wingless flight and escape to the planets, to the stars, perhaps" (196).

*More Than Human* is also the allegory of its "fix-up" composition, a trait it shares with many other American science fiction novels, like those by A.E. van Vogt. Sturgeon's novel is a compilation of earlier short stories, which become different parts of the

novel, different histories, which begin to communicate after the fact in the course of the psychoanalysis of one of the members of the Gestalt, Gerry. Under treatment for oblivion, Gerry tells the story of how when Lone died in an accident he replaced him as the head. With Lone gone, Gerry goes to the surviving sister of Lone's first human contact. She would take care of the Gestalt, Lone advised him, because she owes him. In analysis with Dr. Stern, Gerry remembers that he murdered her to protect the Gestalt against normalization, which would have yielded "ninety per cent short-circuited potentials and ten per cent juvenile delinquent" (143).

Dr. Stern interprets the unique and unprecedented Homo Gestalt as indeed alone, and therefore in need of "something" his patient does not "know anything about" and that, if he told him, wouldn't mean anything to him. "It's sometimes called morality" (145). Gerry concludes that the shrink is merely afraid of their new entity and then erases Dr. Stern's memory along with the tapes of their sessions. "Much funnier than thinking about him being dead" (146).

The narrative attends to any sign of improvement in the psychopathic profile of Gerry, the nickname for the "German." His integration in the Homo Gestalt, which remains iffy, is nevertheless a big part of making the new group ego a viable candidate for the position of new poster norm of evolutionary change.

Janie takes over where the sessions with Dr. Stern left off by helping Hip out from under his oblivion. While an engineer in the US Air Force, Hip stumbled upon the remains of the anti-gravity device while looking into odd test results on the anti-aircraft practice range. Hoping to spark his interest and draw him out of his slump, Janie alerts Gerry to Hip's discovery. Gerry is a psychopath and his energy was carrying the Gestalt forward until he succumbed to manic-depression (205). He had become convinced "that he didn't need to prove anything to anyone" (*ibid.*). Gerry's intelligence didn't get a contact high from Hip's "mathematical recreation" (206). Instead he wasted Hip's life out of envy, a "kind of childishness" that "was pretty vicious" (205). When Hip "shared his discovery," Gerry "suddenly smiled at him, pulled the lever, let a wrecked truck and a lifetime dream fall upward into the sky" (198). Gerry added to the injury the

oblivion that Janie is helping lift (206). What lifted off with the anti-gravity device could have led “to the addition of one more item to the United Field – what we now call psychic energy” (206–7).

Janie picks up this lack by leading the Gestalt, through acceptance of “morals,” which are a “coded survival instinct,” toward a “psychic evolution instead of the physical” (220). She integrates those figures of humanity on the periphery of the constitution of the Gestalt who had not yet been included within its history. The only thing Janie knows about moral systems is that if they’re violated, one feels ashamed (215). So, she’ll start with that by bringing Hip into the Gestalt: Gerry must “learn something that a computer can’t teach him. He’s got to learn to be ashamed” (214).

Gerry thinks that the ethos he’s been learning is too small a concept to cover the how and why of humanity’s existence, which Homo Gestalt will inherit. Then he gives the only formulation of morality that is recognizable. It’s the utilitarian valorization of sacrifice, which acquits the Gestalt of the crimes of “Gerry.” “Here was the withheld hand as thousands died, when by their death millions might live” (233). That Hip becomes the Homo Gestalt’s new function, its conscience, shifts the “awesome Watcher in the sky” in Gerry’s thoughts, making room for “a laughing thing with a human heart and a reverence for its human origins” (ibid.). The novel concludes on Gerry “humbly” rejoining the Gestalt’s inheritance of the earth.

That the orphan teleport twins who join in the Homo Gestalt are Black, another mark against them in their 1950s setting, which they, however, zip past, is a good intro for considering *Wild Seed* (1980), a novel by Octavia E. Butler, whose oeuvre lies between fantasy and science fiction in ways compatible with Ursula Le Guin’s diplomacy. By going Black to the future, Butler’s work could be adopted as Afrofuturism, a concept that took off by the late 1990s and hit blockbuster culture with *Black Panther* (2018). In Afrofuturism, you go to the future not to deny the past but to change its reception, its recent passage. *Wild Seed* “changes” the traumatic history of slavery by redirecting its course in the service of a new psychic constitution akin to that of the Homo Gestalt.

