

**FANTASIES OF THE MECHANICAL BODY
IN MODERNIST AND CONTEMPORARY
CULTURE**

Shohini Chaudhuri

Queen Mary and Westfield College, University of London

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD, April 2000

Abstract

This study will look at fantasies of the mechanical body in a series of close readings of key modernist and contemporary texts. It will argue that these texts are sites of resistance or repression, in which unconscious and / or cultural narratives about the death drive have left their traces. Part One, Chapters 1-3, explores the links between war and fantasy, and between fantasy and gender. Chapter One looks at the art and writings of the Italian Futurists and English Vorticists, with the focus on Marinetti and Lewis, to consider how the rationalized bodies of the soldier and worker might be seen as the covert problems underpinning the fantasy, returning to it in the form of the repressed. Chapter Two concerns the writings of Ernst Jünger, where war, modern labour, the incursion of danger into everyday life, and photography are seen to provide signs of the emergence of the *Typus*, an organic construction, who has learnt to see himself as devoid of feeling, turning the death drive into the will to power in acts of aggression, and for whom the function of the eye is the same as that of the weapon. Chapter Three investigates the problem of war-shock and the shocks of cinema in First World War film footage of shellshocked soldiers, Lang's *Metropolis*, and Chaplin's *Modern Times*. It shows how discourses of hysteria, feminization and commodity relations form the common ground between the cultural reception of both shellshock and cinema, and how film-makers and critics responded to both sets of debates. Part Two, Chapters 4-5, explores the links between the machine, the maternal body and the death drive in the *Terminator* and *Alien* films, and considers the question of affect, mourning, and identification in Cronenberg's *Crash*.

Contents

List of Illustrations	4
Acknowledgements	6
Preface	7
<i>War and Machine Aesthetics</i>	13
ONE Immaculate Bodies, Machine Aesthetics: F.T. Marinetti and Wyndham Lewis	14
TWO Ernst Jünger: the Will to Power, Photography, and War	99
THREE Shellshock, Cinema, and the Machine: Fritz Lang's <i>Metropolis</i>	124
<i>Death and Machine Technologies</i>	206
FOUR The Machine That Never Stops: Drive, Repetition, and Reproduction in the <i>Alien</i> and <i>Terminator</i> Films	207
FIVE Witnessing Death (Ballard's and Cronenberg's <i>Crash</i>)	262
Works Cited	301

List of Illustrations

- Figure 1 Wyndham Lewis, *The Crowd* (1915)
- Figure 2 Wyndham Lewis, *The Vorticist* (1912)
- Figure 3 Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity* (1913)
- Figure 4 Jacob Epstein, the original *Rock-Drill* (1913-14)
- Figure 5 Jacob Epstein, *Rock-Drill* (1916)
- Figure 6 Wyndham Lewis, *Enemy of the Stars* (1914)
- Figure 7 Umberto Boccioni, *Fusion of Head and Window* (1912)
- Figure 8 Giacomo Balla, *Dynamic Expansion + Speed* (1913)
- Figure 9 Umberto Boccioni, *The Street Enters the House* (1911)
- Figure 10 Antonio Sant'Elia, Umberto Boccioni, and F.T. Marinetti: the
Volunteers of 1915
- Figure 11 Gino Severini, *Armoured Train* (1915)
- Figure 12 Gino Severini, *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*
(1912)
- Figure 13 C.R.W. Nevinson, *Returning to the Trenches* (1914)
- Figure 14 C.R.W. Nevinson, *Paths of Glory* (1917)
- Figure 15 C.R.W. Nevinson, *La Patrie* (1916)
- Figure 16 Wyndham Lewis, *A Battery Shelled* (1919)
- Figure 17 Wyndham Lewis, *A Canadian Gun Pit* (1918)
- Figure 18 The Alliance Between Labour and Capital (Fritz Lang,
Metropolis, 1926)
- Figure 19 The Workers of Metropolis (Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1926)
- Figure 20 *Metropolis'* Female Robot (Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1926)
- Figure 21 Rotwang's Laboratory (Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1926)
- Figure 22 The Feminine-Maternal (Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1926)
- Figure 23 Woman as Spectacle (Fritz Lang, *Metropolis*, 1926)
- Figure 24 The Factory turned into a Nursery (Charlie Chaplin, *Modern
Times*, 1936)

- Figure 25 The Pellows Feeding Machine (Charlie Chaplin, *Modern Times*, 1936)
- Figure 26 "Falling into in-difference": the T1000 (James Cameron, *Terminator 2*, 1991)
- Figure 27 Walking through Metal Bars (James Cameron, *Terminator 2*, 1991)
- Figure 28 Fading into Context (Ridley Scott, *Alien*, 1979)
- Figure 29 Ripley in the Power-loader (James Cameron, *Aliens*, 1986)

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to all those who have helped me to complete this project, especially my supervisor, David Marriott, for his close and critical attention to my work, and Daniel Pick, Morag Shiach, Jacqueline Rose, and Howard Finn, for generously giving suggestions and advice. I also want to thank Lisa Herschbasch and Paul Lerner, fellows at the Wellcome Institute in 1996-97, who gave me direction at an early stage of the project. For their practical help, I would like to thank the library staff at the British Film Institute, the Imperial War Museum, the British Library, and the Special Collections unit at Senate House, too. Finally, a very warm thanks to Ollie Craske, my father Amal, and friends at the University of Essex.

Preface

Ballard: What about the reshaping of the human body by modern technology? I thought that was your project.

Vaughan: That's just a crude sci-fi concept. It kind of floats on the surface and doesn't threaten anyone.

- *Crash* (David Cronenberg, 1996)

In recent years there has been a general sense, as Hal Foster says, "that the metropolitan West is in the midst of qualitative technological transformation."¹ With the emergence of new technologies, such as virtual reality, cloning, nanotechnology, and the internet, this has renewed critical interest in the theme of technology in present day cultural texts, and has at the same time stimulated new perspectives on cultural modernism in order to qualify the idea of an epochal shift between what was experienced then and what is being experienced now. This study intervenes into that already flourishing field. It takes part in the attempts to re-evaluate modernism as well as the debates concerning contemporary texts, in order to analyze a series of key encounters in which a cultural fantasy of the mechanical body becomes operative in modernist art, film, literature, and contemporary British and North American film.

This fantasy, as the quotation from *Crash* makes clear, cannot be reduced to such banal concepts as "the reshaping of the human body by modern technology." If that is something that just "floats on the surface," then there must be something at work behind it, something more dangerous and unpalatable - something "threatening," as Vaughan suggests. One of the contentions of this thesis is that the structure of the fantasy has a relationship to

¹ Hal Foster, "Prosthetic Gods," *Modernism / Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 5-38, 31n2.

unconscious and / or cultural narratives about the death drive. These narratives may be regarded as sites of repression, where cultural and psychological anxieties are displaced, worked over, and transformed. It is in these narratives that the death drive leaves its traces and these links between the psyche and culture that the thesis explores.

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), Freud says, "We should picture the instrument which carries out our mental functions as resembling a compound microscope or a photographic apparatus."² This analogy distinguishes between the apparatus (the psychical system), and the psyche (internal perception), which is virtual. In the microscope, for example, images come into being "at ideal points, regions in which no tangible component of the apparatus is situated."³ We can see the image caused by the refraction in the lenses of the microscope, but not the lenses themselves; so too with the psychic apparatus, where we can assume the existence of the systems which project our psychical perceptions, although we can never see the apparatus itself. Impressions form in the psyche in the same way that light is virtually inscribed in the microscope; in the camera analogy, in the same way as light is registered on the photographic negative. Although Freud never mentioned cinema in this regard, links can be made between his camera-microscope metaphors and the photoplay of cinema, where the mechanism projecting the images is behind the spectator's head. This analogy underscores the relation between dreaming and watching films, between fantasy and the machine. This is the theoretical significance of my discussion of cinema, but even in the non-cinematic texts that will be discussed, such as the art and writings of the Futurists, or Ernst Jünger, the emphasis is on spectacle; as such, they constitute reflections on cinematic perception. Indeed, with their dreams of perpetual motion, ideal time,

² Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams: The Penguin Freud Library*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 4 (London: Penguin, 1991) 684.

³ Freud, *Interpretation of Dreams* 685.

and voyeurism, the Futurists' bachelor machines have all the makings of such a fantasy machine as cinema.

Freud's idea of the psychic apparatus as a machine did not, however, make its first appearance in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. It first emerges in a letter to Wilhelm Fliess on October 20 1895, written after a struggle he had been having with his pre-psychoanalytic paper, "A Project for a Scientific Psychology" (1895):

The barriers suddenly lifted, the veils dropped, and everything became transparent - from the details of neurosis to the determinants of consciousness. Everything seemed to fall into place, the cogs meshed. I had the impression that the thing really was a machine that shortly would function on its own.⁴

Nor would the machine metaphor leave him afterwards. In 1925, Freud eventually characterized the psychic apparatus as a mystic writing pad. This contraption had only recently "come upon the market," and at last enabled him to encapsulate all the properties of psychic writing - "an unlimited receptive capacity and a retention of permanent traces" - which hitherto seemed to be "mutually exclusive" in any apparatus that we use to supplement our memory, and that Freud had employed, analogically, to describe the psyche.⁵

However, Freud says nothing of the eerie coincidence that machines in the real world have increasingly begun to resemble the psyche, or, more specifically, memory itself, which is seen as the very "essence" of the psyche in "A Project for a Scientific Psychology." (There, memory is identified as a resistance which opens itself to "the effraction of the trace."⁶) Neither does

⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904*, trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Berknap Press, 1985) 146.

⁵ Sigmund Freud, "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad'" (1925), in *On Metapsychology: the Penguin Freud Library*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 11 (London: Penguin, 1991) 430.

⁶ Jacques Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge, 1990) 201. "Memory is

Freud envision the future ramifications of the pad's invention, its technical evolution into appliances that resemble the psyche even more closely. The twentieth century has witnessed huge developments in storage media, devices for archiving, and for supplementing memory (what Derrida in *Archive Fever* calls "prostheses of so-called live memory").⁷ Derrida moreover asserts that the psyche's resemblance to the machine is "a certain Being-in-the-world of the psyche. It didn't come about by chance to memory: [this resemblance] did not happen to memory from without, any more than death surprises life. It founds memory."⁸

This is because memory has a prosthetic structure: "there is no archive," Derrida says, "without consignment in an external place which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression."⁹ This links the psyche/ fantasy as a machine to the death drive, which shares this prosthetic structure: "we must also remember," Derrida continues, "that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive The archive always works, and *a priori*, against itself." Carrying the idea of death as the origin and aim of all life, seeking to "conduct life into death," the death drive works in silence; it never leaves any archives of its own.¹⁰ It can only be known by its messengers (by repetition-compulsions), or when it is displaced as sadism or masochism.

represented by the differences in the facilitations of the ψ neurones" in "Project." Sigmund Freud, "A Project for a Scientific Psychology," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey, vol. 1 (London: Hogarth Press, 1966) 300.

⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996)15.

⁸ Derrida, "Freud and the Scene of Writing" 228.

⁹ Derrida, *Archive Fever* 11-12.

¹⁰ Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), in *On Metapsychology* 322.

This thesis explores the links between the death drive and the cultural fantasy of the mechanical body. Part One, Chapters 1-3, deals with war and machine aesthetics, focusing on responses to the First World War. The first chapter discusses the art and writings of the Futurists and Vorticists; particularly their fantasies of parthenogenesis (the desire to procreate without the aid of woman), as regressions to the pre-oedipal paranoid-schizoid phase, where sexual difference is denied. It shows that what is banished from these fantasies - cultural anxieties about the breakdown of the male body (as manifested in the rationalized bodies of soldiers and workers), as well as psychic fears of the masochistic, feminine component within (inseparable from the death drive) - returns to them in the form of the repressed.

Chapter Two focuses on the writings of the First World War veteran, Ernst Jünger, for whom the war and the labouring masses of the modern metropolis augur the coming of a new type of subject - the *Typus* - an organic construction, who is able to distance and dissociate himself from the spectacles of horror and catastrophe in war and civilian life alike. Standing outside the sphere of pain, this man of steel learns to perceive himself as an object (that is, as inorganic thing, in which all life has been frozen out). This new cold, detached form of perception, which Jünger calls "second consciousness," is embodied in photography, which is considered as yet another sign of the *Typus*. For Jünger, seeing is all about killing.

Chapter Three uses three film texts, *Metropolis*, *Modern Times* and *Man With a Movie Camera*, together with film footage of shellshocked patients, to show how questions of hysteria, feminization and commodity relations form the links between the debates on shellshock and issues of spectatorship in early discourses about cinema. These films present responses to the trauma of the war, but now displaced and inextricable from masculine fantasies of femininity as a machine that runs by itself.

Part Two, Chapters 4-5, deals with issues of fantasy and technology in contemporary cinema. Chapter Four examines the links between the machine, the maternal body and the death drive in the *Terminator* and *Alien* series. It also considers how these films allow us to enjoy impulses of the id through vicarious identification with the figure of a primordial being; a refined killing-machine (an identification through which our perverse desires may become extreme pleasures).

My last chapter, on *Crash*, reiterates some of these links between death and desire, film and identification, fantasy and gender, and between film and the real. In *Crash*, our sadistic-guilty witnessing of car-crashes, as well as our melancholic-narcissistic identifications with those who have died or have been close to death, is the main focus, allowing me to pull together some of my interlocking themes: throughout the thesis, questions concerning technology are intimately linked with fantasies of the death drive, but what is merely implied in fantasies of the mechanical body at the beginning of the twentieth century becomes more legible at its end - above all, in *Crash*, which is not only directly inspired by Futurism, but also crystallizes many of the earlier debates about cinematic spectacle and the machine that runs by itself from Jünger, via *Metropolis* and its robot, through to *The Terminator*.

WAR AND MACHINE AESTHETICS

Immaculate Bodies, Machine Aesthetics: F.T. Marinetti and Wyndham Lewis

I. Machine Fantasies

"Set fire to the library shelves! Turn aside the canals to flood the museums!" It was with exhortations such as these that F.T. Marinetti launched his Futurist movement on the front-page of *Le Figaro* in Paris, February 20, 1909. In this manifesto, anarchism and a call to ransack and repudiate past art works were joined to a glorification of danger and war, a scorn for women and a love for machines. Peering through "our millennial gloom," Marinetti announced that introspection - cherished by traditional art - was really a form of masochism leading to self-extinction; the Futurists would instead hurl their sensibilities "far off, in violent spasms of action and creation." Art, he said, had to come out of its ivory tower, to "sing of the great crowds . . . the multicolored, polyphonic tides of revolution in the modern capitals."¹ Art had to immerse itself in the new and exciting urban, technological landscape. To seal this passage into a new era is the manifesto's key "happening": Marinetti's car-crash.

Beckoned by the "roar of automobiles" from under the window of a room where they had for hours "trampled" their "atavistic ennui into rich oriental rugs" - symbols of a decadent past that had to be left behind - Marinetti and his friends rush down to their "three snorting beasts," and lay "amorous hands" on them.² Marinetti stretches out on his like a corpse on a bier, but revives "at once," under the steering wheel: "a guillotine blade" that threatens his stomach. The three friends race through the night in sheer

¹ Marinetti's words are "admiring an old picture is the same as pouring our sensibility into a funerary urn." F.T. Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism," in *Let's Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings*, trans. R.W. Flint and Arthur Coppotelli (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1991) 48, 50.

² Marinetti, "Founding" 47-8.

madness, intent on surrendering themselves "to the Unknown." But two cyclists suddenly come into Marinetti's path, sending him crashing into a ditch. This account is anecdotal (there is even a photograph to commemorate this crash of 1908), but the cyclists here are allegorical figures. "Shaking their fists, wobbling like two equally convincing but nevertheless contradictory arguments," they are representatives of querulous, dead-end reason, blocking Marinetti's path. The next paragraph is even more fabulous and fantastical, as flesh and metal interpenetrate in a sexually delirious and ambiguous submission to, or impregnation by, the machine. The new Futurist man is born through the car-crash, an omnipotent and immaculate metallized being: "When I came up - torn, filthy, and stinking - from under the capsized car, I felt the white-hot iron of joy deliciously pass through my heart!"³

At the Doré gallery in London, Marinetti famously imitated the guns of Adrianople (accompanied by the English artist C.R.W. Nevinson, hiding behind a curtain, banging a drum), a performance which led Wyndham Lewis to describe Marinetti as "one of the most irrepressible figures of our the time."⁴ In England, Futurism inspired the founding of Vorticism, the avant-garde led by Lewis, who, however, took pains to establish that his group was no mere satellite of Futurism, and who in fact reserved even greater vituperation for Marinetti and his "automobilism" than for the rival London Bloomsbury group. But, like the Futurists, the Vorticists liked to think of themselves as anti-establishment, daring and iconoclastic. Lewis founded the Rebel Art Centre in Great Ormond Street, and inaugurated his movement in 1914 with the publication of a new magazine, *Blast* (the name was in fact suggested by Marinetti's acolyte, Nevinson). As Lewis later reflected, the journal bespoke a revolutionary cast of mind - it was "immensely pink, very thick, and awfully

³ Marinetti, "Founding" 48-49.

⁴ Wyndham Lewis, ed. *Blast 2* (July 1915; Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993) 26.

large," with BLAST emblazoned diagonally across it in huge bold black type.⁵ Lewis and his following were the punks of their day.⁶ Although *Blast* hardly looks like an affront to *our* eyes, its "puce-coloured" cover, its enormous sans-serif type, and its contents were intended to challenge traditional bourgeois tastes, and extend aesthetic boundaries. If Futurism took the military origins of the term avant-garde seriously, so did Lewis, with a range of campaigns which were waged in many arenas - not only in the art world, where the very act of founding a new avant-garde constituted an act of war, creating a rival faction to vie with other contemporary groups of artists, the Futurists in particular - but also, in the event of the First World War, in the political sphere, where the forces of the Vortex were marshalled against Germany. Lewis' rivalry with Marinetti took place at many levels (aesthetic, formal, psychic, political), and at each level, their differing attitudes to the machine played a central role in hostilities. For Lewis, Marinetti's adoration of machines made him a target for derision.

Lewis' humour is corrective as well as combative, and in this respect, it is informed by the thinking of Henri Bergson, where deadening materiality (epitomized by the machine) is opposed to creative, ever-evolving "life", vitality (*élan vital*), which must transcend matter. In his book on *Laughter* (1900), for example, Bergson associates life with intuition, with forward movement (time is never reversible for life, he maintains). This (his theory goes) is why we laugh at human beings who act mechanically, or show repetitive behaviour, or give the impression of being a thing - they display the essence of the comic, which is "something mechanical encrusted on something living."⁷ Our laughter serves as a redress and a reproof. Mechanical behaviour

⁵ Wyndham Lewis, "The Vorticists," in *Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change: Essays on Art, Literature and Society 1914-1956*, ed. Paul Edwards (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989) 378.

⁶ Thanks go to Howard Finn for bringing this to my attention!

⁷ Henri Bergson, *Laughter: An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*, trans.

is an evolutionary step backwards; in such cases, intuition, which naturally goes forwards and upwards, and strains to transcendence, is being pulled down by the body's matter. Bergson claimed that human beings had the power to develop the intuition that he saw exemplified in the insect world. Insects have an innate sympathy with creatures that are "separate" from them: a hymenopter, for example, senses the exact spot of vulnerability in its prey, the caterpillar.⁸

Lewis had attended Bergson's lectures at the Collège de France when he was in his mid-twenties, and the French philosopher's ideas were to exert a life-long influence on him, even after he came to dispute them: the Bergsonian model becomes something to define himself against, most vehemently in *Time and Western Man* (1927). Lewis' early (pro-Bergson) attitude to the mechanical can be seen in the short stories he published in *The Tramp* in 1910. These are satires, based on his experiences in Brittany, about peasants, who are shown to be mechanical figures, dulled by routine (with the mechanical dragging the body down to the non-spiritual level of matter).⁹ At around the same time (1910), Lewis' counterparts in Italy were also reading Bergson, but wilfully, and against the grain. For them, matter, too, was potentially spiritual; matter could be suffused with intuition, awakened to its higher potential and take a flight from the logic of death, paving the way for a transcendence of the body, which could extend its limits through the new technologies of the modern world, into the body-machine, a post-natural body.

Up to now, both Futurism and Vorticism have been framed rather obliquely in relation to other art movements of this period. Signalling this,

Cloudsley Brereton and Fred Rothwell (København: Green Integer Books, 1999) 56.

⁸ Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Art and War* (London: Lund Humphries Publishers, 1992) 20.

⁹ Wyndham Lewis, "A Breton Innkeeper," *The Tramp: An Open-Air Magazine* 1 (March-September 1910): 411-14, 412.

Jessica Burstein refers to Lewis' "cold modernism" (although she is justified in this), and Cinzia Sartini Blum titles her book on Marinetti *The Other Modernism*.¹⁰ Although this accurately reflects the plurality and diversity of modernisms, it has tended occasionally to elide the continuities between the modernism of these artists, and those of others, serving conveniently to highlight the more unappetizing and perplexing aspects of their work - namely, its links with fascism - as monstrous and aberrant. Worth bearing in mind is Blum's warning against reductionist readings of Marinetti, some of which conflate his work with a so-called "fascist aesthetic" without reconstructing the historical or rhetorical complexity of either.¹¹ Although mapping the relations between Futurism and fascism is not my aim here, by gesturing to both the radical energy and the reactionary aggressivity in their impulses, as well as the extent to which their ideas were widely shared, I want to foreground, rather than smooth away, the problems that such figures present to us.

One critic who certainly cannot be accused of the pitfall outlined above is Jeffrey Schnapp, who puts Futurism at "the key place" in the "the birth of cultural modernism."¹² He suggests that the car-crash described so deliriously in the founding manifesto marks "the culminating point of an anthropology of speed and thrill that evolved over the course of two prior centuries."¹³ His account centres on high-speed travel in modernity - from the mail-coach and the railroad to motorization. These changes in communication express a desire for the possession of speed, and the Futurists were exemplary in celebrating speed and accelerated rhythms as the distinctive hallmarks of modernity;

¹⁰ Jessica Burstein, "Waspish Segments: Lewis, Prosthesis, Fascism," *Modernism / Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 139-64, 142.

¹¹ Cinzia Sartini Blum, *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996) 2.

¹² Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "Crash (Speed as Engine of Individuation)," *Modernism/Modernity* 6.1 (January 1999): 1-49, 2.

¹³ Schnapp, "Crash" 3.

seeking out the dangers, the shocks and thrills that these new technologies afforded. The flipside of this story of speed (which Schnapp recognizes) is the rationalization of speed that could be found in the time and motion studies of labour: in such studies a "productivist calculus" was applied to the body, which then came to be conceived as a "human motor," in which it was possible to eliminate fatigue, so as to optimize and speed up production.¹⁴ In the early twentieth century, these European studies came into contact with the system of scientific management of labour developed by the American F.W. Taylor. Taylorism divided up work into a series of precisely calculated parts, and standardized tools and machines; each worker's movements and the time he took to complete them were standardized according to the accelerated rhythm of production in order to achieve optimum efficiency and performance.

Outside the factories, other areas of modern life were beginning to be organized according to rationalist principles. By the late nineteenth century, even the speeding train had come firmly under their sway, by means of the technologies used to separate the driver and passengers from the landscape, from the engine, and from each other: these included the furnishings that cushioned travellers from the shocks, the jolts, the *ebranlement* of the train; sealed windows; enclosed compartments; and suspension systems.¹⁵ Speed came to be routinized - regulated, standardized and commodified - isolating and enclosing passengers "as if they were packages."¹⁶ At the time of Futurism's founding manifesto, Schnapp writes, neither the motor-car nor the airplane had yet properly come under the rule of this Enlightenment reason, or the time of capital - although they were in danger of it. Engineers dreamed of manufacturing vehicles that were "fully reliable and peril-free" - such an

¹⁴ Anson Rabinach, *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992) 8.

¹⁵ Schnapp, "Crash" 25. The word "ebranlement" conveys the thrill of the jarring movement of the train, of its vibratory shocks.

¹⁶ Schnapp, "Crash" 9.

advance, Schnapp maintains, would not have been favoured by the Futurists, for it would "promote the attenuation of instinct in the name of predictability, standardization, and the levelling of human differences." For the Futurists what was so attractive about the new transportation technologies were their "capricious, excessive nature," and the scope they gave for "acts of heroism, improvisation, and innovation" in situations of grave danger, where an individual was thrown upon "higher instinctual facilities while faced with the prospect of death."¹⁷ In cases where speed had been rationalized, although peril was not fully removed (the threat of death is still there), it was somewhat receded, repressed in favour of dull routine or repetition.

That the labouring body is a repressed quantum in Futurist discourse has already been argued by Maurizia Boscagli: she maintains that the superman-machine is the realization of Taylorist principles and is "in fact called forth by the demands of intensified capitalist production."¹⁸ The Futurist body must become a machine, not in preparation for war, which is its overt purpose, but to function better at the production line. Boscagli demonstrates how Futurist discourse eclipses its foundation upon the labouring body, how labour is banned from the scene of Futurist creation, which is actually a production. It is dramatized in Marinetti's novel, *Mafarka the Futurist* (1909), as we shall see, by the expulsion of the craftsmen when the manual labour has been completed so that the protagonist can put the finishing, ethereal touches to his artificial son Gazourmah and laud over him as his own, independent work. All machines glorified by Futurists, Boscagli says, are "unproductive ones that work rather to speedily and prosthetically catapult or reproduce images of the heroic male body."¹⁹ Primarily, they are, as Klaus Theweleit expresses it, machines "for

¹⁷ Jeffrey Schnapp, "Propeller Talk," *Modernism / Modernity* 1.3 (1994): 153-178, 161.

¹⁸ Maurizia Boscagli, *Eye on the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996) 146.

¹⁹ Boscagli 146

display" rather than production.²⁰ Given this, Boscagli contends that "Futurist man is never the worker." Although my later section on the war will qualify this, the machine, clearly seen as a force that breaks and tears up the body in industry and war, is rarely allowed to emerge explicitly as such in the pre-war work.

According to Schnapp, the Futurists had found a way to position themselves in opposition to the negative side of industrialization, finding a way of reclaiming uniqueness through "non-recursive modes of repetition," that is, avoiding assembly-line repetition.²¹ They epitomized the new models of individuality that arose in relation to the new modes of travel. In their rhetoric, the sheer exhilaration of the speeding vehicle, the thrill of possible annihilation, the car-crash as a kind of epiphany (an "erotico-transcendental transfiguring of the self"), all bespeak an anti-rationalist and individualistic response to modernization.²² The very notion of thrill gestures to a unique subjective experience, where one's sense of time is less that of external linear time, but one of inner duration (a Bergsonian idea), where one is dislocated in relation to the dimensions of space, too - with distances collapsed and whole new axes of movement ushering in new kinds of freedoms. "Time and Space died yesterday," the Futurists claimed, celebrating this new order of "simultaneity."²³ Thrill also puts the spotlight on the affective sensorium of the body, its agitation (sometimes, the feeling of one's internal organs being rearranged) and excitation under the sensation of acceleration. The Futurists' exaltation of moving vehicles can thus be placed in conjunction with two popcultural forms that were also emerging at this time - the rollercoaster in the

²⁰ Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies II - Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, trans. Chris Turner and Erica Carter, in collaboration with Steven Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989) 202.

²¹ Schnapp, "Crash" 34.

²² Schnapp, "Crash" 5.

²³ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 21.

amusement parks that had been springing up since the previous century, and, of course, the cinema. The bodily encounter with both of these, as Mary Ann Doane has shown, likewise contains the threat or promise of danger. She cites the case of the audiences that watched the Lumière Brothers' film *Arrival of a Train* (1895) as typical of early responses to cinema, typical in that the body was thought to be at *risk* from the technology: the movement of the train was such that spectators fled, imagining it to be rushing headlong into them.²⁴ This "risk," in the literature of this period, is one of shocks, where modern technology (or the accelerated rhythms of modernity as a whole) is conceived as an assault or intrusion into the body.²⁵

Schnapp positions his argument against such "traumatocentric accounts of modernity." In "trauma thrills," he argues, there is no "psychic blockage nor new sure-fire forms of regimentation or alienation."²⁶ This formulation is too stark. The Futurists' fantasy of the body-machine is all the things he says it is, but this is to take the fantasy in the way the historical actants do, nothing more. Take, for example, the way the Futurist love of machines is predicated upon a rejection of women. In "Against Amore and Parliamentarianism," the take-off of a Blériot plane makes the Futurists feel "detached from women, who have suddenly become . . . the symbol of the earth that we ought to abandon."²⁷ Women become a symbol of that which opposes the new. The Futurists fantasized about forsaking women, about giving up their love of them - more specifically, giving up that lost and absent body of the woman that is the subject of nostalgic longing in the poetry of their Symbolist predecessors.²⁸

²⁴ Mary Ann Doane, "Technology's Body: Cinematic Vision in Modernity," *Differences* 5.2 (1993): 1-23, 1.

²⁵ "Simultaneity," however, would be a "risk" on the inside and outside of the body.

²⁶ Schnapp, "Crash" 4.

²⁷ Marinetti, "Against Amore and Parliamentarianism," from *War, the World's Only Hygiene* (1911-1915), in *Moonshine* 83

²⁸ Giacomo Balla and Fortunato Depero, "Futurist Reconstruction of the

She would be supplanted now by love of the machine and a rhetoric of presence and simultaneity. Thus, the Futurists attempt to exit from the order of desire as lack - often, by swallowing the desirable object.²⁹ This expedient is illustrated in the *Futurist Cookbook* (1932), where Marinetti creates an "Edible Sculpture" for Giulio, who is pining for his dead lover. This enables the "fugitive eternal feminine" to be "imprisoned in the stomach." Once he has eaten it, Giulio is cured of his mourning.³⁰ However, as we shall see, in regard to *Mafarka*, this internment or compartmentalization, which is a fantasy of shutting out whilst simultaneously keeping in, is complicated by its repercussions.

Abandoned as objects of desire, women become something to define oneself against.³¹ Schnapp contends that this is all in aid of a search for multiplicity and novelty, an escape from standardization, from "monogamy, monotony and other principles of repetition and decay."³² The Futurists' longing to be free from earthbound femininity, he says, does not constitute a flight from sexuality or labour, but is rather a precondition for hypersexuality. While this locates a cultural trajectory that goes from Futurism to Ballard's *Crash*, it risks taking Marinetti's assertions too much at face value - in his

Universe" (1915), in Umbro Apollonio, ed. *Futurist Manifestos* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973) 198.

²⁹ There is a Futurist tendency to substitute lack with presence: for instance, in "We Abjure Our Symbolist Masters, the Last Lovers of the Moon," Marinetti repudiates the poetry of distance, wild solitudes and exquisite nostalgia, rendered redundant now, he claims, because of the implosive effects of global communication. In their stead he proposes the "tragic lyricism of ubiquity and omnipresent speed." Marinetti, *Moonshine* 75.

³⁰ F.T. Marinetti, *Futurist Cookbook*, trans. Suzanne Brill (London: Trefoil Publications, 1989) 28.

³¹ This rhetorical denigration of women didn't extend, apparently, to the actual status of women in both movements. Under "the banner of the Vortex," Lewis later wrote, there were only "a couple of women and one or two not very reliable men." The women were Helen Saunders and Jessica Dismorr, "both very gifted." Lewis, "The Vorticists" 382.

³² Schnapp, "Propeller Talk" 165.

writing claims to hypersexuality are all too common. Schnapp doesn't discuss the fantasy *as* a fantasy, thus foreclosing discussion on what the fantasy of the machine-body holds at bay, or what is less articulated in the fantasy, at work behind the surface, namely, the death drive, which has the aim of returning the organic to the inorganic state from which it once departed, and which, in Freud's theory, is also inseparable from a tendency towards unbinding or dissolution of the self (Schnapp interprets the death drive more literally than psychoanalytically). The function of fantasy is the preservation of the "topographical status quo," one that is often "secretly maintained." This means an investigation into the fantasy has to find what it is summoned to resist, "the danger it is meant to avert."³³ The Futurists' immaculate machine-body is, after all, a *bachelor* machine, apparently self-sufficient, self-regulating, like the ones identified by Michel Carrouges.³⁴ On the one hand, its orifices are rigidly protected. On the other, there are fantasies about release from bodily boundaries, fantasies of interpenetration, but here bodily boundaries are exchanged for those of the good object, the machine / vehicle with which the body fuses. In both cases, the thoroughfare of objects into and out of the body is carefully policed. What we will see is that the Futurist fantasy creates a binary view of the universe, where objects are sorted out into either good or wholly bad. If this is a regressive fantasy of omnipotence, where one is returned

³³ Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Introjection-Incorporation. Mourning or Melancholia," in S. Lebovici and D. Widlocker, *Psychoanalysis in France* (New York: International University Press, 1980) 4.

³⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London: Athlone Press, 1984) 18; Constance Penley, *The Future of an Illusion* (London: Routledge, 1989) 57. The term "bachelor machine" derives from the name Duchamp gave to the lower section of his 1915-23 painting *The Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors, Even (Large Glass)*. It shows his bachelors, represented by their uniforms only, masturbating endlessly, grinding away at the Chocolate Grinder. Although it squirts their semen towards the upper section of the painting, which shows the bride disrobing, it never meets its target on account of the leaded bar which separates the two sections.

to a pre-oedipal, non-sexually differentiated paranoid-schizoid stage, that which is repressed in the immaculate body - affective desire, sentiment, the historical bodies of workers and soldiers (two types of body eminently subject to rationalization) - returns to it and threatens its claim to self-sufficiency.

If the worker's and soldier's bodies form a homosocial limit which is radically rejected from Futurist fantasy, other bodies which threaten its coherence (those of the fin-de-siècle decadent, as well as women's bodies) are similarly excluded. However, the latter are repressed rather than foreclosed from its symbolic system.³⁵ The more vulnerable parts of the self, desire for women, the decadent, masochistic, or feminine self within, are evacuated through projection onto others - enemies - who therefore bear the role of scapegoats. This abjection of the other is frequently envisioned as an act of cleansing. Marinetti contrasts the Symbolist poets, who swim in the "river of time with their heads always turned back toward the far blue spring of the past" (a Bergsonian reference), with the Futurists, who have "dared to emerge naked from the river of time and create, in spite of ourselves, our bodies skinned by the stones of the craggy ascent, new singing sources of heroism."³⁶ To separate oneself from one's poet forbears is to have one's skin stripped off painfully and to create one's own Second Skin, a skin which develops into the gleaming metallic surface of the machine, a new skin, a new organ, to equip the individual for the shocks of the modern world.³⁷

³⁵ Foreclosure (in German *Verwerfung*, "throwing out") is a much more radical form of denial than repression. An object that has been repressed still enters symbolization, whereas, in foreclosure, the object is thrown out of the symbolic system altogether, and only re-enters that system from the outside, from what Lacan calls the register of the real (what has been foreclosed in the symbolic returns in the real).

³⁶ Marinetti, "We Abjure Our Symbolist Masters, the Last Lovers of the Moon," in *Moonshine* 74.

³⁷ This derives from Esther Bick's paper on "The Experience of the Skin in Early Object Relations," where she describes second skin formations such as "second muscular skin" in patients who have failed to *introject* a representation

What the fin-de-siècle modernists stand for in the Futurists' eyes is a debilitating inwardness, self-lacerating introspection, and that is a danger that their own, more self-affirmative project must escape. For both Futurists and Vorticists, shaking off the past - that atrophied bourgeois culture of the fin-de-siècle - is an imperative. For the Futurists in particular, shackled as they were in an almost pre-industrial Italy, stifled by its monuments to past traditions in art, the past had to be rejected if Italy was to move into the twentieth century: "all your hope should be in the future," Marinetti writes, "put your trust in progress, which is always right, even when it is wrong, because it is movement, life, struggle, hope."³⁸ Inspired by Sorel's declarations about the revolutionary power of myth, the Futurists sought to frame a myth which would embody communal experience in the shape of a collective sense of destiny, one capable of sending Italy hurtling into the future.³⁹ Venice was particularly hated for its sickening adhesion to the past, and the Futurists were not alone in depicting it as a place of death, decay and corruption (Mann's *Death in Venice* springs to mind). Neither were they alone in feeling that society had undergone a kind of death and needed rebirth; a stagnant bourgeois world was just as bitterly evoked in Ibsen's *When We Dead Awaken*. In England the Vorticists struggled to throw off the mantle laid by painters like Augustus John, who they felt had sedimented the public's response to the new in art, and by all the Aubrey Beardsleys who had given art the tincture of an enfeebling aestheticism: "We will fight John Bull with art," was their cry.

of the skin as a container. "Second muscular skin" arises from projection rather than introjection. Esther Bick, "The Experience of the Skin in Early Object Relations" (1968), in *The Collected Papers of Esther Bick and Martha Harris* (Perthshire: Clunie Press/ Roland Harris Trust, 1987) 114, 117.

³⁸ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 89, 90.

³⁹ Georges Sorel, *Reflections On Violence*, trans. T.E. Hulme (London: Collier Books, 1969) 124-5.

For the Vorticists, the term "John Bull" epitomized all those aspects of English heritage they despised; they were not anti-nationalistic (far from it), just averse to certain manifestations of English nationalism. Indeed for both of our avant-gardes, a particularly vehement patriotic rhetoric was added to the call to shake off the past. It was especially marked with the Futurists; Italy had little sense of national identity at this time (it had only recently become a nation-state - in 1870), and they took upon themselves the task of binding the country together. The Italian people had to be reawakened, they had to be given "a new sense of Italianness" - they had to be spurred on "to the conquest of new preeminences."⁴⁰ The Futurists offered the Italians a new "religion-morality," a new, all-encompassing vision of life, from which their compatriots might take incentive for action. It was to replace the void left by the death of God (the Futurists took Nietzsche very seriously), and eradicate forever the slave morality that looked nostalgically to the past, thus effecting what they took to be a transvaluation of all values. This new religion was the cult of speed (worship of the machine), and, like the crumbling communal ideology that it was intended to replace (Christianity), it advocated temperance in matters sexual. But lest this be seen as a slide back into slave morality (in the form of self-lacerating asceticism), the Futurist ideal of temperance was modelled on the apathy (lack of affect) Nietzsche attributed to the coming superman. The "new religion-morality of speed" performs, just as Christian morality does, the elimination of sensual excess. Sentiment and passion are split off from the male body and identified with woman - who, as we have seen, has become a symbol of resisting slowness, a symbol of the anti-modern (or anti-machine) - so that the man can acquire a new hygienic body: "one must

⁴⁰ Emilio Gentile, "The Conquest of Modernity: from Modernist Nationalism to Fascism," *Modernism/Modernity* 1.4 (1994): 55-87, 59.

persecute, lash, torture all those who sin against speed" because they are reminders of pollution, whereas speed itself is "pure."⁴¹

This tract hints at the suppressed motive of the rhetoric of asceticism: excessive passion dissipates energy elsewhere, causing fatigue, which undermines the speed and efficiency of the machine body. As Boscagli points out, it has its counterpart in Taylorism, where temperance and control outside the workplace helps the body to function optimally within it. Yet, this fact - Futurism's utopian machine-body founded on the working body - has no place in the fantasy. Once fully identified with the machine, the male body in fantasy becomes a wholly good object, omnipotent and self-sufficient. Prohibiting for himself the passion and erotic feelings that would pollute and fragment his body, the Futurist male "destroy[s] in himself all the sorrows of the heart, daily lacerating his affections and infinitely distracting his sex with swift casual contacts with women."⁴² With the reduction of "Amore" to a sadomasochistic function of conserving the species, the "friction of the epidermis is finally freed from all provocative mystery, from all appetizing spice, from all Don Giovannian vanity: a simply bodily function, like eating and drinking."⁴³ Supposedly no longer a surface for supporting sexual excitement, the skin is transformed into a smooth, metallic barrier, with the friction on the surface replaced by a smoothly running interior, a homeostatic, self-regulating machine. (Yet what produces smooth regulation is a self-lacerating violence.)

Nevertheless, it is much less the efficiency of machines than their promise of novelty that excited the Futurists. Novelty may be the key word here because what is not specified in Schnapp's account is the fact that Italy was slow to modernize (so was Russia, which in part accounts for why

⁴¹ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 103.

⁴² Marinetti, "Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine," in *Moonshine* 100.

⁴³ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 100.

Constructivism took root there). Motor-cars and other machines made their incursion on this largely agrarian country far later than in advanced industrial England - a fact that Lewis, bemused by the Futurists' machine idolatry, sensibly pointed out: "we've had machines here . . . for donkey's years."⁴⁴ Given England's advanced industrial status, the Vorticists did not feel compelled to speed up the process of modernization in the way the Futurists did. However, Lewis, while he rarely missed opportunities to mock the Futurists on this count, also loved staking claims about England's central place in industry; it was the "workshop" of the world, "industrial island machine . . . discharging itself on the sea." He blesses its ports,

PORTS, RESTLESS MACHINES of	scooped out basins heavy insect dredgers monotonous cranes stations lighthouses, blazing through the frosty starlight, cutting the storm like a cake beaks of infant boats, side by side heavy chaos of wharves, steep walls of factories womanly town
-----------------------------	--

BLESS these MACHINES that work the little boats across
 clean liquid space, in beelines.⁴⁵

Lewis' description emphasizes activity, energy, busy industry, anything that evokes power, as well as the stillness in the centre of hive and chaos. The frequent recurrence of hard consonants conveys the sense of constantly cutting

⁴⁴ Wyndham Lewis, *Blasting and Bombardiering* (London: Imperial War Museum, 1992) 34.

⁴⁵ Wyndham Lewis, ed. *Blast 1* (June 1914; Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1997) 23.

against hard metallic surfaces. As well as exemplifying industry, the insect analogies also suggest the carapace of the machines, a hard outer covering (insects, Burstein says, are "nature's attempt at prosthesis").⁴⁶ Everything is in tidy arrangements, everything is clean, apart from one odd juxtaposition, "womanly town" that suggests the steep factory walls are shields against it - "BLESS this hysterical WALL built round the EGO," Lewis goes on to say.⁴⁷ The rigid protection of the ego is described as hysterical in a statement that would seem to exacerbate gender confusion at the same time as it signals Vorticism's refusal to give in to the desires of dispersion and defusion that appear in the Futurists' fantasies (hysterical symptoms were commonly associated with women who refuse to realize their desires). It is here that one of the chief differences between Futurism and Vorticism can be located. Although the dissolution of bodily boundaries is explored in both Marinetti and Lewis, the rigidly protected body is far more assiduously maintained in Lewis' work.

The Vorticists prized the efficiency of machines - more for their power and energy than for their productive value. Both avant-gardes tended to aestheticize machines at the expense of recognizing their role in commodity production; the Futurists' images, in particular, served, as Foster recognizes, to distract from industrial reality.⁴⁸ In reaction to the Futurists' "romanticizing" of machines, Lewis simply reinstates their functionalism, their utility, their everydayness, in an equally matter-of-fact tone (but with a hint of corrective sarcasm): "Elephants are VERY BIG. Motorcars go quickly."⁴⁹ Yet for him, as for the Futurists, machines were a rich imaginary: as the above extract from *Blast* shows, and as Foster points out, machines helped Lewis figure both the

⁴⁶ Burstein 158.

⁴⁷ Lewis, *Blast* 1 26.

⁴⁸ Hal Foster, "Prosthetic Gods," *Modernism / Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 5-38, 7.

⁴⁹ Lewis, *Blast* 1 8

dynamism of bodily drives and the armouring of the male ego.⁵⁰ In his post-war tome, *Time and Western Man*, Lewis associates objects and ways of thinking with either one of two poles: the masculine and the feminine. The qualities hard, static, changeless, and distinct go with the masculine, which are opposed to the repellently soft, overflowing feminine that cannot maintain boundaries. Lewis objects to Joyce's *Ulysses*, for example, since its method "imposes a softness, flabbiness and vagueness everywhere in its bergsonian fluidity."⁵¹ The topography of this style corresponds to a certain kind of body, he continues, "*There is an organic form to which every form of speech is related.*" To allow the feminine body would be to embrace extinction and dissolution, and so to prevent the breaching of the male body, violence is projected out onto feminine. Concurrently, the male body is damned up to bind the ego against the feminine flow. This binding ensures that all that has been projected outside the body remains outside (so runs the fantasy). The Futurists and Vorticists' fantasies are similar to those of the Freikorps, in this respect: Theweleit maintains that the man of steel's most important task is to obstruct and quell "any force that threatens to transform him back into the horribly disorganized jumble of flesh, hair, skin, bones, intestines, and feelings that calls itself human," which is here coded as feminine.⁵²

What the above extract from *Blast* may not reveal, however, is that Lewis was also a keen discerner of the alienating otherness of modernity, the unhomeliness of the metropolis and its huge crowds, a sensation of unhomeliness which is condensed in Anthony Vidler's term, the "Architectural Uncanny." The latter encapsulates the sudden shock of contact, the sudden invasion of the self by the other that subtends this experience of modernity. In

⁵⁰ Foster, "Prosthetic" 10.

⁵¹ Wyndham Lewis, *Time and Western Man* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1927) 132, 133.

⁵² Theweleit 159, 160, 162.