When the author as a young girl saw the SF movie from the UK, *Devil Girl from Mars* (1954), she knew that proximity to science fiction, rather than only to fairy-tale fantasy, in which she was already dabbling, was the ticket. The borderzone between fantasy and science fiction was as open to newcomers as the recycling bin and has-been. It was other. And its open sesame was bolstered at that time in the United States by a new inclusion of all pupils and a newly fostered accessibility of science through the educational reforms and funding that the space race had brought about.

The lead players in *Wild Seed* are shape-shifters, with the difference that Goro, an immaterial spirit, steals bodies and consumes the lives of the former occupants, while Anyanwu, a clairvoyant healer, can become or re-member with her own pliable substance any life-form with which she made contact.

Goro believes in mastery and collects for his long-term breeding assignment candidates marked by special psychic talents. He picks up Anyanwu who goes along with the master plan. A healer or witch for hundreds of years, she is compelled by the aloneness of the unique talents Goro collects to buffer them in the new communities she works to establish.

In the time of individual development, each tele-talent goes through a pubescent process of transition, in which the paranormal ability is stabilized and can henceforth be used selectively – or extend into madness, psychopathy, and self-destruction.

The spirit or ghost inside Goro calculates that control of these extra-sensory talents, who alone could see through the deception of his being “immortal,” insures his continued survival. Those he doesn’t select are killed off by the uncomprehending in any event. Then it becomes clear that he, too, enacts the tele-transition in the process of body theft. Toward the end of the novel he makes an experiment: he pulls back from the termination phase during his stranglehold on Anyanwu and they relish instead ultimate contact, the fulfillment of transition. Thus, the suicidality to which these near-immortals, like Anne Rice’s vampires, were turning for respite from their longevity, their long goodbyes, can be stayed.

The two African superheroes span in the centuries of their relationship the trek from eastern regional civilization (Goro

means “the east”) to the new west (and its new metaphysics of science fiction). The book chronicles the westward momentum from within the history of forced African migration across the sea. Goro and Anyanwu meet in seventeenth-century Africa, and the novel ends with Anyanwu’s relocation with her community from Louisiana to California on the eve of the Civil War. Goro, whose mastery is uncompromised by the debasement of the history of slavery, simply finds the slave trade a waste from his perspective of breeding. The African contribution is the foundation. Body-based primary narcissism, which is not broken by machine relations, is what the slave trade that comes from Africa carries forward. But not for the whites, who are atrophied by the degradations they perpetrate.

Goro is always sizing up how much wear is left in his current body, so he can select his next victim. Otherwise his metabolism would decide for him and he would have to consume the one he’s with. That, too, would be a waste. Goro cannot flex the special powers of the person he replaces, but he can pass them on when he uses the borrowed body to contribute to the breeding circle. Goro was just another killer as old as the slaughter trough of history. But before the prospect of a new world he fully entered upon the melting pot experiment by setting his metabolism on choice and selection. It’s not the European fit with survival (White Man’s Burden) drawing Goro onward, but instead the prospect of a new species endowed with paranormal abilities and increased lifetime.

Like Butler, visual artist Arthur Jafa concluded: the space race *c’est moi*. The artist’s day job, Hollywood cameraman, brought him to the set of Stanley Kubrick’s *Eyes Wide Shut*, his work ending with the jolt of the director’s death. Jafa’s work of mourning was framed within the eidetic memory he flashed back on: seeing *2001: A Space Odyssey* as a pre-adolescent Black boy in Mississippi. Like Butler, he was interested in science fiction against the contemporary backdrop of the space race. Before seeing Kubrick’s film, he had been following its progress on the pages of *Popular Mechanics*. In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze argues that

when we watch Kubrick's films we are in contact with his brain.<sup>44</sup> Jafa recalls his primal viewing of Kubrick's SF movie:

First, there is the absolute whiteness of the context (both figuratively and literally). All of the characters are Caucasian and they are, in their demeanor, both archetypically and atavistically white. This is a whiteness that's sterile, creepy and ultimately seductive (I'd guess Kubrick's background, a Bronx Jew, is relevant here). [...] And second, there is the absence of both Black people and/or any apparent sign of Blackness. This absence is misleading. Ultimately, I came to recognize the film's highly repressed and anxiety-ridden preoccupation with Blackness.<sup>45</sup>

After the fact, Jafa concluded that "the obsession with/suppression of Blackness" in Kubrick's SF movie was "atypical of the genre only with respect to the elegance of its construction" (16). This retrospective judgment was passed following the instruction he took down from *Alien* and *Star Wars*, which he introjects parenthetically: "(Have you noticed that *2001*'s monolith, Darth Vader's uniform/flesh, and H.R. Giger's alien are all composed of the same black substance?)" (15).