Vidler's account the modern uncanny arose both as a response to and as a symptom of this shock and disturbance. He shows how architecture begins in the modern period to mutate the human body, rejecting "the traditional embodiment of anthropomorphic projection in built form."⁵³ In a similar way, machines, which could be read as unconscious projections of bodily structure, evoke the uncanny because they represent the return of the same but with a difference: as monstrous doubles, they return to the body an image of itself that disturbs and alienates. Approximate to my meaning here is Sartre's notion of the "practico-inert," as summarized by Fredric Jameson: it is "that malignant destiny or antifreedom which human beings create over against themselves by the investment and alienation of their labour in objects which return up them unrecognizably, in the hostile form of a mechanical necessity."⁵⁴

It is this sense of territorial insecurity, of "unhomeliness," that spawns "themes of anxiety and dread" in modernity, particularly in relation to the rise of the big cities and their crowds.⁵⁵ In Walter Benjamin's version of modernity, the urban masses are connected to the figure of shock because they are simultaneously external and internal to the flâneur who moves amongst them: moving through the traffic of a big city "involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous intersections, nervous impulses flow through him in rapid succession, like the energy from a battery. Baudelaire speaks of a man who plunges into the crowd as into a reservoir of electrical energy."⁵⁶

⁵³ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays on the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1992) xi-xii.

⁵⁴ Fredric Jameson, *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, The Modernist Fascist* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California Press, 1979) 82.

⁵⁵ Vidler 7.

⁵⁶ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, trans. Harry Zohn (London: Fontana Press, 1992) 161, 164, 171.



Figure 1 Wyndham Lewis, *The Crowd* (c. 1915)

Reproduced in Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Art and War*

In his painting *The Crowd* (c.1915), Lewis presents geometricized human beings who borrow their form from the environment they inhabit (*Figure 1*). To be part of the crowd, observes the narrator of his story "The Crowd Master," one must temporarily shed one's "small skin," and adopt the larger communal skin.⁵⁷ At the middle of the top part of the picture, there are two crowd scenes, both undifferentiated masses of mechanical bodies. The adjacent figures who are as yet separate from the crowds show signs of being engulfed in their chaos. It seems that the ego has to pit itself against the crowd: to struggle to retain its boundaries against the energies, impulses from outside. In "The Crowd Master," the crowds are gathering at the outbreak of the war. These crowds, he says, are the first mobilization of the country. His attitude towards them is ambivalent: they may be a possible force for good, yet, he continues, wars begin with this "huge indefinite Interment in the cities."⁵⁸ The regimentation of the crowd is a cause for dread, so too its cancellation of identity: each man is equal to another in this flow of bodies, everything is reduced to sameness. The crowds are an "immense anaesthetic towards death," because they imply a "similar surrender": they are capable of dissolving the boundaries of the ego, returning an individual to a state of non-differentiation.

In "The New Egos," Lewis claims dehumanization is becoming more and more an everyday reality in modernity, the "old form of egotism," is now at risk:

The African . . . cannot allow his personality to venture forth or amplify itself, for it would dissolve in the vagueness of space. It has to be swaddled up in a bullet-like lump. But the modern town-dweller of our civilization sees everywhere fraternal moulds for his spirit . . . Impersonality becomes a disease with him. Socially, in a parallel manner, his egotism takes a different form. Society is sufficiently organized for his ego to walk abroad. Life is really no more secure, or his egotism less acute, but the frontier's [sic] interpenetrate, individual

⁵⁷ Lewis, *Blast* 2 94.

⁵⁸ Lewis, *Blast* 2 94.

demarcations are confused and interests dispersed . . . According to the most approved contemporary methods in boxing, 2 men burrow into each other, and after an infinitude of intimate little pummels, one collapses. . . We all to-day (possibly with a coldness reminiscent of the insect world) are in each other's vitals - overlap, intersect, and are Siamese to any extent. . . Just as the old form of egotism is no longer fit for such conditions as now prevail, - so the isolated human figure of most ancient Art is an anachronism.⁵⁹

Lewis recognizes that modernization has redefined the human form, has mechanized it. As Paul Edwards argues, this marks a change from his earlier, pre-*Blast*, Bergsonian attitude to the mechanical and mechanization. Lewis' new, revised attitude to the mechanical around the time of the foundation of Vorticism, could be described as an overturning of Bergsonianism and as a critical and ambivalent absorption of Futurism. Although Lewis never aimed for a postnatural or transcendent body along Futurist lines, he did begin to formulate his own version of geometrical abstraction in painting and writing. The artist's job is to reduce the body into plane shapes, a practice which, Lewis implies in the Vorticist Manifesto, parallels that of the hairdresser:

BLESS the HAIRDRESSER.
 He attacks Mother Nature for a small fee. . .
 He makes systematic mercenary war on this
 WILDERNESS.
 He trims aimless and retrograde growths
 into CLEAN ARCHED SHAPES and
 ANGULAR PLOTS.
 [bless him for]
 correcting the grotesque anachronisms
 of our physique.⁶⁰

Just as the hairdresser corrects these anachronisms, so the artist divests the human body of individuating features and refashions undesirable excrescences by bounding them with straight lines, containing them in geometric shapes. This aesthetic has its reference in the "breeness and hardness" of machinery in the

⁵⁹ Lewis, *Blast 1* 141.

⁶⁰ Lewis, *Blast 1* 25.



Figure 2 Wyndham Lewis, *The Vorticist* (1912)

Reproduced in Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Art and War*

modern world.⁶¹ Vorticist forms are hard and fixed, their surfaces polished.⁶² But this hardness, Lewis emphasizes, must be imbued with the suggestion of energy: form had to be characterized by the lines and masses, by "the life and displacement," of a machine.⁶³ In Lewis' picture *The Vorticist* (1912), for example, parts of the body are gradated like machine components, but the figure has a war-like energy, accentuated by the diagonals which suggest forward thrust like Futurist lines of force while at the same time containing the body in a geometric stance (*Figure 2*). Once again, war provides the rhetoric with which Lewis distinguishes his art from both that of the Futurists and that of the ancients - the new egotism from the old.

In the mechanized figures that shunt across Lewis' paintings from this time onwards, including those in his war paintings, can be seen glimmers of his later confrontation with the Bergsonian philosophy of humour. What makes us laugh, he argues in "The Meaning of the Wild Body" (1927), is not a person becoming a thing, but a thing trying to be a person.⁶⁴ Lewis' humour is tragic humour: the dehumanization and mechanization that marks his representations of the human body in this period, although totally unsentimental, are a sign of their alienation from their environment. His art could be taken very much as an illustration of T.E. Hulme's thesis on the geometric tendency in modernist art, delivered as a talk in January 1914 to a gathering of artists that included Lewis. Hulme attributes the present tendency to geometric art to the same kind of feeling of separation between man and nature that inspired earlier waves of geometric art (the naturalistic tendency in art, on the other hand, comes from a

⁶¹ Lewis, *Blast* 1 41.

⁶² Lewis, *Blast* 2 41, 77.

⁶³ Lewis, *Blast* 2 44.

⁶⁴ Wyndham Lewis, "The Meaning of the Wild Body," in *The Complete Wild Body*, ed. Bernard Lafourcade (Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1982) 158.

perceived harmony with the environment).⁶⁵ In the long passage quoted earlier, Lewis refers to the African artist who is alienated from his surroundings - his fear, like Lewis', is that of being devoured by space - and his art objects are testaments to his shocked retreat. Hulme himself was inspired by the art historian Wilhelm Worringer's notion of a "drive" to abstraction, which Worringer saw as "a mimesis of a primal state of inorganicity."⁶⁶ Given that this impulse towards inorganic forms in art is attributed to the call of earlier, more primordial times (in Lewis, Worringer and Hulme), these ideas resonate very clearly with Freud's theory of the death drive, where an organism is said to strive to return to the inorganic state from which it once departed.

In the pre-war period, however, neither the Vorticists nor the Futurists simply gave in to the fact of alienation: in order not to be overwhelmed by the "Vortex" of modernity, they strove to master it and make it their own.⁶⁷ What their work shows is an attempt to turn alienation inside out, as it were. As huge industrial machines usurped the power traditionally ascribed to men, and women entered into the sphere of work, as the scientific management of labour turned the male worker's body into a human motor, the need to reaffirm the male body became critical. "When you watch an electric crane, swinging up with extraordinary grace and ease a huge weight," Lewis avers, "your instinct to admire this power is, subconsciously, a selfish one. It is a pity that there are not men so strong that they can lift a house up and fling it across a river . . . In any heroic, that is energetic, representations of men to-day, this reflection of

⁶⁵ T.E. Hulme, "Modern Art and its Philosophy," in *Speculations. Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Keagan Paul, 1936) 106-7. Indeed Hulme mentions Lewis in this particular lecture, and Lewis liked to think that his work was the most exemplary of this trend in modern art, yet Hulme withheld this honour from Lewis, bestowing it instead on the sculptor, Jacob Epstein.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Foster, "Prosthetic" 26.

⁶⁷ Gentile 58.

the immense power of machines will be reflected."⁶⁸ The solution that both Futurism and Vorticism found takes place on the level of fantasy, with the creation of an immaculate body, as we know, which then acquires the status of an empowering fiction. This fantasy is based on the mechanisms of projection, as we have seen, but it also involves introjection: taking the machine inside oneself, where the machine becomes a kind of Kleinian good object, coherent and whole, enabling the ego to cohere around it. This amounts to a mimetic identification with the machine, the idea being to forge "new egos" corresponding to the new technologies. Lewis tries to achieve this through a set of playful contradictions that enable him to compromise with the influx of the environment into the individual, while sustaining an inner sanctuary from it. His surroundings are taken as "fraternal moulds" for his spirit: kinship can be acknowledged, a new brotherhood of machines established.

You must be a duet in everything. For, the Individual, the single object, and the isolated, is, you will admit, an absurdity. Why try and give the impression of a consistent and indivisible personality? You can establish yourself . . . as a Machine of two similar fraternal surfaces overlapping. . . . There is Yourself: and there is the Exterior World, that fat mass you browse on. You knead it into an amorphous imitation of yourself inside yourself. Sometimes you speak through its huskier mouth, sometimes through yours. Do not confuse yourself with it, or weaken the esoteric lines of fine original being.⁶⁹

The model of eating figures as a way of determining the traffic inside and outside the body. When sealed off inside, the machine can be contained as a good object, even though it is a distillation of the exterior world, described in terms that suggest sensory disapprobation. That "fat mass" has been masticated and broken down into a form fit for swallowing. Housed inside, it becomes "an amorphous imitation of yourself": an extension of oneself, an instrument through which one may act and speak. For Lewis, incorporating the machine

⁶⁸ Lewis, *Blast* 2 43, 44.

⁶⁹ Lewis, *Blast* 2 91.

obviates the anxiety of being out-manoeuvred by it in strength and of being subsumed in the industrial process - it allows him to avoid the negative consequences of modernity.

Lewis characterized the modern condition as one of impersonality.⁷⁰ This judgement is very similar to that given in Georg Simmel's 1903 essay, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," where the shocks of the urban technological environment are said to have made human beings cultivate a blasé attitude because human personality, or more particularly, the human body and its sensory organization, are so much under assault. The body's periphery, its nerve-ends, become desensitized through over-stimulation. Simmel surmises that modernity has given rise to a new type of man, "metropolitan man," who has developed an "organ of intellectuality" to protect him against the threatening "fluctuations and discontinuities" of his external environment - a kind of stimulus-shield.⁷¹ This interpretation of modernity as a barrage of shocks was shared by Benjamin, who was influenced by Simmel. In each case, it is the accelerated rhythms of modern urban techno-industrial life that is accountable for the swift, speedy changes that challenge a human consciousness' power to assimilate them: Benjamin's flâneur is a "kaleidoscope" equipped with consciousness, doing battle with the battery of impulses that rush into him. Shock was formerly a military-medical term, but it came increasingly to carry psychological connotations (the subject of Chapter Three).

Informing Simmel's notion of the new "metropolitan man" is Jean Baptiste de Lamarck's hypothesis that one generation inherits the physical characteristics developed by the generations before it - a theory that the Futurists explicitly embraced. In "Multiplied Man and the Reign of the Machine," Marinetti declares:

⁷⁰ Lewis, *Blast* 1 141.

⁷¹ Georg Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in *On Individuality and Social Forms* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971) 326.

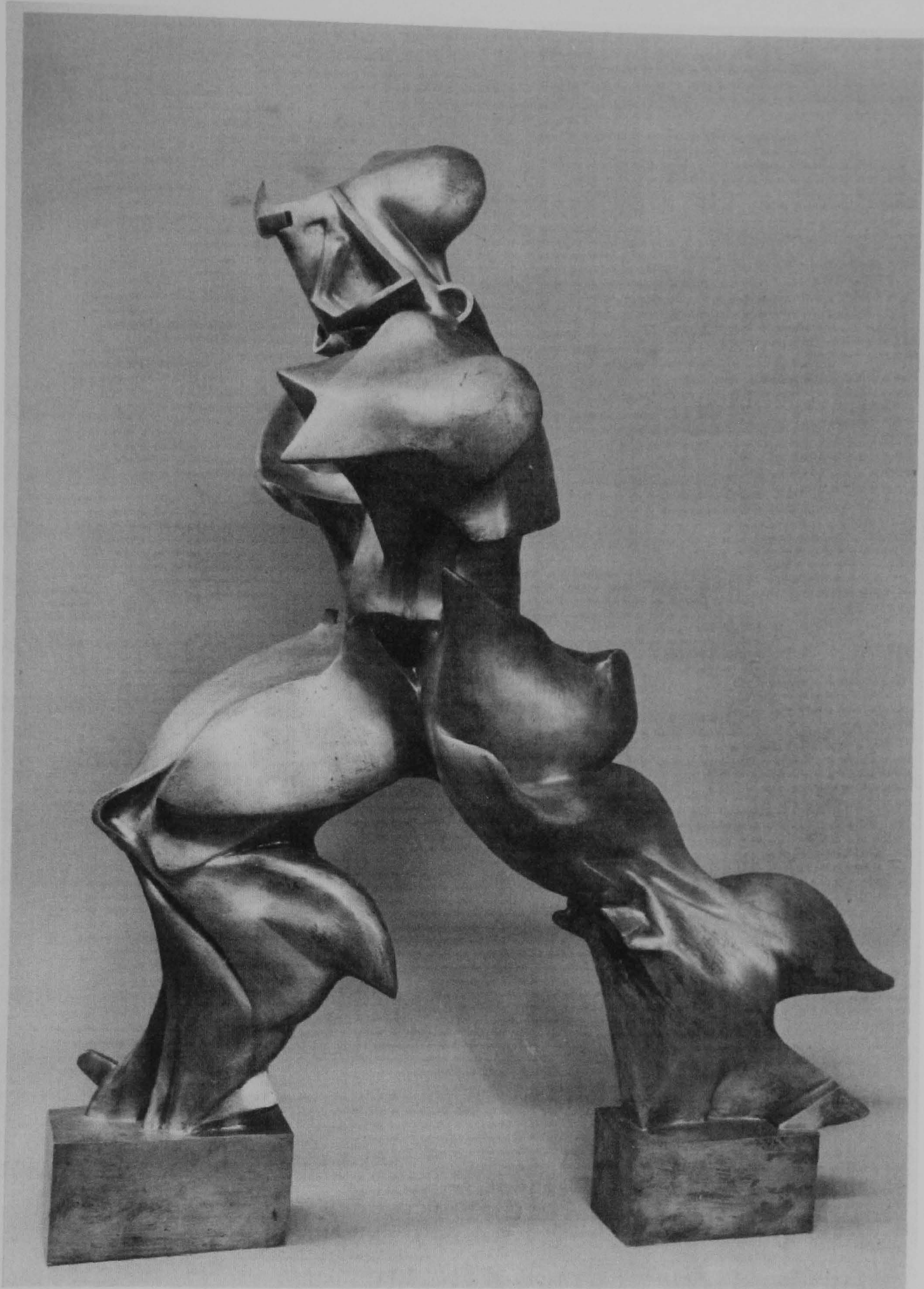


Figure 3 Umberto Boccioni, *Unique Forms of Continuity* (1913)

Reproduced in Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism*

We believe in the possibility of an incalculable number of human transformations, and without a smile we declare that wings are asleep in the flesh of man. On the day when man will be able to externalize his will and make it into a huge invisible arm, Dream and Desire, which are but empty words today, will master and reign over space and time. This nonhuman and mechanical being, constructed for an omnipresent velocity, will be naturally cruel, omniscient and combative. He will be endowed with surprising organs: organs adapted for the needs of a world of ceaseless shocks.⁷²

Marinetti's man of the future is endowed with a jutting breastbone to cope with the shocks of modernity, and his description is easily linked to Umberto Boccioni's sculpture, *Unique Forms of Continuity* (1913; *Figure 3*). Like Marinetti's Multiplied Man, Boccioni's superman-machine has developed new organs: a projecting breastbone and wings. He has a twin funnelled nose (all the better for making the most of one's senses) mounted by a pointed protuberance (to make the face more aerodynamic) and his legs suggest compulsive energy, forward thrust, as if the legs were pushed back by a torrent of shocks as they carve their way through space. This sculpture, too, has a Lamarckian premise, for its vision of the man of the future is founded on an extrapolation of present tendencies (the increased speed of urban life) and its supposed effects on the future of the body.

This Lamarckianism seems typical of the discourse of shock in the early twentieth century. At the same time, several philosophical theories grew up which took non-linear temporality to be the "mark of human subjectivity par excellence."⁷³ Like Futurism, these theories were informed by perceptions of the accelerated pace of modernity (modernity seen in terms of shock, unassimilable speed), and show a very distinctive appraisal of what it meant to be human. Two thinkers who stood out in this respect are Freud and Bergson, who although very different, both revise ideas of human temporality - they

⁷² Marinetti, *Moonshine* 99.

⁷³ Doane, "Technology's Body" 12.

agree that time for humans was not a succession of discrete instants, but an "uneven" superimposition of moments. In contrast to the speeded up rhythms of modern life, human temporality is marked by a temporal *lag*. Bergson's theory is based on his idea that perception is external to us, it is equivalent to matter, and therefore not accessible to us in its entirety. Our consciousness (or memory) can only cut through it to a limited degree: "In concrete perception, memory intervenes, and the subjectivity of sensible qualities is due precisely to the fact that our consciousness, which begins by being only memory, prolongs a plurality of moments into each other, contracting them into a single intuition."⁷⁴ The past and present merge into each other, with the past retrospectively becoming useful: "there is nothing that is instantaneous. In all that goes by that name there is already some work of our memory."⁷⁵ This is what signals a human being's "freedom" from matter - the fact that in between perception and action, there is an interlude, which is packed with memories (*durée*).⁷⁶ The Futurists took Bergson's *durée* to heart, to the extent that it implied that the discrete self no longer held, neither spatially nor temporally.

In Freud, too, the gap between stimulus and response is important; his notion of psychic temporality is one of *Nachträglichkeit* (deferred action), but unlike Bergson, Freud saw this condition of human temporality more as a burden than a freedom; human experience for him was tragically overdetermined. In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), he describes consciousness as a protective shield that becomes hardened ("inorganic"), "baked through" by external stimuli as the latter make their impact upon it.⁷⁷ In Freud's metaphor, this protective shield of consciousness is like the outer,

⁷⁴ Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer (New York: Zone, 1991) 219.

⁷⁵ Bergson, *Matter and Memory* 69.

⁷⁶ Doane, "Technology's Body" 10-11.

⁷⁷ Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *On Metapsychology: the Penguin Freud Library, vol. 11*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 297-8.

epidermal layer of an organism, since consciousness is also located on the borderline between the self and the outside world. It comes to serve as a shield against an excessive influx of stimulation, protecting the softer, more vulnerable layers inside (the psyche). Shocks that overwhelm the protective shield have their effect retroactively; the experience is not assimilated by consciousness at the time, but remains latent until put into articulation with another moment in time.

In the later "Ego and the Id" (1923), Freud further insists on the importance of the periphery: "the ego is first and foremost a bodily ego . . . [it] is itself the projection of a surface," a statement that recalls Lewis' idea of "fraternal surfaces."⁷⁸ The psyche comes into being through the body image acquired from sensations like pain felt on the surfaces of the body. This 1923 paper also revisits Freud's 1914 essay, "On Narcissism," where the infant in the stage of primary narcissism is its own libidinal object, and the beginnings of the ego take shape as a cathexis of this image.

To take the parallel between these theories and Futurism further, in "Electrical War," we see Marinetti's power station controllers identifying with the iron walls which encase the rooms. The men have reinforced their skin with iron; their bodies are walled in: "their flesh, forgetful of the germinating roughness of trees, forces itself to resemble the surrounding steel."⁷⁹ Such a shield in all these accounts is both formative and compensatory.⁸⁰ What these descriptions amount to is, as Burstein observes, a theory of a prosthetic subject formation: identity in each case is taken from the outside; one forms oneself by identification from the outside in. Bodies become "seamless elaborations of their surroundings" - or, to return to Lewis' words, an "amorphous imitation"

⁷⁸ Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in *On Metapsychology: the Penguin Freud Library, vol. 11*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 364.

⁷⁹ Marinetti, "Electrical War," in *Moonshine* 113.

⁸⁰ Burstein 151.

of the "Exterior World."⁸¹ Implicit in these accounts, too, as Foster points out, is an intermingling of the functions of shield and stimulus: now the human organism "needs technology as both shield and stimulus-shock - and needs more of the shield as it needs more of the shock."⁸² But Doane alerts us to what often goes untold in this rhetoric of shock. The sex and race of the body concerned is unspecified, but what is implied is that it is a white male body that is under attack from the forces of modernity: in her view, both the need for prosthetic defence and a desire for more shocks confirms this. Certainly, in the fantasies of the Futurists and Vorticists, it is an aggressively white male body that is at stake.

Take, for example, Marinetti's poem, "The Futurist Aviator Speaks to His Father, Vulcan" (1914), where a fear of the interior of the body underlies the fear of losing bodily wholeness: emotional impulses are experienced as dangerous body-stuff and liquids, which are apt to overflow uncontrollably and cause the bodily ego to spill away or explode.⁸³ They must therefore be projected elsewhere. In Marinetti's poem, the dangerous interior is externalized in the image of the volcano, a "vast belly" of boiling, seething fluids, capable at any moment of convulsing "into horrid, titanic guffaws" and burying a city "beneath a tumulus of ore and ash and blood."⁸⁴ The anxiety of liquefying and pouring away uncontrollably is quelled here by imagining that scenario happen outside the body, projecting it onto the figure of the volcano. While dancing precariously close to danger, "pirouetting" above the volcano's "fearsome

⁸¹ Burstein 151; Lewis, *Blast* 2 91.

⁸² Foster, "Prosthetic" 14.