Skipping the racist caricatures trolling around in Lucas's first *Star Wars* films,<sup>46</sup> Jafa fixes his focus on the Vader crypt as the

44 Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989), 206.

45 Arthur Jafa, *On the Blackness of Blackness: My Black Death* (Hudson: Publication Studio Hudson, 2018), 14. Subsequent page references are given in the text.

46 The trajectory of integration on board the good ship *Star Trek* went into retrograde with the racist caricatures crowding the first *Star Wars* films. In the course of tracking the phases of integration in the occult horror genre in *The Psycho Records*, I pointed out that the Black American allergy to Lucas's first round of science fantasy gave this electorate a unique immunity to President Reagan, who wrote the recycled propaganda of *Star Wars* on the banner of his politics (13). Since *Independence Day*, a remake of the basic group psychology of *Star Wars*, Will Smith provided continuity correction. Moving from the television of rerun to the digital relation of return of return, science

clear text of denied Blackness. He allows that the destruction of “Vader’s crib,” the Death Star, attacks “the engendering Black womb,” which is “a diminished, and more overtly nihilistic, replay” of the concluding sequence in Kubrick’s movie. When the butt plug pops out of John Hurt’s chest in *Alien* only the Black actor, Yaphet Koto, isn’t thrown back in shock, but leans into the recognition scene/seen.

“The Blue Danube” waltzes the transatlantic flights connecting New York and London in 1968 up through the solar system. The US diplomat in charge of covering up the monolith’s excavation on the moon has an English-accented daughter at the other end of the line. What does she want for her birthday? First choice: a telephone, which the father discounts as superfluous since they inhabit that transmission. Then she chooses instead “a bush baby,” a term that cites the idiolect of the British Empire’s White Man’s Burden. The English girl’s second choice is, then, colonial and out of Africa. But we’re in the future and, in any event, a doll or pet lodges an immediacy of affection second only to live transmission.

At the film’s conclusion, the Saturn station is a palatial introject of the French eighteenth-century style befitting a luxury hotel chain but still bearing the datemark of the Enlightenment. The monolith on the moon transmits to one astronaut standing alone in this room while the allegory of the ages of man is performed. Out of one dying old man issues the Star Child, the afterlife in outer space. The ultimate fantasy jump cut in the history of cinema – from the prehistoric weapon hurled against the monolith in Africa to the spaceship of the future traversing the Black continent of outer space – sets off a series of evolutionary-mutational leaps forward that culminates in the closing mystery sequence of rebirth. Jafa: “2001’s white/star child is engendered by a black sentient body, subliminally, and desperately, positing the possibility of pure white being issuing forth from all encompassing dark matter. A manifestation of white fear of genetic annihilation by the (Black) other” (ibid.).

fiction’s poster boy of integration could still inherit the era of *Night of the Living Dead* but outside the original setting of opposition or sacrifice.



In the setting of the Pax Americana this sci-fi bogie of Blackness is the ill-fitting and backfiring adaptation to Faustian Europe's White Man's Burden. And yet outside the tired straits of repression, Jafa's Blackness is another word for savvy, which stirs the opposition in the Cargo Cult. Because of the adolescent turbulence that the Homo Gestalt undergoes through Gerry and his morals charge as well as the growing pains that in *Wild Seed* rehearse the inheritance of the tele gift, we cannot end the Space Race at the finish line of reproduction. Like Schreber's rays-inseminated inception as transgender and cyborg bringing forth a new survivor species, the science fiction that Jafa aligns with white racism in fact fulfills the ultimate teen wish to get past reproduction and death. We close therefore instead before the prospect of an Inner/Outer Space that's as old as the concise history of adolescence. The world of reproduction is not enough.

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