⁸³ Schizoid mechanisms, according to Melanie Klein, originally constitute a defence against the anxiety of the death instinct. Esther Bick, writing on the skin of the ego, contends that this anxiety is felt as the anxiety of one's insides liquefying and streaming away. See Bick, "The Experience of the Skin in Early Object Relations."

⁸⁴ Felix Stefanile, trans. *The Blue Moustache: Some Futurist Poets* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1981) 47-8.

maw," the aviator-narrator is safely immune. The aircraft which he is flying encases him in a protective skin. This machine gives him the power to escape at any moment he pleases: "In vain your carbon rage/ that would buffet me back to the sky! / I grip the flight-stick firmly in my hands."

This creates a kind of carapace ego, a second muscular or ersatz skin, put into place by the aggressive drive - a prosthetic defence against the fear of unbinding, or leaking away of the self. This protective shield is a prophylactic barrier that supplements the organic skin's function as an excitation-screen. In Freud, the aim of the protective shield is to conserve the topography of the body, the store of energy within it, "against the effects threatened by the enormous energies at work in the external world - effects which tend towards a levelling out of them and hence toward destruction."⁸⁵ In order to lessen the traumatic threat from those energies of the external world, the Futurist and Vorticist body reinforces its protective shield by metallizing it. In addition, this prophylactic barrier protects against other impulses that threaten the annihilation of the body - masochistic desire and effeminacy and the fear of death (Freud identified masochism, a manifestation of the death drive, with the feminine).⁸⁶ Eliminating images of suffering, the gleaming metallic sheen of the body's envelope bespeaks the fantasy of heroic invulnerability: it is immortal and invincible.

In these fantasies, the drive to direct affect outwards is stronger than the drive to contain and inwardly hoard. As touched on in my opening, creativity for these modernists is a matter of externalizing aggressive impulses, "a violent attack on unknown forces," which projects one's "inner stirrings" onto "exterior forms."⁸⁷ In opposition to the "strategies of inwardness" of their

⁸⁵Freud, "Beyond" 299.

⁸⁶ Peter Nicholls, *Modernisms: A Literary Guide* (London: Macmillan, 1995)100.

⁸⁷ Umberto Boccioni et al., "The Exhibitors to the Public," in Apollonio 49; Lewis, *Time* 443.

modernist peers, they deal in "outward discharge."⁸⁸ Violence is directed away from the self by externalizing the will, splitting the self, and projecting "bad" parts of the self onto others. In total, all of this - as a reaction against fin-de-siècle culture and other "modernisms" - is an attempt to topple psychology (or subjectivity defined solely as interiority) from its throne as the priority for contemporary art. Emptying out their own interiorities, and violently ejecting them, Marinetti and Lewis demonstrate that they eschew psychology in art, with all the debilitating, masochistic emotions that went with it. Empowerment was their key objective (coded as a sadistic fantasy).

Yet what are we to make of the fantasies of prosthetic subject formation informing these modernists' work? Freud's speculations on the protective shield as a prosthesis came when hordes of the walking wounded returned from the war. Many of these men had arms and legs shredded to bits and blown off by the powerful new forms of artillery employed in that war - its artillery shells and shrapnel had the capacity to maim with greater force than had hitherto been seen. Whatever was left of survivors' limbs was often amputated, to prevent further infection, and then the men were fitted with artificial limbs in order to rehabilitate them for civilian life and work. In England the number of men said to have lost one or more limbs in the war totalled over 41 000.⁸⁹ This made artificial limbs, just a cottage industry before the war, "international big business."⁹⁰ Disabled men equipped with prostheses were "easily incorporated" into pre-war frameworks of work, which had already conceived the body as "a series of interdependent parts."⁹¹ Thus, the

⁸⁸ Nicholls 92; Jameson 2, 4.

⁸⁹ Ernest Muirhead Little, *Artificial Limbs and Amputation Stumps. A Practical Handbook* (London, 1922) 22.

⁹⁰ Gordon Phillips, *Best Foot Forward* (Cambridge: Granta Editions, 1990) xii.

⁹¹ Roxanne Panchasi, "Reconstructions: Prosthetics and the Rehabilitation of the Male Body in World War I France," *Differences* 2.3 (Fall 1995): 109-140, 112.

actual fragmentation of the body posed few problems. Bodies with missing limbs were at no less advantage than whole ones - in the Taylorist scheme, prosthetic replacements designed as tools, which were mounted on the amputated stump, would do just as well as uninjured hands: "in the rationalized model, every body represented a set of productive values that could be measured and manipulated in the same way."⁹²

Although the First World War is known as a kind of technological watershed - both for its weaponry and for its rationalization of men, mobilizing them first for war, and then on their return, equipping them with the appropriate artificial parts to go and work in the office or assembly-line - it was not the first time that such prosthetic men were made visible to the public. Manufacture and innovation in prosthetic technology had been spurred by the American Civil War, where Weir Mitchell treated amputees for their experience of phantom limbs, and in the period between the Franco-Prussian war and the start of the First World War, a number of small improvements were made, although, as Ernest Muirhead Little notes, amputation was a rare operation in Britain before August 1914 (but it was common in the USA, because of the greater number of accidents there).⁹³ However, the fact remains that in the nineteenth century amputations were on the increase, and prosthetically-aided bodies would have been becoming more commonplace, even if not as dramatically as they were at the time of the First World War. For in the nineteenth century, gunpowder and cannon were introduced, making war more mutilating, while improved surgery meant that more patients survived after an amputation. The increasing speed of vehicles (trains, trams, buses, and cars) and the use of modern high-speed stationary machinery and the machinery of mines also meant there were more accidents necessitating amputation and/ or

⁹² Panchasi 118.

⁹³ Little 22.

the fitting of artificial parts.⁹⁴ In addition to the prosthetic body of the soldier, then, the prosthetic body of the worker was another historically visible body which resembles the Futurist's and Vorticist's body, yet which was suppressed in fantasy. One exception might be the "Artificial Man" in Paolo Buzzi's performance piece, *The Futurist Prize* (1916). He has "a cork leg, a plaited-rope arm, a rubber ear, a glass eye, and if this is not enough, a wig."⁹⁵ Yet the fact that he became the way he is through an industrial accident is rather downplayed, and he features more as an entrepreneur/ inventor than as a worker.

II. Return of the Repressed (Or, Fantasy as a Machine)

It is highly probable that all complicated machinery and apparatus occurring in dreams stand for genitals - and as a rule male ones.

- Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*

The surrealists (especially Hans Bellmer) rightly diagnosed what lay under the surface in Futurist rhetoric: that machines speak the language of eroticism. They express the automatisms of the drives, the "struggle between psychosexual fusion and defusion," the interlocking of sex and death.⁹⁶ As Jacqueline Rose observes, taking her cue from this famous passage from Freud, fantasies about machinery signify difficulties with sexuality.⁹⁷ In their fantasies of an immaculate machine-body, the Futurists and Vorticists are, professedly, repudiating the sexual body, but as with the influencing machine, constructed by schizophrenics to deny sexual difference, this body is simply displaced into the machine, which is a projection of the libidized body - albeit disguised on

⁹⁴ H.H. Thomas, *Help For Wounded Heroes: the Story of Ancient and Modern Artificial Limbs* (London, 1920) 9.

⁹⁵ Michael Kirby and Victoria NesKirby, *Futurist Performance, including Manifestos, Playscripts and Illustrations* (New York: PAJ Publications, 1986) 242.

⁹⁶ Hal Foster, "Armor Fou," *October* 56 (Spring 1991): 65-97, 94.

⁹⁷ Quoted in Penley 62.

various levels. In a paper on the influencing machine in schizophrenia, Victor Tausk extends to the contexts of fantasy and delusion Freud's contention that complicated machines appearing in dreams always represent genitalia. He adds that the machines always stand for the subject's genitalia and that the dreams have a masturbatory character. Furthermore, he emphasizes their inhibitory function, for the machines become increasingly complex as the syndrome progresses: the greater the intellectual interest the intricacies of the machinery arouse, the less libidinal interest it has. The machine in the delusion becomes more and more distorted to displace overt libidinal content, losing first the genitalia - which, in early stages of the syndrome, are manipulated by enemies to produce sexual sensations in the patient's physical body - then the limbs, and ultimately, "all human characteristics."⁹⁸ In terms of the Futurist and Vorticist fantasies, then, it seems that the more dehumanized, ascetic and puritanical their machine bodies become, the more libido has been displaced onto them. Hence, the machine, ultimately, returns to the subject an intensified sexual body. Take, for example, Jacob Epstein's original *Rock Drill* (1913-14; *Figure 4*). This complete plaster model mounted on a drill is more overtly phallic than the existing sculpture, and therefore has less repressed content (see *Figure 5*). A few years later, in 1916, Epstein "symbolically castrated" it, as Robert Hughes calls it, by removing the drill and tripod (that is, the figure's various members and its mechanical torso).⁹⁹ He cast in gunmetal only the "upper part" (the masked head and the thorax).¹⁰⁰ Yet, by apparently decreasing its phallic content, Epstein simply made it an even more enhanced version of the repressed libidinized body.

⁹⁸ Victor Tausk, "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia" (1919), *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 2 (1933): 519-556, 533.

⁹⁹ Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New: Art and the Century of Change* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993) 65.

¹⁰⁰ Jacob Epstein, *Let There Be Sculpture: An Autobiography* (London: Michael Joseph, 1940) 70.

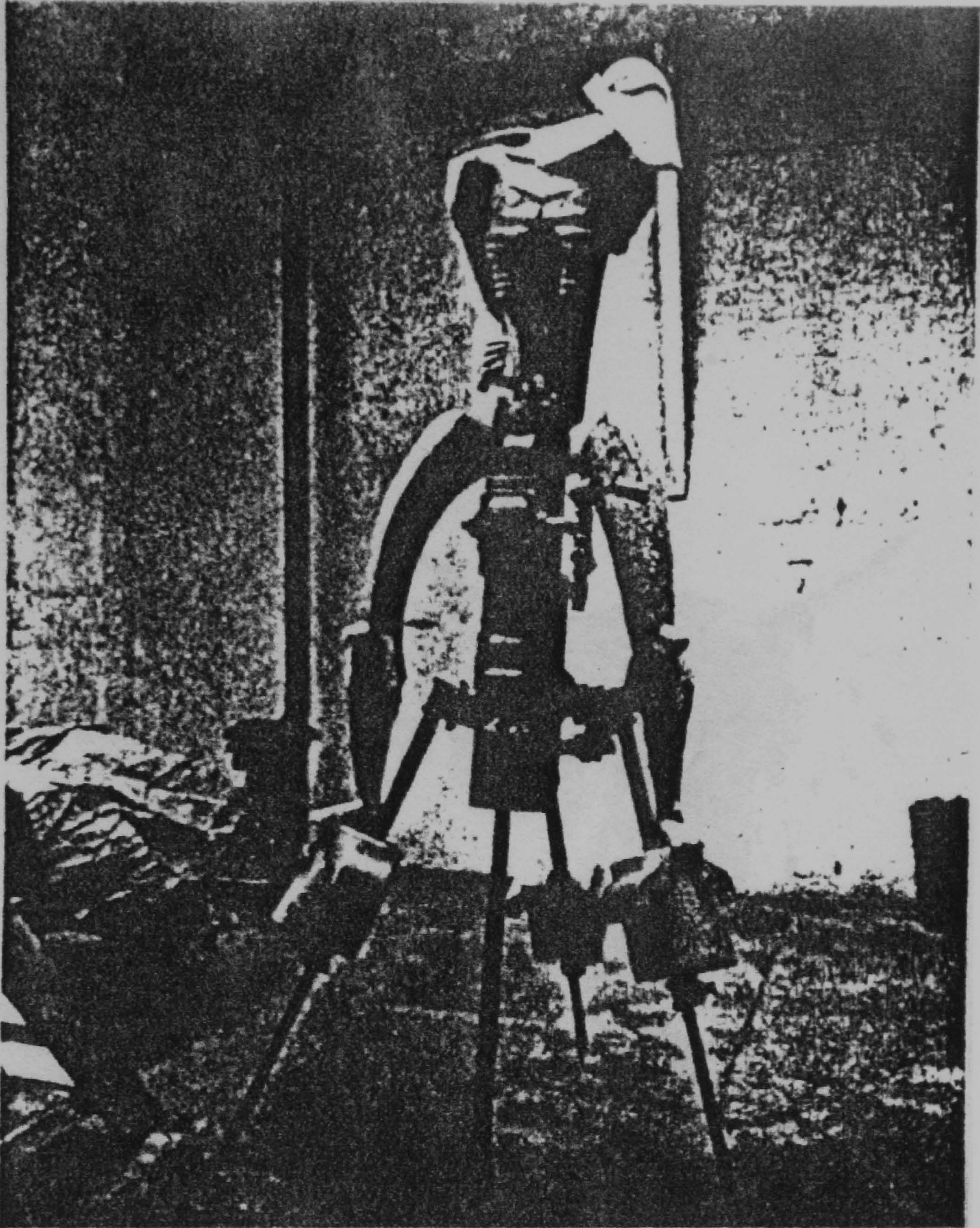


Figure 4 Jacob Epstein, the original *Rock Drill* (1913-14)

Reproduced in K. G. P. Hulton, *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age*



Figure 5 Jacob Epstein, *Rock Drill* (1916) (Torso in Metal)

Reproduced from postcard from the Tate Gallery, London

The suppressed content in Marinetti and Lewis' art and rhetoric returns in several guises: as the depiction of skin, eroticized, palpitating and ornamental in their fictional writing and in the myth of parthenogenesis (with its ambiguous desire to procreate without women). The total dehumanization of the subject in becoming a machine is supposedly, as Peter Nicholls puts it, a "mark of its triumph over the lack and incompleteness associated with sexual difference."¹⁰¹ Yet sexual difference and oedipal anxieties are reaffirmed in visual tropes inscribed on the male body that suggest homoerotic desire. The beginning of Marinetti's novel *The Untameables* (1922), for example, offers an image of a bevy of male bodies swarming together in a pit, a conglomeration of iron, flesh, blood and sweat. The glistening sweat is "faceted like precious jewels," and although this image suggests a metallic sheen with the surface given depth, a chiselled geometrical texture - the dominant signifier is that of ornamentation - of a spectacularly beautiful body, rather than a smooth functional exterior.¹⁰² Some of the *Untameables* even have arabesque decorations on their bodies. This version of the male body undermines the image in Marinetti's polemical writing of a body that completely denies desire, both to itself and to its spectator. Moreover, the presence of blood and sweat, fluids exuding from the interior of the body, jeopardizes the metallized body's aspiration to be an impermeable surface.

A similar discrepancy can be seen in Lewis by comparing his play, "The Enemy of the Stars" with the accompanying drawing of the same title (*Figure 6*). The latter depicts a shining metallic robot, faceless, but topped with a wedge-shaped head that suggests a machine tool. This sits on a neck elongated and rectangular like that of an electric crane. Evidence that he is cousin to the ideal machine man of the Futurists lies in the jutting of his breastbone, foreseen

¹⁰¹ Nicholls 97.

¹⁰² F. T. Marinetti, *The Untameables*, trans. Jeremy Parzen (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994) 94.

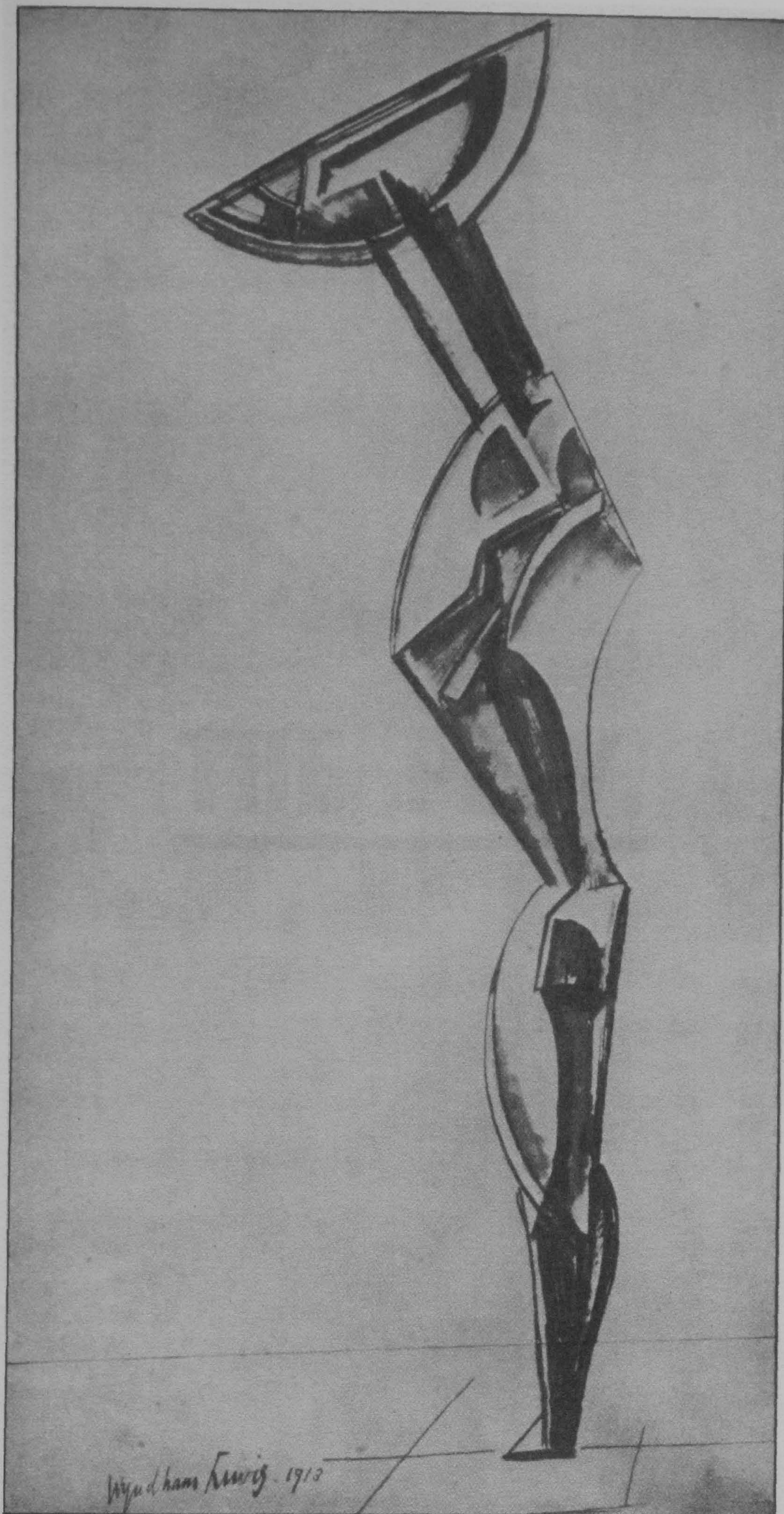


Figure 6 Wyndham Lewis, *Enemy of the Stars* (1914)

Reproduced in *Blast 1*

in Marinetti's vision as "a bodily development in the form of a prow from the outward swell of the breastbone, which will become the more marked the better an aviator the man of the future becomes."¹⁰³ Lewis' figure is indeed streamlined and aerodynamic, but nevertheless stands stiffly and seems somewhat top-heavy. Although the jutting prow recalls the rigid and toned chest of the body builder, this male body seems to bear little relation to the gladiators in the drama, who are charged like coils of energy and flesh. They seem to be entirely composed by seething, "rebellious" muscles, hemmed in by tightly fitting clothes. The bounding lines that contain form in the drawing fail here, for the body bursts "everywhere" through them with a rage of its own.¹⁰⁴ Clothed in such a way as to suggest bondage, the gladiators' bodies are inscribed by homoerotic desire. The skin is coated with "fiery dust" to absorb sweat and, as with Marinetti's *Untameables*, the overall impression is of a painted, decorated skin. The suppressed eroticism of fin-de-siècle aestheticism and decadence (the cultural tendencies which Lewis and Marinetti tried to expunge from their art), it seems, has reared again here.

Now for the myth of parthenogenesis, Marinetti's first novel *Mafarka the Futurist* provides the best example. It is far more troubled about the inconsistencies in its fantasy than his manifestos are, although it tries to resolve them as it moves to its conclusion, where a Futurist polemic begins to take shape. Like the founding manifesto it was written in French and first published in Paris, but perhaps oddly for a Futurist novel it is set not in advanced industrial Europe but in the continent where Marinetti was born (he was born in Egypt). However, the Africa in Marinetti's novel, while it signifies the West's pre-industrial past, also holds the key to its future. In this way, as Barbara Spackman has pointed out, the novel constitutes a skewed take at

¹⁰³ Marinetti, *Moonshine*, 99.

¹⁰⁴ Lewis, *Blast* 1 55, 74.

orientalism.¹⁰⁵ Much of the novel relates the battles between the armies of the Arabs and the black Africans. Mafarka himself is the Arab leader, and the clear winner (he obtains the crown of Africa). A colonial imperative stands behind the novel's figuration of bodies (women's bodies in particular are inscribed with fantasies of colonial products). The Arabs represent what Italy (which was behind other Western countries in the scramble for Africa) must do to bring itself into the right (proprietary) relation to the continent.

An inset tale, where Mafarka swallows the penis of a sexually rampant magical horse (served to him in the guise of a rare savoury fish), and then himself becomes sexually invigorated (his penis grows to the length of "eleven cubits"!), encapsulates the novel's presentation of Mafarka as the epitome of virility and prowess.¹⁰⁶ In the gendered schema of the novel, as in the manifestos, the hard, masculine body of the warrior is set in opposition to everything else - nature, blacks, women, even war, which are all cast as feminine. The energies or elements of nature are there to be tamed, reaped, mastered, or mounted, like "the ripe and quivering harvest of spring virgins" that are offered to Mafarka after one of his successful battles.¹⁰⁷ But even in those descriptions that serve to highlight his virility, there remains the pull of the body towards this other fluid, feminine, or racially unbound other.

Mafarka's hatred for women is clearly set up in the scene at the fortress of Gazr-el-Housan, where two beautiful sacred dancers pleasure each other in a lesbian erotic encounter staged for the apparently all-male gathering. Mafarka throws them to the deadly fishes to be macerated to pieces.¹⁰⁸ However, as Boscagli notes, the "affectively charged female body" which has "allegedly"

¹⁰⁵ Barbara Spackman, "Mafarka and Son: Marinetti's Homophobic Economics," *Modernism / Modernity* 1.3 (1994): 89-107, 90.

¹⁰⁶ F.T. Marinetti, *Mafarka the Futurist: An African Novel*, trans. Carol Diethe and Steve Cox (1909; London: Middlesex University Press, 1998) 47.

¹⁰⁷ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 79.

¹⁰⁸ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 102.

been abolished in the manifestos - and in the scene just described - is "displaced onto the image of the masculine-maternal body."¹⁰⁹ Mafarka shows tenderness for his brother Magamal, who with his rubber body is "as soft and fragile as the juicy bodies of young girls."¹¹⁰ Mafarka looks deep into Magamal's eyes, "with a mother's brimming tenderness." When his brother dies, from a bite from one of the rabid Sun Dogs (unleashed upon Mafarka's side by one of the enemy armies), Mafarka is further feminized by his grief: learning of Magamal's sickness, he feels "his heart alternately hardening like a wooden knot and flooding his chest with tears," the "searing pain" dissolves his willpower.¹¹¹ Travelling on a sailing boat in moonlight, to take his brother's remains to his parents' statues in the Hypogea, he offers kisses to the apparition of his brother. The limp sails and the "softly deliquescent" evening mirror his hopelessness and the melting of his will, and the waters beckon to him to dissolve himself in suicide.¹¹²

Mafarka, however, learns to turn his affective impulses into aggression, his melancholia into "fruitful, virile grief," to prevent it from overgrowing "the implacable hardness of [his] lucid will."¹¹³ Overcoming his sorrow, he feels his soul detach itself from his body, and announces his intention: "soon I shall be like the birds, for my sun-warmed soul will give birth to a son, who flies on tuneful wings!"¹¹⁴ It is the sun that gives him encouragement, while moonlight sapped his strength and made him prone to sensuality, and as he takes on the traitors who have stowed themselves away on his boat, he is able once more to crow over his victory. But the melancholia has not been dispelled. Mafarka has

¹⁰⁹ Boscagli 145.

¹¹⁰ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 16.

¹¹¹ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 104.

¹¹² Marinetti, *Mafarka* 121.

¹¹³ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 122.

¹¹⁴ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 123.

simply incorporated his loss, and his desire to make a son is actually born out of this loss.

As he starts "building" his son, Mafarka soon puts his new philosophy into practice, economizing on his emotions, ruling out sentiment, engaging only in swift contacts with women. One of them remarks in astonishment, "He crushed me with pleasure . . . Then sprang to his feet, stepped over my naked body and went back to work without another glance!"¹¹⁵ One woman, however, remains a threat, Mafarka's ex-girlfriend Coloubbi, who returns to him and brings with her the shadow of his past. In her presence, Mafarka is transported back to his youth: "He inhaled the gardens crowded with banana trees . . . The white acacia flowers still shed their scent of breasts warm with love and cool with milk; the carnal roses spilled their amorous perspiration."¹¹⁶ Coloubbi's charm invades Mafarka's boundaries "like a wave of perfumes and sweet odours;" she enters "all the gates of [his] soul at once."¹¹⁷ All this sensuousness - associated with the humidity and fervour of a woman's body - must be forgotten and repressed if Mafarka is to carry out the programme for immaculate conception he has set himself.

And immaculate conception it is, but not without its (homo)erotic undertones. As mentioned before, Mafarka has been revived by the sun - at that point put in opposition to the moon, which has always been yoked to the feminine. Shortly after, however, the sun becomes female, described as a hen, warming the "egg" of Marinetti's heart. As Blum says, the sudden change of gender is for convenience, to obviate anxieties about homoeroticism in what is to follow: the hen/ sun's beak starts "stabbing . . . at the shell of his heart."¹¹⁸ Mafarka interprets this as his son asking to be born, but if one were to follow

¹¹⁵ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 152.

¹¹⁶ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 171.

¹¹⁷ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 166.

¹¹⁸ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 131.

the logic of this fantasy, it is rather Mafarka being fecundated/ "taken" by the sun/ son. In other words, it's a primal scene fantasy where Mafarka can be mother, father, and son, all at the same time. This fantasy of parthenogenesis lies at the heart of all the transformations of the body into a machine in Futurist rhetoric: the subject travels back in time to participate in his own birth which then is made to look like an act of self-creation (a trope to which I will return in my reading of *The Terminator* in Chapter Four). It makes explicit what is subdued in the founding manifesto, for example, where Marinetti rolls into a ditch and immerses himself into it: "O maternal ditch, almost full of muddy water! Fair factory drain! I gulped down your nourishing sludge; and remembered the blessed black breast of my Sudanese nurse."¹¹⁹ It allows him to regress into pre-oedipal plenitude, far removed from sexual difference. The nurse appears momentarily to furnish this pre-oedipal dream and to dispel the homoerotic connotations when the baby/ Marinetti emerges, pierced by the machine ("I felt the white-hot iron-joy deliciously pass through my heart!"). The racial/ maternal other and the whole order of sexual difference are simultaneously rejected as Marinetti fantasizes birth as birth through the anus (and if babies can be born through the anus men can give birth just as well as women). The anus serves both for impregnation and as a birth canal, and the baby (who also doubles as penis and faeces in this cloacal fantasy) hurtles out, transfigured: immaculate, phallic, machinic. In appropriating the mother's function, the Futurist aspires to be what she, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, is said to desire or what she is said to figure.¹²⁰

However, as Lacan says, nobody can really be or have the phallus (no-one can "possess" a signifier). Moreover, in eliminating women (who are the "paper currency" in the patriarchal economy) the Futurists find that they have

¹¹⁹ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 48

¹²⁰ Foster, "Prosthetic" 13.

made their new order unstable. Once "expelled culturally," women have to make their "re-entry economically."¹²¹ In the homophobic logic of the novel the line between the homosocial and the homoerotic must never be left too ambiguous, and so women are called upon to serve as a conduit for same-sex relations between men. Mafarka tells his mummified mother Langourama that his son is for *her*, and she tells him to kiss his son, Gazourmah, on the mouth for her, which Mafarka obviously thinks gives him the pretext to do so without weaving an aura of homoeroticism around the whole affair, but which it nonetheless retains: he gives his son's sculptured mouth a lingering, tender kiss, and joyfully gazes at his son's beauty.¹²² The male gaze turned away from the female body returns to take in Gazourmah's "handsome" body, its sturdy pectorals and sternum, its "iron ribs," and the "ideal harmony" of his face.¹²³

Coloubbi is the other woman who presides over Gazourmah's birth; she spies on the father and son, as Mafarka, "gnawed by a strange jealousy," realizes when he turns in the direction of Gazourmah's gaze. Coloubbi challenges Mafarka's prerogative to be the sole author of his son: "Oh I forgive you, Mafarka, for wanting to stone your son's mother like that! He is my son, you know, because his very first glance was for me! . . . He is my lover, too, and I yielded to all his whims in that first glance!"¹²⁴ As Spackman has detected, Coloubbi serves to re-introduce a safe heterosexual love, even if it is incestuous heterosexuality, in order to divert attention from the homoeroticism. But she is also a crucial third party in another sense: she is "the only witness" of Gazourmah's "divine birth."¹²⁵

Coloubbi needed to be present to ratify the fantasy that is taking place - the overcoming of sexual difference. Mafarka tries to convince her of this: "He

¹²¹ Spackman 102-103.

¹²² Marinetti, *Mafarka* 194, 196.

¹²³ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 188, 186.

¹²⁴ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 189.

¹²⁵ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 201.

is mine alone! It is I who made his body. It is I who engender him through sheer exertion of will!"¹²⁶ The pleasure of intercourse in Mafarka's conception is sublimated into the pleasure of work in making a son: "it is my hands that have carved my son from the timber of a young oak . . . I have discovered a mixture that transforms plant fibres into living flesh and solid muscle."¹²⁷

However, Mafarka has not "made" Gazourmah on his own. He has enlisted the help of the blacksmiths of Milmillah to construct a cage to protect the son as he is being built, and also the clothmakers of Lagahourso to make the "indestructible" fabric that will cover his wings. When the building is finished, the workers are dismissed (without remuneration), and Mafarka breathes life into Gazourmah through the exercise of externalized will. That sexuality has been sublimated here is obvious from the text's adopted motif of upward displacement familiar from creation myths: from the genitals to the ear in the case of Zeus and Athene; and, with the God of Genesis, to the word

The point of parthenogenesis (as the novel puts it, creating "without the aid of the vulva") is to exit the order of finitude, of disease and decay. The son Mafarka wants to create is to be eternally youthful and invincible:

One night I suddenly asked myself: "Does it take gnomes to run like sailors on the deck of my chest to raise my arms? Does it take a captain on the poop of my forehead to open my eyes like two compasses?" To these questions my infallible instinct answered: "No!" So I concluded that without the stinking collusion of the woman's womb, it is possible to produce from one's flesh an immortal giant with unfailing wings!¹²⁸

Together with Mafarka's earlier declarations about releasing his will into his son's new body, and his instructions to his audience to "radiate willpower from your muscles and from your mouth. . . like a supernatural force, so that it

¹²⁶ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 183.

¹²⁷ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 143.

¹²⁸ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 145.

masters, transforms and arouses wood, granite, iron and all metals," this strikes us as a garbled version of Nietzsche's doctrine of the will (more on this doctrine will be said in Chapter Two). Mafarka tells us not to search for causes, but to sense the primal will within us, that just *is*. This will enables us "to take hold of matter and change it to our fancy."¹²⁹ He also adopts and turns round Bergson's theory of intuition (this is the Futurist belief in transcendence, discussed above):

Our mind, which is the supreme manifestation of organized living matter, accompanies matter itself in all its transformations, preserving in its new forms the sensations of the past and the subtle vibrations of the energy previously expended . . . The divinity and individual continuity of the wilful, all-powerful mind must be externalized, in order to change the world!¹³⁰

III. Flights of Fantasy and of Vision

When Gazourmah takes flight at the end of *Mafarka the Futurist*, he takes his father's "soul" with him. But in view of the fact that he has killed both his parents, he is also author of himself, owing no allegiance to the past, weighted down by nothing, not even the earth. By killing Coloubbi he has, as she warned him, killed the earth ("It is the Earth you've killed in killing me! . . . Soon you will hear its first death-throes").¹³¹ As he flies into the future, Gazourmah watches the earth crack and crash beneath him from an aerial viewpoint. He floats and hovers, swoops and soars; he has utter freedom of movement in the skies. Written as it is at the dawn of a new century, the novel partakes of a wider rhetoric of transcendence. There are many references to flight in connection with the birth of the new in the literature of this period, and the Futurist fantasy of flying is related very specifically to the aeroplanes that were beginning to be seen in the skies at this time. Gazourmah's creation captures the

¹²⁹ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 146.

¹³⁰ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 147.

¹³¹ Marinetti, *Mafarka* 202.

"mystery" of flight, of how wood, metal, cloth, loaded down with human bodies, could lift off into the air - that is, become effectively "dematerialized" and "spiritualized" merely through the acceleration of an internal combustion engine and propeller.¹³² The Futurists were keen participants in this new culture, aviation contained the promise of new possibilities for heroism and for art: the air was another space to conquer, just like Africa. Marinetti first flew in an airplane at the first international air meet at Brescia in 1909; along with other poets and writers, he hitched a ride.¹³³ The paintings known as *aeropittura* from the second wave of Futurism develop this fascination with flight, as many of its artists were commissioned by the Ministry of Aviation in the Second World War to "immortalize" the acrobatic flights of fighter planes, in which they themselves took part.¹³⁴

In its first wave, Futurism focused its rhetoric of transcendence in a more general delimitation of the body's boundaries: the Futurist destruction of the "I," which is introduced in Marinetti's "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" (1912). This piece purports to be inspired by an aeroplane flight:

Sitting on the gas tank of an airplane, my stomach warmed by the pilot's head, I sensed the ridiculous inanity of the old syntax inherited from Homer. A pressing need to liberate words, to drag them out of their prison in the Latin period! Like all imbeciles, this period naturally has a canny head, a stomach, two legs, and two flat feet, but it will never have two wings. Just enough to walk, to take a short run and then stop, panting!¹³⁵

In the manifesto, the new experiences of the body in aerial speed come to form the basis of a new poetics: Marinetti claims to be writing from dictations by "the whirling propeller" as he flew above Milan. In the type of aircraft in which

¹³² Schnapp, "Propeller" 161.

¹³³ Schnapp, "Propeller" 156.

¹³⁴ Livia Velani, *Balla and Futurist Italy* (London: The Estorick Collection, 1998) 12.

¹³⁵ Marinetti, "The Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature"(1912), in *Moonshine* 92.

he would have been flying, probably a Voisin, "the poet-passenger body, rather than that of the pilot," as Schnapp tells us, would have formed "a single unit with the engine, fuel system and propeller chassis." This would mean that, because of the "deafening din," Marinetti, unable to talk to the pilot, would have communicated instead with the plane's "mechanical rhythms and physical vibrations," with the propeller, most of all, roaring into his ear.¹³⁶ Exposed to the airstream, feeling the pulsations of the motor being fed into his body, breathing in the smell of castor oil, and surrounded by the overall uproar, Marinetti was provided with a model of how art could be collapsed into its object. In the biplane, Schnapp says, he would have had a "sense of unrestricted vision" - aerial flight afforded the possibility of an "unmediated, accelerated and synthetic mode of apprehending the real."¹³⁷

The manifesto announces 11 points, the last of which is "destroy the 'I' in literature: that is, all psychology."¹³⁸ To replace human psychology there would now be "an *intuitive psychology of matter*."¹³⁹ When the "I" speaks, it is to be matter itself speaking, the agitations of atoms. As Marinetti looked at objects "from a new point of view," from his airplane, he realized that literature had to "enter directly into the universe and become one body with it."¹⁴⁰ Poets had to create "imagination without strings," and dismantle the old syntax: they were to "lighten" their metaphors to speed them further and cast "nets" of analogies, dropping the first terms (even at the risk of not being understood).¹⁴¹ Nicholls suggests that the imagery of the net means that there is no longer a stable centre.¹⁴² In his interpretation, the bodily ego itself is

¹³⁶ Schnapp, "Propeller" 160-161.

¹³⁷ Schnapp, "Propeller" 163.

¹³⁸ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 95.

¹³⁹ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 96.

¹⁴⁰ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 96-97.

¹⁴¹ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 94; F.T. Marinetti, "Destruction of Syntax-Imagination without Strings-Words-in-Freedom" (1913), in Apollonio 99.

¹⁴² Nicholls 98.

construed as a net, abolishing "the traditional dialectic of private and public, inner and outer."¹⁴³ The "Futurist self" becomes "a functional conduit of external rhythms."¹⁴⁴

Nicholls' observations have to be qualified, however, for this poetics of matter also has the effect of synthesizing the self. Through "intuition," Marinetti claims, we will bridge "the seemingly unconquerable hostility that separates out human flesh from the metal of motors."¹⁴⁵ And art, he says, is an "*extension of the forest of our veins*, that pours out, beyond the body, into the infinity of Space and Time." On the one hand, intuition serves disembodiment; but, on the other, used creatively, it is a prosthesis that sutures flesh and metal. The body that has dispersed and deliquesced gathers itself together again, hardened and even more imposingly unified, as a vision-machine, with a totalizing perspective on the aerial domain.

The machine with which Marinetti wants to identify is, in fact, the cinema. In the manifesto, Marinetti actually says cinema is supremely adapted to this intuitive psychology of matter; it can, he implies, intervene directly into matter, through its montage and superimposition techniques. It also has the power to reverse time, and to give the impression of simultaneity: it "offers us the dance of an object that divides and recomposes without human intervention. It . . . offers us the backward sweep of a diver whose feet leave the ocean and bounce violently back on the diving board."¹⁴⁶ Unfortunately, the Futurists own foray into cinema, *Vita Futurista*, is lost, but in their reinterpretation of the universe, a cinematic model of seeing can easily be discerned, not least because this rhetoric dis-engages vision from the contingencies of human vision, which is tied to a body, to a punctual self. As

¹⁴³ Nicholls 97.

¹⁴⁴ Nicholls 98.

¹⁴⁵ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 97.

¹⁴⁶ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 95-6

Doane says, cinema *disembodies* vision; it is not anchored to seeing from a specific limited time and place. As a prosthetic enhancement, it enables us to escape from our finite, flawed bodies and take a seemingly de-spatialized gaze, which "signals a superhuman mastery of space." Doane adds, "to the extent that this is predicated on the refusal of contingency and embodiment, it shelters the white male body from the various shocks of modernity" (contingency and embodiment are instead displaced onto the white female and black male in cinematic images).¹⁴⁷

When Marinetti was a war correspondent in Libya, covering the 1911 Battle of Tripoli, aircraft was being used for reconnaissance: on-board cameras served as sighting devices. A documentary film-maker, Luca Comerio, who was also there commented on the way the image was holding sway over the object.¹⁴⁸ As this suggests, the technology of cinema and the technology of warfare were beginning to share a common history from this period, a history which the disembodied way of seeing in Futurist rhetoric participates. As Foster notes, when Marinetti says "the projectile's very personal path is a thousand times more interesting to us than human psychology" he "looks past Jünger, to Virilio, the Gulf War and our next video inferno."¹⁴⁹

The primacy of the image enters into Futurist painting and sculpture, too. As Rosalind Krauss notes, the ambition of high modernism was "to achieve a spatial condition unique to the perceptual modality specific to the arts of *vision*, one which would cancel all separations of figures from their surrounding space or background to produce a continuum unimaginable for earthly bodies to traverse, but into which we, as *viewers* might easily slide - or glide - in an effortless, purely *optical* movement."¹⁵⁰ Dedicated as they were to

¹⁴⁷ Doane, "Technology's Body" 20-1.

¹⁴⁸ Schnapp, "Propeller" 168-9.

¹⁴⁹ Foster, "Prosthetic" 20.

¹⁵⁰ Yve-Alain Bois and Rosalind Krauss, "A User's Guide to Entropy," *October* 78 (Fall 1996): 39-88, 40

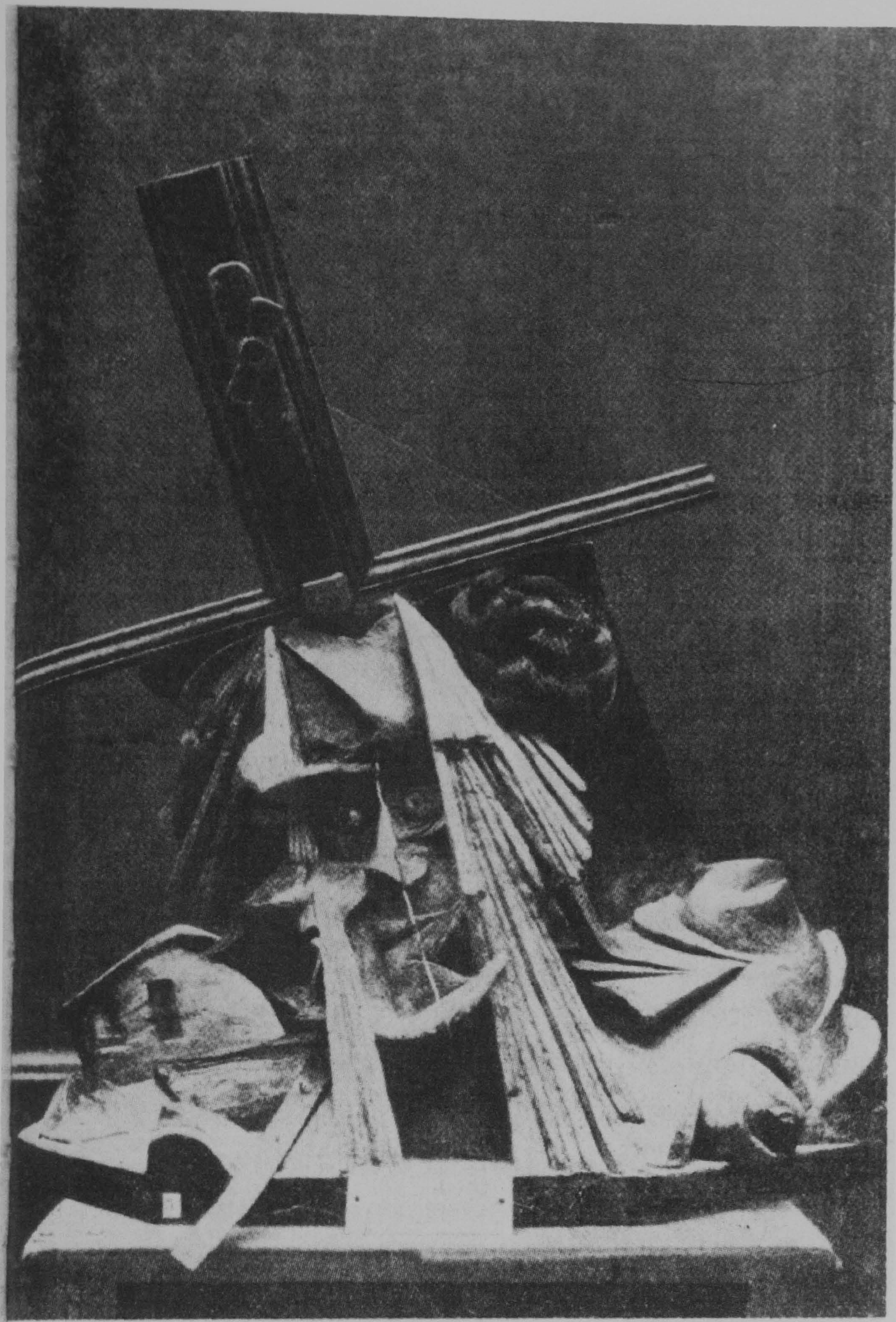


Figure 7 Umberto Boccioni, *Fusion of Head and Window* (1912)

Reproduced in Tisdall and Bozzolla

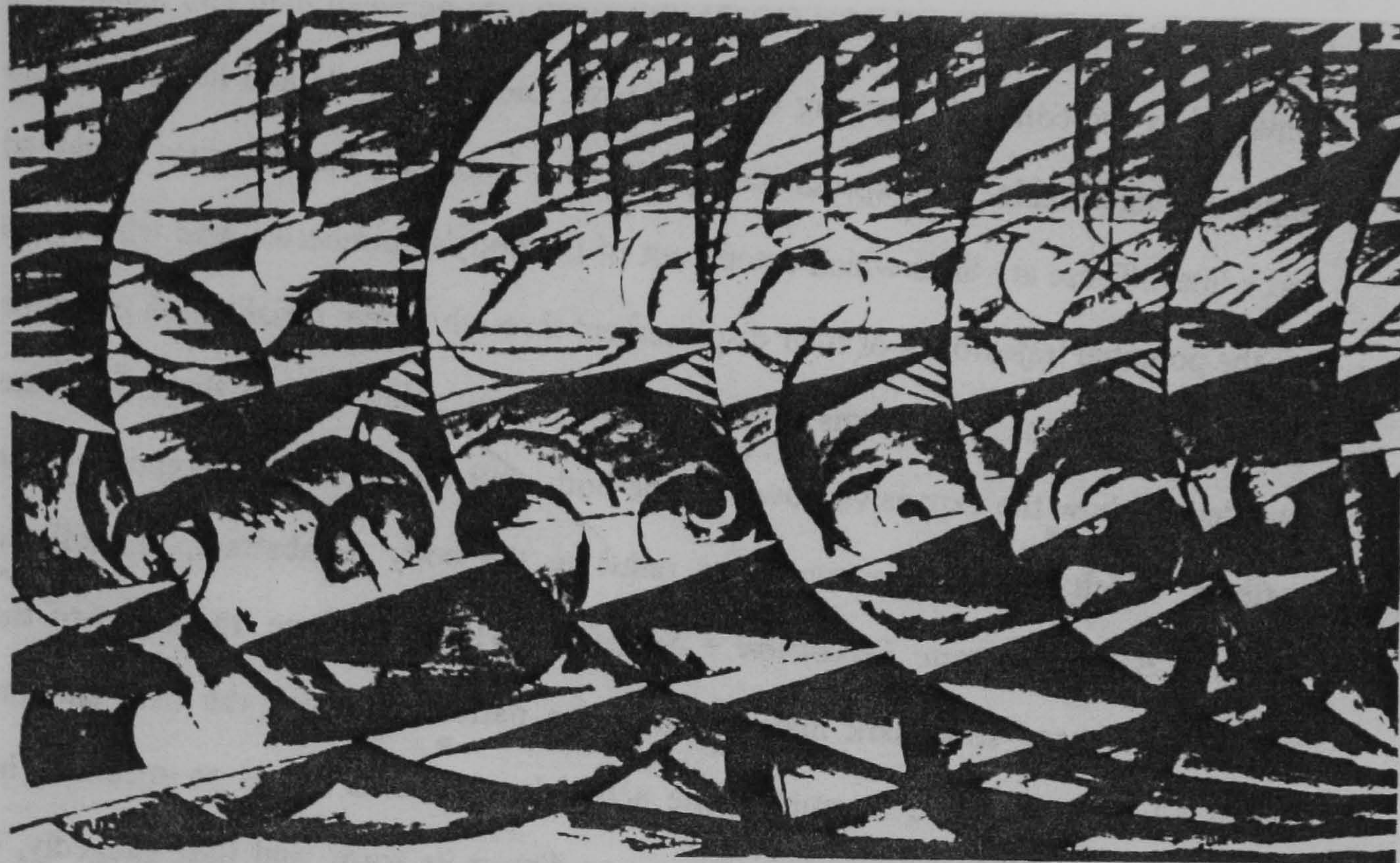


Figure 8 Giacomo Balla, *Dynamic Expansion + Speed* (1913)

Reproduced in K. G. P. Hulton



Figure 9 Umberto Boccioni, *The Street Enters the House* (1911)

Reproduced in Tisdall and Bozzolla

celebrate speed, this ambition was especially marked in the Futurists, who were inspired by the way a moving platform such as a car altered one's vision, so as to make objects rush into each other and interpenetrate. The Futurist sculptors did away with the closed statues; they opened up their figures and placed the environment inside them. "No one still believes that an object finishes off where another begins," Boccioni declared.¹⁵¹ His *Fusion of Head and Window* (1912) is an attempt to illustrate this: the window frame interfuses with the head, into which also a house collides (*Figure 7*). The Futurist painters showed bodies and vehicles in motion, where forms are merged and serialized to map out their trajectories in time and space - see, for example, the repeated discs and dark lines of force in Giacomo Balla's *Dynamic Expansion + Speed* (1913; *Figure 8*). Abandoning the traditional way of placing objects and people before the beholder, the painters strove to place the spectator "in the centre of the picture."¹⁵² In Boccioni's *The Street Enters the House* (1911), the spectator is internalized as a hypothetical observer behind the figure of a woman on the balcony, standing with her back to us in the foreground (*Figure 9*). The painting is intended to show how she and her surroundings would look from the point of view of this hypothetical observer. Objects rush headlong into the woman's body: poles from the construction site pierce her head. A horse emerges from the cheek of her buttocks - this is how, the painting suggests, it would be perceived by someone standing behind her - a "cheeky" reference to the declaration made in "Futurist Painting: Technical Manifesto" (1910): "How often have we not seen upon the cheek of the person with whom we are talking the horse which passes at the end of the street?"¹⁵³

Such paintings and sculptures give the impression that the distinction between self and milieu, figure and ground have been dissolved. Krauss' words,

¹⁵¹ Apollonio 52, 65.

¹⁵² Apollonio 28.

¹⁵³ Apollonio 28.

however, force us to qualify this: "in sloughing off the inevitable separations of space as we see it where objects stand apart from one other and space is discontinuous with them, this new optical continuum could be a result of what one vocabulary would call *sublation* - as figure and ground achieve a new and higher synthesis - and another *sublimation*, since the purified space would, in dispensing with bodies, rid itself as well as of all the drives to which bodies are lamentably prone, erotic or otherwise."¹⁵⁴ Sublation and sublimation are both at work in these fantasies of interpenetration, dispersal and dissolution: sublation, because the body whose boundaries have been stretched, penetrated, or altogether broken up regains a unity in *transcendental synthesis* with the machine; sublimation, since dissolution, or death drive, in this art, becomes a way of going beyond sexual difference. With each, the death drive is transvalued (that is, invested with a new value) into a form of self-preservation.¹⁵⁵

The impulse of this art is, as with Marinetti's poetics, an attempt to move closer to *eidos*: "visual form ... is taken closer to the idea of itself."¹⁵⁶ It was precisely this impulse in Futurism that galled Lewis - in this respect Futurism was no better than Impressionism, or other comparatively "naturalistic" tendencies in art. More fundamentally, he repudiated the view of the world as flux and as the annihilation of differences - a move strongly reminiscent of Bergson's time philosophy: "As much as [Bergson] enjoys the sight of things 'penetrating' and 'merging,' do we enjoy the opposite picture of them standing apart - the wind blowing between them, and the air circulating freely in and out of them."¹⁵⁷ This strikes again at one of the pivotal differences between Futurism and Vorticism: according to Pound and Lewis,

¹⁵⁴ Bois and Krauss 40.

¹⁵⁵ Foster, "Prosthetic" 15.

¹⁵⁶ Bois and Krauss 40.

¹⁵⁷ Lewis, *Time* 443.

Futurism was "the disgorging spray of a vortex, with no drive behind it, DISPERSAL," whereas for Vorticism the interest was in the stillness at the centre of the vortex; its conception, Lewis claimed, was "electric, with a more mastered, vivid vitality."¹⁵⁸ Pound writes: "You may think of man as that towards which perception moves. You may think of him as the TOY of circumstance, as the plastic substance RECEIVING impressions. OR you may think of him DIRECTING a certain fluid force against circumstance, as conceiving instead of merely observing and reflecting."¹⁵⁹ Vorticism thus stakes its claim to be more the "manly" of the two.

Lewis rejected the way the Futurists tried to bring visual form closer to perception. They simply showed the receiving of impressions, without the use of the creative mind to shape its objects: their principle of perceptual superimposition reduced the body and the object to a series of surface representations, a semiosis of signs, where everything was a spectacle. Lewis was instead intent on preserving the object as an object, over and above our subjective attitude. He tried to define a three-dimensional approach to the object, an approach which draws on Kant's insistence on the necessity of *space* for the generation of the substantial principle. In this way the object could be imbued with a "mystifying independence and air of self-sufficiency . . . far more uncanny than the unity we experience in our subjective experience."¹⁶⁰

However, the Futurists, with their interest in dispersal and velocity, were far closer to the climate of the time. Balla's *Dynamic Expansion + Speed* shows the Futurists' interest in the persistence of vision, a physiological fact of our embodied vision, where objects belatedly leave their trace on the retina. At this time, the persistence of vision was thought to be the basis of cinema, providing the illusion of movement when a series of still photographs were

¹⁵⁸ Lewis, *Blast 1* 153; *Blast 2* 38.

¹⁵⁹ Ezra Pound, "Vortex," *Blast 1* 153.

¹⁶⁰ Lewis, *Time* 372-373.

shown in quick succession. Although persistence of vision is a mark of the body's deficiency, both cinema and Futurism abetted it in order to *extend* human capacities for vision.

IV. Advance Guards: Machines for War

The Futurists carried their fascination with cinematic perception into their vision of war, which becomes a cinema experience - a matter of spectacle and expenditure. In Marinetti's tract, "Electrical War," locomotives armed with electric batteries create numerous "electric explosions" in the sky - an extravagant light-show.¹⁶¹ Delighting in the aesthetics of expenditure, the Futurists imagined energies unleashed outwards in acts of destruction, and fantasized about the violent defusion of the self. As "the plainest and most violent of Futurist symbols," Marinetti singles out the Japanese commerce of making explosive powders from crushed human bones. The skeletons of dead heroes are crushed, but this body turned into granules is reconstituted by turning into a weapon: "the indomitable ashes of men . . . come to life in cannons!"¹⁶² Despite their rhetoric of defusion and dispersal, the Futurists cannot resist the drive to total reification and everlasting incarnation (immortality, as Slavoj Zizek has said, is another name for the death drive).¹⁶³ Battle explosions and car-crashes, in the Futurists' fantasies, provide scenarios for an approved type of unbinding, where the conferral of "divinity" - through the experience of transcendence - creates an identification, once more, with wholeness. This reveals that there is no real contradiction between the rigid protection of bodily boundaries and the aesthetics of crashing and explosion. Speed provides the means for achieving this transcendence: "the intoxication of

¹⁶¹ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 115.

¹⁶² Marinetti, *Moonshine* 90.

¹⁶³ Slavoj Zizek, "Why is immortality one of the names of the death drive?" *Death Drive: Contemporary Art and Psychoanalysis Conference*, Tate Gallery, London, 26 June 1998.

great speeds in cars is nothing but the joy of feeling oneself fused with the only *divinity*."¹⁶⁴ As Theweleit asserts, the "violent" and "intoxicating" act of "revving up and racing" forms a prologue to attaining the object of pleasure. It is "a need" that "the armoured body has": a legitimate loss of one's own organic boundaries, which are exchanged for the metallic boundaries of the vehicle.¹⁶⁵ Flesh and metal violently collide in "an orgiastic and orgasmic moment of identification with totality."¹⁶⁶

In its calls to war, Futurism took its role as an avant-garde literally - as an advance guard. Indeed, the Futurists' glorification of war combines many of the aspects of their ideology discussed so far - its rhetoric of transcendence, its destruction of the past, its misogyny. Further, the Futurists' rhetoric of cleansing finds its logical climax in the slogan "war is hygiene": in Marinetti's future, disease has been confined to "two or three hospitals" and the "sick and the weak" have been "crushed, crumbled, pulverized by the vehement wheels of intense civilization."¹⁶⁷ Shocking as it may sound, the Futurists were not alone in this sentiment. In *Blast 2*, Lewis speculates, "We might eventually arrive at such a point of excellence that two-thirds of the world's population could be exterminated with mathematical precision in a fortnight. War might be treated on the same basis as agriculture." Yet he adds, "nobody but Marinetti, the Kaiser, and professional soldiers WANT war."¹⁶⁸ The Vorticists showed a longing to destroy, although in their case it was governed less by a desire for war than for an art of action that would overturn traditional sensibilities, made even more resistant by a "government-sponsored" offensive against modernism. While that gave the Vorticists a "home-front enemy," in *Blast 2* ("the War

¹⁶⁴ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 104.

¹⁶⁵ Theweleit 181n13.

¹⁶⁶ Boscagli 150.

¹⁶⁷ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 115.

¹⁶⁸ Lewis, *Blast 2* 14.

Number"), the vitriol that had formerly been reserved for the Futurists is turned onto Germany, to show that the Vorticists were firmly on Britain's side.¹⁶⁹

There were other modernists who longed to see an end to what they felt was a moribund world, as we have seen; some of these also saw war as a purgative, able to destroy what they felt was diseased in society, and therefore permit transition to another era.¹⁷⁰ Certainly some of the Futurists' contemporaries in Italy felt this way: war and violence were seen as the "necessary instruments for the conquest of modernity, the regeneration of the nation, and the construction of a new Italian civilization."¹⁷¹ And many other intellectuals, as Roland Stromberg has shown in his study of the cultural climate in 1914, condoned war. For Max Weber, Emile Durkheim and others, war seemed to offer an answer to the anomie and uprootedness that they saw in the modern masses. Violence and war had the potential to destroy a sterile, rationalized culture, and so were embraced in the name of community.¹⁷²

Neither was the idea of war as hygiene new to the twentieth century. Nineteenth century forerunners who held this kind of idea, or something that approached it, included Clausewitz, who, in his discussion of Austria and Prussia's campaigns of 1805, 1806, and 1809, was led to form "a conception of modern absolute War," inspired by war's "destroying energy."¹⁷³ As Daniel Pick suggests, this idea figures war as a form of cataclysm.¹⁷⁴ It was also fuelled by the perception of war as being increasingly controlled by industrialized armaments and by scientific planning; this led, as Pick's study shows, to the

¹⁶⁹ Paul Peppis, "Surrounded by A Multitude of other Blasts': Vorticism and the Great War," *Modernism / Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 39-66, 40.

¹⁷⁰ Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined: the First World War and English Culture* (London: Bodley Head, 1990) 139.

¹⁷¹ Gentile 61, 71-2.

¹⁷² Roland N. Stromberg, *Redemption by War: the Intellectuals and 1914* (Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1982) 5, 10.

¹⁷³ Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* (1832; London: Penguin, 1982) 373.

¹⁷⁴ Daniel Pick, *War Machine: the Rationalization of Slaughter in the Modern Age* (New Haven; Yale University Press, 1993) 49.

beginnings in the nineteenth century of a notion of war as a freewheeling machine, in which human agency and identity were completely lost. With a general arms race mounting in Europe since 1870 (the time of the Franco-Prussian war), such feelings were becoming widespread by the time Futurism came into being. Prussia and its successes against Denmark, Austria and France in the mid-late nineteenth century reinforced this view of war as an undertaking of science and planning, as the fast, efficient movement and management of troops. If this is the background to the Futurists' vision of war, it emerges only obliquely in the clean, co-ordinations of the machines and men gathering in the war zone, and in the laboratory preparation of weapons, where technicians of war, the radiotherapists, are seen inspecting "the piercing healing danger of radium" through leaded windows, "their faces protected by india-rubber masks, their bodies encased in overalls woven of lead, india rubber, and bismuth."¹⁷⁵

However, as Richard Cork points out, despite all their bombast, the Futurists' creative output (apart from Marinetti's, of course) before the First World War actually contained very little on the subject of war.¹⁷⁶ In Cork's view Futurism singularly fails to measure up to the declarations of the manifestos. Marinetti, who served as a reporter in the Balkan war of 1912, made the siege of Adrianople into the topic of his book, *Zang Tumb Tuum* (although not published until 1914, Marinetti declaimed excerpts from the book to audiences in London, Berlin and Rome). In this work, Marinetti puts into practice the poetics he had announced in the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature" - he tries to convey the noise and havoc of battle through onomatopoeia: the sound of cannons, machine-guns, trains, telegraphic

¹⁷⁵ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 116.

¹⁷⁶ Richard Cork, *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art and the Great War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994) 16.



Figure 10 Sant'Elia, Boccioni and Marinetti: the volunteers of 1915

Reproduced in Richard Cork, *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art and the Great War*

messages. The dynamism of war is recreated through extravagant and inventive variations of the typeface and arrangements of words on the page.¹⁷⁷ Contrary to what Cork says about this piece - he dismisses it as a rather irrelevant exercise in form - it is not entirely removed from the bitter realities of war: it describes a cholera outbreak, soldiers arriving by train being carried on stretchers, and, not uncaringly, it evokes the dismal and weary experience of these sick bodies, even as it goes on in the final chapter to celebrate war as glorious hygiene.¹⁷⁸ That said, many other modernists, including many of the Futurists, and certainly all of the Vorticists, found themselves questioning their belief in the redemptive possibilities of war.

Italy was late in joining the war. From when the war began in August 1914 to when Italy finally decided to take part in May 1915, during which time both sides of the conflict bid for an alliance, the Futurists experienced exasperation at not being able to put into action their patriotic zeal and their vision of national destiny (they believed the war would speed up the process of modernization and "oblige" Italy to stop living in the past).¹⁷⁹ As soon as they could, in July 1915, Marinetti, Boccioni, Luigi Russolo, Antonio Sant'Elia and other Futurists volunteered for service. A photograph from 1915 shows Marinetti, Boccioni and Sant'Elia posing together (*Figure 10*). As Cork remarks, they look hardy and unruffled enough. Marinetti, on the right, his chin raised, is typically assertive - even though the Italians were not making progress against the Austrians (Boccioni's diary reveals his exhaustion and his realization that they had found themselves fighting "without the shadow of equipment and training and without having the right physique").¹⁸⁰ Boccioni and Sant'Elia were soon killed (that very year), and their loss was a terrible

¹⁷⁷ Caroline Tisdall and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993) 96.

¹⁷⁸ Cork 24.

¹⁷⁹ Gentile 72.

¹⁸⁰ Cork 68.



Figure 11 Gino Severini, *Armoured Train* (1915)

Reproduced in Tisdall and Bozzolla

blow to Futurism.¹⁸¹ Many of the Futurists, those who took part in the war, were disillusioned by it. By the end of the war, the movement no longer had the same appearance. (Some of the artists left - Ardengo Soffici and Carlo Carrà went to join Giorgio de Chirico's group, the Metaphysical Painters).

The state of his lungs prevented Gino Severini from entering service, but while he was staying in Paris, where he had moved in late 1914, he managed to paint pictures of the war based on an overhead view from his window, a view which enabled him to approach the foreshortened perspective of aerial flight celebrated by Marinetti in "The Technical Manifesto of Futurist Literature." One of his pictures from this time, *Armoured Train* (1915), shows the war-machine and the machine-gun-armed soldiers within it cloaked in geometricized plumes of smoke (*Figure 11*). There is very little detail that can be made out save the bolts on the sheets of metal that make up the train's carapace, and the huge gun-barrel projecting out of the train. Even the soldiers and their weaponry appear to be lost in the formal pattern of the picture. Their faces are hidden, huddled as the soldiers are together, the stance of each man (poised to shoot) is impersonal and the overall impression is one of total uniformity. Cork remarks that Severini's train is "strangely pristine," his view of the war is "laundered of all unpleasantness, and betrays his lack of direct involvement in the human cost of the conflict."¹⁸² Rather than taking Cork's attitude, I want to suggest now that the Futurist's painting techniques were actually highly adaptable to the depiction of war, precisely because of their translation of visual form into spectacle - *because* of their view of war as fantasy. The impetus for this comes from Boscagli's comments on Severini's civilian scenes (see *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin*; *Figure 12*). In the geometrical configuration of such pictures, each component is reduced to a

¹⁸¹ Cork 148. Boccioni died in August, Sant'Elia in October.

¹⁸² Cork 70.



Figure 12 Gino Severini, *Dynamic Hieroglyphic of the Bal Tabarin* (1912)

Reproduced in Robert Hughes, *The Shock of the New*

tessera in a pattern. But even as each individual body loses its own, particular boundaries, it finds a new boundary in the larger pattern: individual bodies are lost in order to be "recruited merely as a component in a larger spectacle."¹⁸³ In these civilian scenes, Boscagli argues, lies the spectre of the totality troop of war. Nevinson's *Returning to the Trenches*, which shows the totality troop, may illustrate this: soldiers share arms and legs, each body and machine part forms a tessera in the overall pattern, yet the containing skin is reaffirmed by the mobile "front" of the troop (*Figure 13*). Boscagli further deduces that the aesthetic innovation of representing bodies as geometrical forms slotting into each other like components in a machine mirrors the materialistic effect of capitalism, whereby "human relations and the body of the worker are abstracted and quantified in monetary value."¹⁸⁴ Perceptual fragmentation of bodies colludes with the actual fragmenting of bodies in war and industry.

Severini's view of the war seems compatible with the Vorticists', although he was a bystander and many of the Vorticists were participants. It is true that this war marked a break in the "absentee" tradition. Formerly, paintings were commissioned from artists who had never visited the scene of conflict - now that changed.¹⁸⁵ But like Severini, the Vorticists found the transition between depicting "civilian" scenes and war ones relatively smooth. A *Punch* cartoon of 1914 made Lewis the butt of its joke by implying that he only had to give his pictures different titles (or perhaps turn them upside down?) for them to pass as representations of the war.¹⁸⁶ Trivialization aside,

¹⁸³ Boscagli 152.

¹⁸⁴ Boscagli 152.

¹⁸⁵ Hynes 34.

¹⁸⁶ George Murrow, "How the Cubist, By a Mere Alteration of Titles, Achieved a Ready Sale of Unmarketable Pictures," *Punch* (14 October 1914), reproduced in Edwards 28. Modernist art was a running joke in newspapers of this period; pictures were often printed upside down and the journalists seldom cared for the distinctions between Cubism, Futurism and Vorticism - terms which Lewis insisted on particularizing in his "Review of Contemporary Art," *Blast* 2 38.



Figure 13 C.R.W. Nevinson, *Returning to the Trenches* (1914)

Reproduced in Richard Ingleby et al., *C.R.W. Nevinson: the Twentieth Century*

the cartoon points to the fact that when they entered the war, the Vorticists found that their fantasies of the machine-body had become reality. Nevinson, who of the English artists was closest in style to Severini (and to Futurism in general), gave voice to this concern in his autobiography. There he recalls the 1913 Allied Artist exhibition at Holland Park, which included his painting *War* and Lewis' *Plan of War*, and agrees with Sadler's theorem that "some modern artists had a curious pre-sense of the catastrophe that was to come. In retrospect it would certainly seem that some of us were already preparing our technique to express the horror, the cruelty and violence which were to be our destiny."¹⁸⁷ Returning from the front, he claims he simply painted what he saw there: the war "dominated by machines," with men "mere cogs in the mechanism." War, in other words, had become the realization of Taylorism. Proclaiming himself as the "first" to depict war as mechanical, he avers that his overturning of traditional treatments of war in painting was "unconscious." In the act of simply painting what he saw he "was caught up in a force over which he had no control."¹⁸⁸ These claims of Nevinson are not entirely ingenuous, however, for the totality troop was already visible at the time the Vorticists/Futurists were elaborating their machine aesthetic. To declare that the latter found its realization in the war, and to disavow consciousness in the premonition, is to occlude the extent to which their vision of the mechanical body was culturally-inflected - by those real historical and cultural changes in the application of technology in modernity, and by the effects of rationalization and dehumanization in civilian society and earlier wars.

But it has also been argued that this realization (that fantasy was now reality) was what made artists turn away in horror from their former machine-based aesthetics: machine-age optimism quickly faded once artists witnessed

¹⁸⁷ C.R.W. Nevinson, *Paint and Prejudice* (London: Methuen, 1937) 64.

¹⁸⁸ Nevinson 87-8.

the terrible slaughter that the machines used in this war were able to inflict.¹⁸⁹ Even Lewis spoke of the war as a "despicable inhuman swindle."¹⁹⁰ In 1916, Epstein stripped his *Rock-Drill* of its machinic accoutrements. Created as it was on the cusp of the war, this sculpture assumed for him the character of sinister prolepsis. "Visored" and "menacing," with its war-like poise, this machine-man, the sculptor writes in his autobiography, "is the armed, sinister figure of today and tomorrow." Its truncated, rectangular arms resemble levers, the ridges of its thorax are uniform to suggest dehumanization. This "machine-like robot," Epstein adds, is "no humanity, only the terrible Frankenstein's monster we have made ourselves into."¹⁹¹ Nevinson retracted his allegiance to Marinetti, a change of stance that Lewis gleefully records in *Blast*: Marinetti's only disciple in this country "had seemingly not thought out . . . all his master's precepts. For I hear that, de retour du Front, this disciple's first action has been to write to the compact Milanese volcano that he no longer shares, that he **REPUDIATES** all his (Marinetti's) utterances on the subject of War . . . Marinetti's solitary English disciple has discovered that War is not Magnifique, or that Marinetti's Guerre is not la Guerre. Tant Mieux."¹⁹²

Another narrative about art in this period states that as a result of their experience in the war, artists underwent a return to figuration (in its 1999-2000 exhibition of Modern British Art, the Tate Gallery, Liverpool, made this an organizing principle). However, this return was never a recuperation of a lost innocence: the new representations of the body were, as Foster says, "reaction formations" against the war's "mutilated bodies." Such representations accepted the idea that the old view of the body was already dead, just as the mechanized

¹⁸⁹ Cork 135.

¹⁹⁰ Quoted in Edwards 34.

¹⁹¹ Jacob Epstein, *Let There Be Sculpture: An Autobiography* (London: Michael Joseph, 1940) 70.

¹⁹² Lewis, *Blast* 2 25.



Figure 14 C.R.W. Nevinson, *Paths of Glory* (1917)

Reproduced in Ingleby et al., *C.R.W. Nevinson: the Twentieth Century*

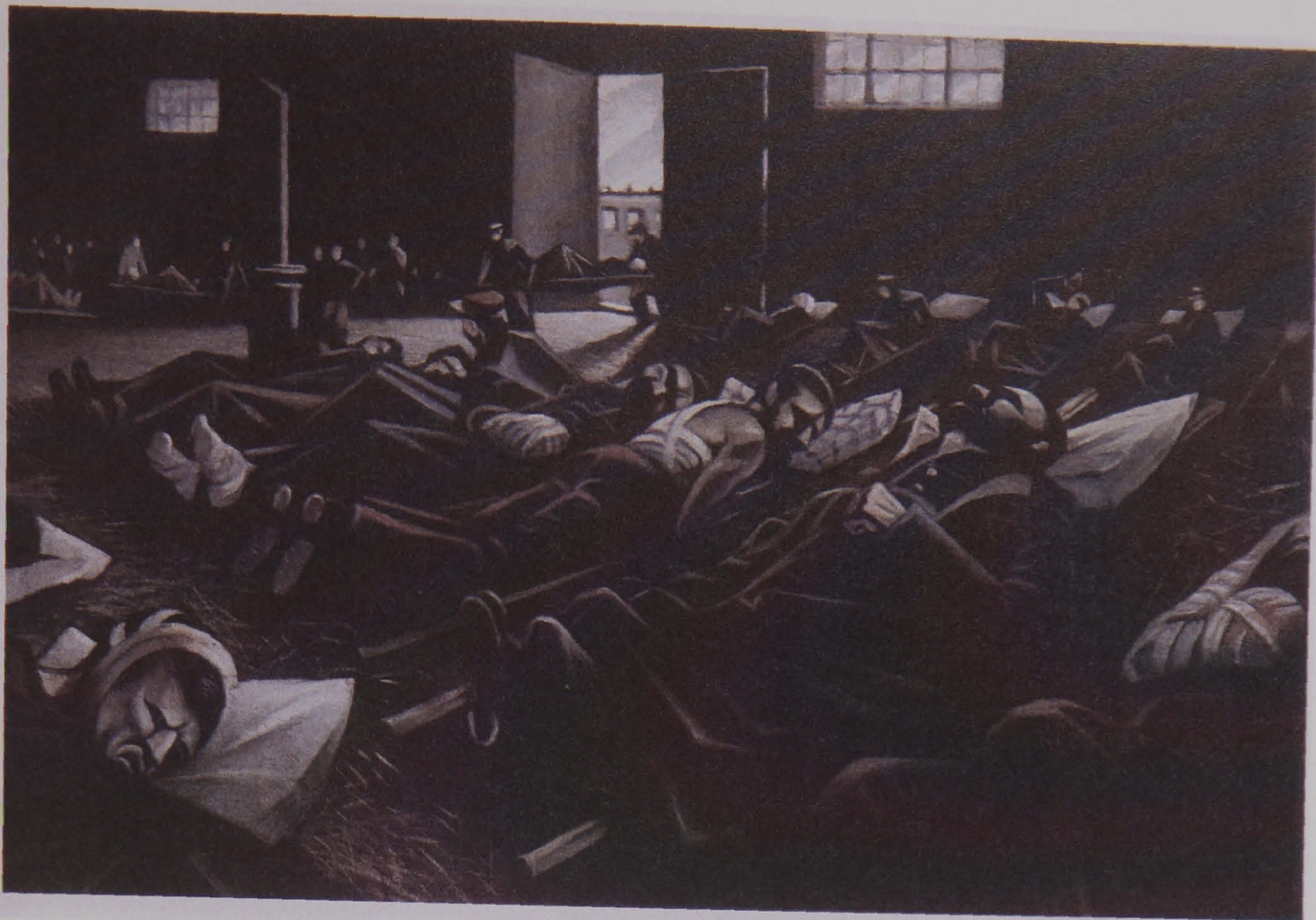


Figure 15 C.R.W. Nevinson, *La Patrie* (1916)

Reproduced in Ingleby et al., *C.R.W. Nevinson: the Twentieth Century*

articulations of the body did.¹⁹³ This return to figuration can certainly be seen in Nevinson, who, as a Red Cross ambulance-driver, was particularly exposed to scenes of suffering and hardship (later in the war he worked in a Wandsworth hospital looking after shellshocked soldiers).¹⁹⁴ *Paths of Glory* (1917), one of Nevinson's most figurative war paintings shows two dead British soldiers, clumsily sprawled face down in the mud, their bodies enmeshed in barbed-wire (*Figure 14*). The painting was not at all well-received by the War Office: firstly because pictures of the dead were not allowed, and secondly because the picture flagrantly contradicted popular sayings that English soldiers were always heroic, even when they died.¹⁹⁵ Nevinson was asked to remove it from the exhibition; instead of complying, he plastered a label saying "CENSORED" across the painting. This further infuriated the authorities, since the word "censored" was forbidden by the Defence of the Realms Act.

Nevinson's war paintings were generally admired, however, and some of his comparatively less figurative (that is, more machine-aesthetic based) paintings, for example, *La Patrie* (1916), did manage to awaken a degree of popular sympathy with modernist art (*Figure 15*). Newspaper reviewers were prepared to meet artists like Nevinson halfway, agreeing that this war was qualitatively different from past wars, and hence called for a new and different style of painting. The offensive against modernism could stop. People could be persuaded that the experimental techniques of pre-war art had been "validated

¹⁹³ Foster, "Prosthetic" 6.

¹⁹⁴ Cork 72. A photograph which Nevinson sent to Marinetti at the start of the war shows that Nevinson's convictions weren't shattered straight away. Nevinson stands "proudly" by his motor, "a powerful symbol of the machine age among the horses and mules used for most transport at the front." Cork writes, "as if to stress his valour, Nevinson has arrowed and outlined the places where shrapnel pierced the ambulance," giving annotations like "tout ça etait démolé." Cork 71.

¹⁹⁵ Cork 169.



Figure 16 Wyndham Lewis, *A Battery Shelled* (1919)

Reproduced in Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Art and War*

as perceptions of reality by the war itself."¹⁹⁶ This war was Modernist.

Nevinson's paintings are imbued with affect; the suffering in the men's faces is very clear, and this no doubt stimulated public comprehension of his pictures, whereas Lewis met with no such popular endorsement. Lewis volunteered in 1916, and trained as a bombardier in Salisbury Plain before arriving at the front over a year later, where he was second lieutenant in a siege battery close to the Ypres Salient; his role was as an observer, informing his battery of the accuracy of the fire from a telephone near the front-line. Many of Lewis' pictures focus on artillery-men, busy at their tasks in the gun-pits behind the infantry in the frontline trenches. Lewis' comments in *Blast* show that he had thought very carefully about the nature of war painting. Like many other contemporary war artists, he measured his own art against traditional war painting, and Uccello's *Battle of San Romano* (C15) came to be an instructive example. But it was an instructive example for Lewis in a different way - "Uccello . . . formularized the spears and the aggressive prancing of the fighting men of his time till every drop of reality is frozen out of them."¹⁹⁷ Lewis admired Uccello for the stylization of his figures, and for a certain coldness in his attitude to his topic. To such an artist, Lewis opposes Goya, whose portrayals of the horrors of war are at the other emotional extreme: hot, passionate. The war that Lewis witnessed, however, elicited in him mostly the cold attitude of a Uccello:

There are so many actions every day, necessarily of brilliant daring, that they become impersonal. Like the multitudes of drab and colourless uniforms - these in their turn covered with still more characterless mud - there is no room, in praising the soldiers, for anything but an abstract hymn. These battles are more like ant-fights than anything we have done in this way up to now.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁶ Hynes 164. Hynes is here summarizing the new attitude voiced by two contemporary reviewers of Nevinson's work.

¹⁹⁷ Lewis, *Blast* 2 26.

¹⁹⁸ Lewis, *Blast* 2 25.

This is perhaps what Burstein means by Lewis' "cold modernism:" an imperviousness to affect, the petrification of forms, a coldness "reminiscent of the insect world."¹⁹⁹ It is an art that retreats from the shocks of war and modernity into total reification. Insects, with their rigid exoskeletons, can perform a "mimetic deadness."²⁰⁰ The personality in Lewis' work is one that is similarly performing this becoming-frozen: hardened, encrusted over by the inorganic. But this does not mean that passion, affect, are no longer there - they are simply more difficult to extract than in, say, Nevinson's paintings.

Elements belonging to Lewis' cold style are easily discerned in his war paintings: in the pen and ink and watercolour sketches and drawings such as *Laying* (1918) and *Shell-Humping* (1918), there is the harsh, insect-like characterization of the men, coloured in metallic greyish browns against a warmer or more extravagantly coloured background. In the commissioned oil compositions, men, clustered in groups, are coolly and dispassionately observed as they go about their labour. Unlike Nevinson's art, or art by other famous British war artists like Paul Nash, Lewis' paintings withhold sentimental identification from the spectator. His coldness can be seen to take a direct lineage from Uccello in *A Battery Shelled* (1919); the arrangements of men recall Uccello's stylization of figures (*Figure 16*). In fact the British War Memorial Committee asked Lewis to make this painting in the exact proportions of Uccello's famous painting, a formal constraint that Lewis probably rather liked.

Lewis (and Nevinson, too, to an extent) depicted war as industry, as an organization of men and materials.²⁰¹ This is an aspect of the war that Nash never really captured, despite his pre-eminence among war-artists, despite his

¹⁹⁹ Lewis, *Blast 1* 141.

²⁰⁰ Foster, "Prosthetic" 162.

²⁰¹ Edwards 38.



Figure 17 Wyndham Lewis, *A Canadian Gun Pit* (1918)

Reproduced in Paul Edwards, *Wyndham Lewis: Art and War*

anguished, memorable and hugely influential portrayal of No Man's Land as a post-apocalyptic wasteland, despite his commitment to convey the "bitter truth" of the war. Lewis' *A Canadian Gun Pit* (1918) and *A Battery Shelled* are both exemplary instances of the insights that Lewis had of the war. In *A Canadian Gun Pit*, which was commissioned by the Canadian War Memorials Scheme, men in the left foreground manoeuvre an 8-inch howitzer, while towards the centre men change the caps on the shells (*Figure 17*). Over towards the right a man seems to be shouting orders to a group of workers in the distance, while over to the left background a troop trudges its way among the withered remains of trees to another area of the battle landscape. Men are simply shown at their work; there is no emotion to guide our response or draw us into the picture. But one man stands out among all the others, the black labourer shifting shells in the right foreground. Showing his muscles as he carries the heavy missile, he alone of all the figures seems to be imbued with some kind of affect - melancholy, perhaps? None of the others are romanticized in this way. Their faces are all angles and their bodies geometricized configurations. One of the gunners has what looks like a metal endo-skeleton face - he reminds us of the presence of death in this pit that is being prepared for bombardment.

In *A Battery Shelled*, bombardment has already happened. Here, the worker-soldiers are further dehumanized: several of them carry an injured comrade, but again there is little to draw the eye to these harsh, totally unsentimentalized figures. The similarity in colour between the assemblages of men and of the shells that stand packed together here and there on the landscape underscores this vision of war as an arrangement of men and munitions. In sharp contrast to these insect-like men stumbling across a cratered terrain pounded by shellfire that seems to be ricocheting one way, then the other, providing very little stability for the visual field, are the three more

figuratively-represented men in the left foreground.²⁰² Not only are they more individuated, they are separated from the morass of industrious, moving bodies of the worker-soldiers below by their leisurely pose and their calm indifference to the scene: one man lights a pipe, another gazes impassively at the frenzy beyond, while a third has his back turned to the scene, and looks out of the frame, slightly to the right. It's tempting to interpret these men in terms of rank and class, but their uniforms do not identify them as officers. Cork suggests they are portraits - probably of Lewis himself, and fellow Vorticist Edward Wadsworth (the other is unknown).²⁰³ To some extent, these men, since these they are internal spectators in the picture, mirror the stance that any spectator is forced to take in front of Lewis' painting - because it denies us sentimental identification, the painting makes us gaze upon the scene as indifferently as one of the soldiers. But beneath this indifference is an unarticulated psychological story - and this goes for the apparently exclusively physical portrayal of men in Lewis' war pictures in general. When men were not busy straining under the drudgery of their labour, or hurrying for cover, they faced periods of inaction and boredom at the front. These men in the foreground of *A Battery Shelled* are simply not on call to react or to work for the moment. Their blasé attitude, their detachment, is an index of the extent to which they have internalized the war's demands to repress feeling in the name of stoical duty. Desensitized by their experience, they aren't able to register a response to the shelling.

V. Postwar Reflections

Lewis' war paintings and drawings show an understanding of the role of rationalization in the war, and its effect on the body. In contrast, Marinetti's pre-war writing, as we have seen, seemed to repress the relation between the

²⁰² Severe bombardment made the ground difficult to cross - and this one can see in the bent bodies lurching this way and that.

²⁰³ Cork 226.

Futurist fantasy and rationalization. However, in his later novel *The Untameables*, written after the brief spell of the Futurist Political Party (1918-20), Marinetti gestures to the way in which his ideal body is based upon the labouring body, and for the first time pays attention to industrialized society's human casualties. The inhabitants of the city in the island of the Untameables are the Paper People, who are given the Futurist power of externalized will. But their perfection is shown to be founded upon the atrophied bodies of the paper mill workers. When the Untameables see them, they initially mistake them for black flapping rags attached to the cranks of the wheels. "Stricken with amazement," they realize

Those rags seemed to be panting. They were rrrrrrr. . . . living beings. Flaccid, as if boneless, actually pulled rrrr . . . by the wheels, while in reality the energy to turn the rrrr . . . wheels came from them. Now and then, one of those limp and serpentine men would slow down his jerking movements. They could hear him gasp and groan with fatigue, while the wheels around him, still in gear, slowed down, and the giant perpendicular wheel revealed its luminous silver sawtoothed edge, as it too lost speed.²⁰⁴

A rolling of r's punctuates each line in the text, overwhelming the words as one reads them, just as the workers are deafened and subsumed by their machines. In contrast to Marinetti's images of symbiosis (in his polemical writings) between man and machine, interlocking in mutual rhythms, the synchronicity here of the worker with his machine is shown to be spurious and enforced. Their Paper Man master forbids them to slow down: "Speed or death!" The Futurists' celebrated speed is shown to underpin the labouring body's optimal efficiency. The images of bodies multiplied and mechanized in movement in Futurist painting are unveiled in this text as having their referent in the collective of workers, moving in parallel with each other: "a long column of

²⁰⁴ Marinetti, *Untameables* 176-7.

black stooped men . . . emerged three by three from the smoky depths of the cavern swinging their right arms in time."²⁰⁵

It is the over-specialization of work that is the cause of atrophy in the labourers' bodies: "Ah! if I could only use my left arm!" one of them cries, "I've been working for ten days with just my right arm, my left arm feels like it'll be paralyzed before long!"²⁰⁶ Nevertheless, the paper mill workers are soon forgotten in favour of another set of labourers, the River People, who are subjected to embankments where they turn the wheels of the "illuminating motors."²⁰⁷ The Untameables and their Negro guards, who have immersed themselves in the Lake of Poetry and thus acquired the "illuminating spirit," help the River People to rise up in revolution. However, the revolution is aborted when the river begins to flood. The Untameables hurry out of the city and back into the Oasis. Now that they have lost their illuminating spirit, the guards and the Untameables are returned to the cycle of antagonism that was shown in the opening of the novel. The cycle is broken, though, when Mirmofirm remembers and translates memory into narrative, repeating the events to the other Untameables. The novel thus reinstates salvation, but it is one which has art as its end, where the old order is toppled by creating oneself anew through self-expression: "Thus, the superhuman fresh-winged Distraction of Art, stronger than the raw dissonance of Sun and Blood, finally effected the metamorphosis of the Untameables."²⁰⁸ Indeed, freedom for the Futurists was less a matter of political freedom than the "freedom of creative genius." This allowed them, Emilio Gentile suggests, to accept the Fascist revolution as the first step towards a Futurist revolution.²⁰⁹ Yet the tone of *The Untameables* is

²⁰⁵ Marinetti, *Untameables* 178.

²⁰⁶ Marinetti, *Untameables* 178.

²⁰⁷ Marinetti, *Untameables* 184.

²⁰⁸ Marinetti, *Untameables* 218.

²⁰⁹ Gentile 78.

one of disillusionment, and one of the obstructive Paper People, Blum speculates, was inspired by Mussolini.²¹⁰

VI. The Machine Stops

Hitherto out of sight, the soldier's and worker's body make an explicit re-entry into the postwar work of the Futurists and Vorticists, but they have nonetheless been the covert problems which the fantasies have represented and negotiated all along. Other cast-outs, such as the despised feminine and decadent, masochistic other, also make their re-entry, as we have seen in the fictional writing. The Futurist and Vorticist mechanical body is defined as much by what it excludes as by what it includes. It is a defensive formation that indicates a body in crisis, something that is also apparent in Futurism's and Vorticism's intimation of a death drive at work in their reactions to modernity. It can be seen in their response to the machine as a trauma that breaches bodily boundaries (hence their debates about intrusion, fluidity and dissolution of boundaries) *and* as a defence against that trauma (hence, their notion of the rigid body, and their fantasies of a legitimate loss of boundaries, where boundaries are re-affirmed in prosthetic oneness with the machine). In the restitutive attempt to seal the breach, on the one hand, and in the desire to lose bodily wholeness, on the other, their fantasies oscillate between binding and unbinding - the death drive in operation. The Futurists and Vorticists could be said to share a covert agenda that Foster attributes to the Dadaists: they "prepared," as Freud wrote of the terrible symptomatic dreams of war-shocked soldiers, "for a trauma that had already come," thinking up ways of repairing narcissistic wounds to the (male) ego.²¹¹ For the post-war Dadaists that trauma was the First World War itself, for the Vorticists and Futurists it was the wider trend of modernization preceding the war and which gave the war its

²¹⁰ Blum 128.

²¹¹ Foster, "Armor" 73.

character. Yet war does not only appear under the sign of trauma in the Futurists' and Vorticists' work - it has affirmative, rhetorical value, too. Their polemical wars - against each other, and against others - could be said to encapsulate the way they rose to the challenge of modernity, both to appropriate its forces for themselves and to campaign against whatever they saw as obstructively antimodern. War was a source of dynamic, creative energies, all to be mobilized in their strategies of empowerment. Moreover, in their view of war as a spectacle on a par with cinema, the Futurists were key participants in a history in which war and cinema have formed a common body; this history is part of what forms the province of my next two chapters.

Ernst Jünger: The Will to Power, Photography and War

One of the figures who shot to prominence in German conservative factions in the years following the First World War was the writer and technophile, Ernst Jünger. His experiences in the war were crucial to the formation of his sensibility, and the interpretation he gave to the horrors he encountered in the war makes him a pivotal figure in this study. Like the figures discussed in the previous chapter, Jünger, too, was impelled to find an answer to a crisis in male subjectivity, this time caused by the traumas of the war, and notwithstanding the valour and showmanship with which he managed to acquit himself there. He entered it as an infantryman, then rose to lieutenant in command of a troop, and towards the end of the war he was awarded "Pour le merit," the highest accolade that a German soldier could receive for bravery. Although he had similar intuitions of what was at work in modernity, Jünger's vision is far more cynical and cold than that of the other writers and artists with whom this part of the thesis is concerned. His writings do not engage sympathetically with the masses after the manner of Benjamin and Siegfried Kracauer, whose ideas will be discussed in Chapter Three (they never illuminate opportunities for disenchantment), nor even do they give incentive for communal action in the name of a revolutionary myth of the future as the Futurists did. Jünger's sensibility is one intimate with the witnessing of horror, and that is the context from which his cynicism must be viewed. As Peter Sloterdijk has suggested, his writings constitute both a response to and a symptom of "the modernization of horror" in the twentieth century.¹

¹ Peter Sloterdijk, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, cited in Brigitte Werneburg, "Ernst Jünger and the Transformed World," trans. Christopher Phillips, *October* 62 (Fall 1992): 42-64, 62n40.

War was the emblematic experience of modernity for Jünger and, in his view, the First World War was the crucible in which men and women's future relation to technology, industry and civil administration had been determined. He believed that the human body had been re-shaped by the war, and prepared for a new era, a utopia presided over by the *Gestalt* ("form") of the worker-soldier, in which "total mobilization" was the order of the day. In its call to mass mobilize all the energies and resources of the state, Jünger's vision mirrors that of totalitarianism - that is indeed one of the tendencies in modernity which it describes, and in this respect it encompasses both National Bolshevism and National Socialism.² Heidegger's seminar on Jünger's *The Worker*, held in the winter semester of 1938-39, was called to a halt by Nazi monitors, and this came as no surprise to the participants, for, as Heidegger himself later explained, "it belongs to the essence of the will to power not to let the actual that it empowers appear in actuality as what it itself *is*."³

Yet the scope of Jünger's writings is not limited to this "eavesdropping" on the phenomenology of totalitarianism or fascism. Attempts to frame Jünger as "proto-fascist," as so many contemporary critics do, miss the fact that his writings also "eavesdrop" on wider epochal changes, to wit, the distinctive role that technology was playing in modern life, although this aspect of his oeuvre, too, emerges out of the cultural context of Germany in the 1920s and 30s. Jünger represented a new strand of German conservatism. While conservatives before him had viewed technology distrustfully, preferring instead to look back to an agrarian *Gemeinschaft* ("community"), Jünger and other "revolutionary" conservatives insisted on the necessity of integrating technology into social organization. That was the lesson taught by the war, one to which Germany

² Jünger himself belonged to a National Bolshevik group.

³ Martin Heidegger, *Zur Seinsfrage*, quoted in Werner Hamacher, "Working Through Working," trans. Matthew T. Hartman, *Modernism / Modernity* 3.1 (January 1996): 23-56, 33.

had to pay heed in order to ensure victory in the *next* war. In Jünger's own private vision, the marriage between war and technology also held the promise of transcending the "bourgeois" economic and political ideology that he saw holding sway in the Weimar government (needless to say, Jünger was opposed to the Weimar democracy, as he was to all democracy).

Jünger was deeply influenced by Nietzsche's critique of European nihilism, and his utopia of worker-soldiers was advanced as a form of "completed nihilism" to effect a transvaluation of all values after the style of Nietzsche.⁴ This is what drew Heidegger to Jünger's writings in the 1930s, and what later provoked his reassessment of the values encompassed in the will to power. As we shall see, Jünger's writings were instrumental in turning Heidegger's attention to technology. But that, again, is not the limit of Jünger's influence. Jünger also assumes importance for the post-Heideggerian French thinker of technology, Paul Virilio. Jünger's aesthetic interpretation of the horrors of war made Virilio count him, along with Marinetti, as one of the key witnesses of the trend which he is rendering legible, namely the mutual

⁴ Nietzsche believed his will to power had the status of "completed nihilism," which, unlike "incomplete nihilism," posits an entirely new set of values with which to replace the values made redundant since the wane of belief in the suprasensory world. He thought it broached an utterly new and affirmative morality, beyond good and evil. Martin Heidegger, "The Word of Nietzsche: God is Dead," in *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. William Lovitt, (New York: Harper and Row, 1977) 83. Nihilism, for Nietzsche, is a "will to nothingness." He described a nihilist as "a man who judges of the world as it is that it ought not to be, and of the world as it ought to be that it does not exist." Nihilism is typically embodied in the moral systems which posit a better world beyond this one here below. Such a philosophy of asceticism, Nietzsche alleges, actually harbours a hatred and rejection of this world. He also describes another prevalent strand of nihilism, equally life-destroying, which has unmasked all our values as lies, as perspectival ways of framing our categories of existence, and which has simply accepted that this loss of faith has devaluated everything. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. Carol Diethe, ed. Keith Ansell Pearson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) 94; Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, ed. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage: 1968) 318, 342.

influence of cinema and war. The First World War was a significant turning-point: Virilio claims that it was experienced as a "pyrotechnic fairy-play" (as well as "a bloody conflict"), in which combatants doubled as spectators; some of them, like Jünger and Marinetti, could already perceive this.⁵ Jünger's writings on war and photography in fact anticipate a century of developments in which warfare and the production of spectacle have become increasingly inextricable - developments which he, incidentally, survived to witness.⁶

Jünger first set out his experience of the war in *Storm of Steel* (1920). Entering the war with the desire "to carry forward the German ideals of '70" - to secure a quick, efficient victory, and die honourably among flowery fields stained with blood - Jünger found throughout the terrain an alien presence that exceeded his expectations.⁷ In this war, "the dead would be left month after month to the mercy of wind and weather," a prospect which Jünger and his companion soldiers had never foreseen.⁸ They stumbled across corpses "with dislocated limbs, distorted faces and the hideous colours of decay, as though we walked in a dream through a garden full of strange plants, and we could not realize at first what we had all around us."⁹ These first encounters with horror were perplexing in the extreme: "seeing and recognizing are matters, really, of habit," Jünger writes, "in the case of something quite unknown the eye alone can make nothing of it. So it was that we had to stare again and again at these things that we had never seen before, without being able to give them any meaning. It was too entirely unfamiliar."¹⁰ Yet, even in this passage, written, as

⁵ Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: the Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 1989) 70.

⁶ Jünger died on 17 February 1998, at the age of 102. He was born on 29 March 1895.

⁷ Ernst Jünger, *Storm of Steel. From the Diary of a Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front*, trans. Basil Creighton (London: Constable, 1994) 1.

⁸ Jünger, *Storm* 23.

⁹ Jünger, *Storm* 23.

¹⁰ Jünger, *Storm* 23.

the rest of the book is, in retrospect after the war, Jünger uses language to objectify and distance the war's reality, as well as to evoke the uncanny feelings it produced in him. He makes it familiar through recourse to botanical metaphors - in effect, aestheticizing the horror, even, one could say, making it less removed from his pre-war expectations of "flowery fields stained with blood." As the war wears on, objectification and aestheticization become habitual in him; they are in fact what the war has taught him to do: "finally we were so accustomed to the horrible that if we came on a dead body anywhere on a fire-step or in a ditch we gave it no more than a passing thought and recognized it as we would a stone or a tree."¹¹

The distorted body images offered by glimpses of the dead, with their "torn-off limbs," are matched by the derealization of the landscape.¹² Once replete with meadows, villages, woods, and fields, not even a single blade of grass was now left: "every hand's breath of ground had been churned up again and again; trees had been uprooted, smashed, and ground to dust; hills had been levelled and the arable land made a desert."¹³ The magnitude of devastation in this war, with its employment of weapons of a hitherto unknown index of destructiveness, "expunged" the landscape of its familiar, homely, "pleasant" features, and "engraved there its own iron lines that in a lonely hour made the spectator shudder."¹⁴ These feelings were compounded by the dual facts of a landscape divested of humanity above ground, yet teeming with it in underground dug-outs. Jünger images this simultaneous fullness and emptiness as a technological Argus: "The modern battlefield is like a huge, sleeping machine with innumerable eyes and ears and arms, lying hidden and inactive, ambushed for the one moment on which all depends."¹⁵ Yet, he says, the focal

¹¹ Jünger, *Storm* 23.

¹² Jünger, *Storm* 99.

¹³ Jünger, *Storm* 108.

¹⁴ Jünger, *Storm* 36.

¹⁵ Jünger, *Storm* 118.

horror of such a post-apocalyptic desert was not "the horror of the landscape itself," but "the fact that these scenes, such as the world had never known before, were fashioned by men who intended them to be a decisive end to the war. Thus all the frightfulness that the mind of man could devise was brought into the field; here and there, where lately there had been the idyllic picture of rural peace, there was as faithful a picture of the soul of scientific war."¹⁶ War, itself "an objective thing," purveyor of the most advanced products of technology, suffuses into everything, everywhere, "for even in this fantastic desert there was the sameness of the machine-made article. A shell-hole strewn with bully-tins, broken weapons, fragments of uniform, and dud shells, with one or two dead bodies on its edge . . . this was the never-changing scene that surrounded each one of all these hundreds of thousands of men"¹⁷

In this landscape, where all things are objectified, it seemed to Jünger that human beings, too, were changing, becoming "more mysterious and hardy and callous than in any previous battle."¹⁸ It appeared that "the war had its own peculiar impress that distinguished it from all other wars." The first sign of this comes in the form of an encounter that Jünger has early in his war experience with a man from the front line. Asking the man what it is like there he receives in reply "a monotonous tale of crouching all day in shell-holes, . . . of dead bodies littering the ground, of maddening thirsts, of the wounded and dying."¹⁹ As the man spoke, his face, "half framed by the steel rim of the helmet, was unmoved." He makes a solemn impression on Jünger, who realizes that this man "had been through horror to the limit of despair and there had learnt to despise it. Nothing was left but supreme and superhuman indifference."²⁰ After the battle of the Somme, Jünger's conviction that the war

¹⁶ Jünger, *Storm* 108-109.

¹⁷ Jünger, *Storm* 48, 109.

¹⁸ Jünger, *Storm* 109.

¹⁹ Jünger, *Storm* 92.

²⁰ Jünger, *Storm* 92, 93.

was putting its own stamp on humanity was reaffirmed: "after this battle the German soldier wore the steel helmet, and in his features were chiselled the lines of an energy stretched to the utmost pitch, lines that future generations will perhaps find as fascinating and imposing as those of many heads of classical or Renaissance times."²¹ A leaner, more efficient kind of masculinity has emerged, one that comes to "regard men as mere matter" in the scientific management of war, and which has likewise learned to turn itself into dead matter, a deadness which is then reinterpreted as vitality and put into articulation with the aesthetic.²² I say *masculinity* because in *Storm of Steel* women are very much kept apart from the destinal shaping that takes place on the battlefield. They are conspicuous for their absence, and when they do appear Jünger speaks disparagingly of their influence on men. He writes, "I was always irritated by the presence of women every time that the fate of battle threw me into the bed of a hospital ward. One sank, after the manly and purposeful activities of the war, into the vague atmosphere of warmth."²³ He makes an exception, however, for the Catholic nursing sisterhoods, and praises them for their "clear objectivity," and says he "found with them an atmosphere very congenial to soldiering." Motherly and feminine attentions are seen as potentially dangerous, even emasculating. They set the stage for an unwanted seduction - their proffered lap of luxury threatens to turn the man of steel back into an emotionally dependent being. Yet this is not an outright dismissal of women: "I am no misogynist," Jünger writes, in the same breath, and although we might doubt his words, here and in other writings, women are not categorically excluded from his vision - they too, are being formed by the objectivization that he sees as characteristic of the epoch. They too belong to the generation of new, almost inorganic beings.

²¹ Jünger, *Storm* 109.

²² Jünger, *Storm* 294.

²³ Jünger, *Storm* 314.

By reinterpreting deadness as vitality and putting it on a par with the aesthetic, Jünger was attempting to re-invent aesthetic values. What he approaches here, and what will become more transparent in his later writings of the 1920s and 30s, is a notion of an art of modernity created through the violence of technology. It is a conception of the will to power as art - one might recall that Nietzsche's will to power, apart from being "an insatiable desire to manifest power," was already "a creative drive" in the service of power.²⁴ The other side of this aestheticization, in Jünger, is anaestheticization - bodily and psychic armament against the experience of pain. The new morphology of the male body in Jünger's war writings is a reaction formation to the damaged body image impressed on him by the mutilated and charred corpses found on the battlefield, and a reaction to the experience of bodily exposure to "heavy shelling without cover."²⁵ During a storm of bombs and shrapnel, Jünger writes, "the brain links every separate sound of whirring metal with the idea of death, and so the nerves are exposed without protection and without pause to a sense of utmost menace." To defend against such shocks, the soldier steels his "fragile body" with the "will," and is subsequently able to stand up to "the most terrific punishment."²⁶ This dissociation from pain entails total objectification of the body, its periphery hardened like a protective-shield. Battle is seen to continue the exertions of the military drill, using the will to force the body into obedience. In Jünger, the essence of willing is what it is in Nietzsche's *Will to Power* - it encompasses the "affect of commanding."²⁷ In Nietzsche, this has two moments (which, however, cannot be separated from one other): one of a "commanding thought," and the other of "an inner certainty that one will be obeyed." Thus, "a man who *wills* commands

²⁴ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* 332-3.

²⁵ Jünger, *Storm* 81.

²⁶ Jünger, *Storm* 101.

²⁷ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* 353.

something in himself which he obeys or which he believes obeys."²⁸ In the command, continues Nietzsche, there is a single-mindedness, a "tense attention, that straight look which fixes itself exclusively on *one* thing, that unconditional evaluation 'this and nothing else is necessary now.'"²⁹ Moreover, the will acts as a "master" to cravings by giving them direction and measure, and is therefore always bound up with a moral evaluation, with "willing an end."³⁰ In Jünger, the will is brought into the service of a fantasy of omnipotence; it is seen as a potential within the body that can lift it from a state of cowardly and slavish dependence into an order "beyond organic death."³¹ Formerly traumatized by shock and horror, the soldier learns to respond in an automatic fashion, combining "ardent courage with cool intelligence."³²

This is raised to the level of necessity in Jünger's writing - it is shown to be the only way in which a man may survive. During his stay at a war hospital in Valciennes, he noted how the

whole misery of the war was concentrated in the spacious operating theatre . . . Here a limb was amputated, there a skull chiselled away, or a grown-in bandage cut out. Moans and cries of pain sounded through the room . . . The soldier who after such a sight goes back under fire with ardour unquenched has indeed stood the test of nerve; for every fresh and terrible impression claws itself onto the brain, and is added to the prostrating complex of imaginings that make the moment between the rush and the burst of a shell ever more frightful.³³

The soldier *has* to find a way of living without emotion, and repress what is human within him. He must fortify his heart - and make a stone of it. To do this

²⁸ Cf. Marinetti's desire to create a son by pure will in Chapter One.

²⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990) 48.

³⁰ Nietzsche, *Will to Power* 52, 150, 353.

³¹ Andreas Huyssen, "Fortifying the Heart - Totally: Ernst Jünger's Armored Texts," *New German Critique* 59 (Spring / Summer 1993): 3-23, 8.

³² Ernst Jünger, "Fire," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*, ed. Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendburg (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994) 19.

³³ Jünger, *Storm* 116.

he must recreate himself on the battlefield - having died in one sense, he is to be reborn, this time owing allegiance only to himself and the "Fatherland" - it must seem as if he is bound to no other kin; as if to imply this, Jünger makes little mention of his family or where he comes from in *Storm of Steel*.³⁴ Once he has successfully dissociated himself from his emotions, and once the "will" has been given the upper hand, killing becomes much easier.³⁵ Desiring production gives way to "murdering production," as Klaus Theweleit says of the fantasies of the Freikorps - murdering is seen to be a function of a robotized unconscious.³⁶ These men are now ready to be killing-machines - their bodies sinewed like weapons, poised to hurtle into the action and discharge their energy like machine projectiles. In a situation where retaliation is called for, the man of steel becomes unstoppable, dominated by the need to kill. With "a veil of blood before his eyes," such a man has no remaining scruples, "only the spell of primeval instinct."³⁷ During what he calls the "great offensive," Jünger and his company step out towards the enemy lines: "the turmoil of our feelings was called forth by rage, alcohol and the thirst for blood. . . . The overpowering desire to kill winged my feet."³⁸ Looking back on that "blind dash across the open against a choice and well-furnished position," Jünger reflects, "where would be the success of war if it were not for individuals whom the thrill of

³⁴ Klaus Theweleit, *Male Fantasies II - Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*, trans. Chris Turner and Erica Carter, in collaboration with Steven Conway (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989)159-160.

³⁵ In Jünger, will appears to be conscious, whereas in Nietzsche it is unconscious. Although both have no affinity with the Freudian unconscious, in Nietzsche, the will does have the character of a drive. A body's movement, for example, "spreads" from the will inside - the body is the source of the will - and the whole dynamic, Nietzsche says, must be seen "as a kind of automatism of the whole muscular system impelled by strong stimuli from within." Nietzsche, *Will to Power* 163, 429. In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, he says "a quantum of force is just such a quantum of drive, will, action, in fact it is nothing but this driving, willing, acting." Nietzsche, *Genealogy* 28.

³⁶ Theweleit 199.

³⁷ Jünger, *Storm* 262.

³⁸ Jünger, *Storm* 255.

action intoxicates and hurls forward with a impetus not to be resisted."³⁹ Intoxication suggests hyperstimulation, an increase in tension - a state of dissatisfaction that requires discharge, and this is where the repetition-compulsions of the death drive (in psychoanalytic terms) come into action, with their aim of reducing tension to zero, and returning the organism into an inorganic state. But here the death drive has been made over to aggression, forced out into the world in the form of the will to power.⁴⁰ Pain is the condition for pleasure, an increase in power; that is what makes Jünger's soldiers charge forward - to appropriate and encompass *more* power.⁴¹ He writes, "The nerves could register fear no longer. Everyone was mad beyond reckoning; we had gone over the edge of the world into superhuman perspectives. Death had lost its meaning and the will to live was made over to our country."⁴² Self-preservation has been sidelined - even as it is sublated into the endurance of the Fatherland - in favour of a drive that seeks most of all, as Nietzsche wrote of the will to power, to vent strength, "to discharge its force."⁴³ Megalomania becomes characteristic in these soldiers who actively

³⁹ Jünger, *Storm* 260.

⁴⁰ In "The Ego and the Id," Freud describes how the death drive, which primarily works inwardly in the organism, goading it towards its own, proper, internally wrought death, can be diverted into the external world through muscular action, expressing itself "as an instinct of destruction," acting outwardly, "against the external world and other organisms." Freud, "The Ego and the Id," in *On Metapsychology: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 11*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 381. In Freud's 1924 paper, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," the aggression that an organism fails to turn against itself and therefore directs outward is explicitly characterized as the will to power. Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," in *On Metapsychology* 418.

⁴¹ Pleasure, Nietzsche wrote, lies in the dissatisfaction of the will; it thrives on opposition, and accrues from "the will's forward thrust again and again becoming master over that which stands in its way." Nietzsche, *Will to Power* 370.

⁴² Jünger, *Storm* 255.

⁴³ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 44; *Will to Power* 344-5. Just as Freud was to do later, Nietzsche contested the primacy of the drive to self-preservation: "Life as such is will to power, "self-preservation is only one of

seek out the most perilous situations. They are men of a new, daring breed, declares Jünger in a section called "Fire" in one of his other war memoirs of the 20s, "War as Inner Experience" (1922). "Forged of steel," they are "the best of the battlefield, suffused with the reckless spirit of the warrior, whose iron will discharges in clenched, well-aimed bursts of energy."⁴⁴

Such emotional intensity: war indeed becomes an "inner experience" for the soldiers, just as the title of this memoir suggests - the image of a new kind of experience. It is the stage for the ultimate experience of "intoxication," where the soldier, with blood raging through his veins, is catapulted into a "frenzy" that "breaks all bonds."⁴⁵ That frenzy is sharpened by his proximity to death, and the blood raging on the inside makes it seem as if the battle is being enacted on the inner terrain of his body. Such moments offer a fantasy of release where it seems as if there is no boundary between inside and outside, these having been dissolved in the heat of the battle, while at the same time fears of utter defusion are assuaged by the supporting fantasy of the steel body. Once this defence has been set in place, the soldier constructs himself as an observer, inured to the shocks and the horrors, objectifying himself and his surroundings, witnessing it all from the outside, seeing the war as a spectacular pyro-technical display, just as Virilio suggested. The perception of space becomes deranged, and feelings of depersonalization take hold: "In this war where fire already attacked space more than men, I felt completely alien to my

the indirect and most frequent consequence of it." For example, the protoplasm "takes into itself absurdly more than would be required to preserve it; and, above all, it does not thereby 'preserve' itself, it falls apart.- The drive that rules here has to explain precisely this absence of desire for self-preservation." Nietzsche had elicited a tendency toward dissolution that overrides self-preservation; in Freud, such factors were to be interpreted as signs of the existence of the death drive.

⁴⁴ Jünger, "Fire" 19.

⁴⁵ Ernst Jünger, "War as Inner Experience," quotation translated in Richard Wolin, ed. *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1993) 119-120.

own person, as if I had been looking at myself through binoculars. . . I could hear the tiny projectiles whistling past my ear as if they were brushing an inanimate object. . . The landscape had the transparency of glass."⁴⁶ Once the self is projected outside, it becomes so united with its milieu that it very nearly disappears. Such phenomena of distancing and reverse perspective fosters Jünger's idea that the war had created a new kind of perception, one that was estranged from feeling and best embodied in photography and film, where "we confront our own reflection . . . observing our own movements . . . or hearing our own voice strike our ear as if it were the voice of a stranger" (I shall return to this later).⁴⁷ The transparency of the self to the other also gives rise to fantasies of deliquescence, and Andreas Huyssen notes how, in *The Adventurous Heart* (1929), Jünger describes "the blood of youth confronting deadly matter on the battlefield and the fantasy of their interpenetration in 'streams of liquid metal'" - an image that looks forward to the T1000 in *Terminator 2*.⁴⁸ It is no coincidence that Jünger's descriptions of war should have found their way into film (especially one where the future is war, and where that war is rendered in all its pyro-technic splendour, as we will see in Chapter Four). They are already cinematic - they glamorize violence and present war as a series of special effects. War for Jünger is an art form, a sight and sound spectacle, where artillery fire is heard rising "to a higher and higher pitch," building to a crescendo, and culminating in explosion, which is coded as an ecstatic experience: "shrapnel exploded by the dozen, as prettily as crackers,

⁴⁶ Jünger, cited in Virilio 72.

⁴⁷ Ernst Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" (An excerpt from "On Pain"), trans. Joel Agee, in Christopher Phillips, ed. *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913-1940* (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art/ Aperture, 1989) 209.

⁴⁸ Huyssen, "Fortifying" 8. This means that Jünger "was thus not only *posthistoire*, but even and already then post-Schwarzenegger, whose role in the film is that of an all-too-human machine."

scattering their little bullets in a heavy shower, with the empty cases whizzing after them."⁴⁹

Not least among these spectacles is the spectacle of the body's metamorphoses and mimicries, where the soldierly body dissolves into the material of the battlefield, or becomes a mechanical commodity in accordance with its surroundings. The men and their weaponry blend into one totality, and it was this spectacle that convinced Jünger that something more powerful and metaphysical was at work beneath the destruction, and behind the relentless marching of troops in formation, where he saw "the gleam of helmet after helmet, bayonet after bayonet."⁵⁰ Jünger thought he had perceived a mysterious, irrational force at work within the war which was shaping human destiny - an Eternal Will carrying hidden *Gestalten* that augured the coming of the *Typus*, for this is the name which he gives to this new kind of man, who is part machine - an "organic construction."⁵¹ To suggest this shaping, which is both metaphysical and morphological, and which determines both one's experience and behaviour, Jünger evokes the blacksmith's forge.⁵² The eternal will is like the blacksmith, hammering things, men, reality, into one organisation of material or another.⁵³ It has "chiselled and hardened" us into that to which we were destined. "And as long as life's spinning wheel turns within us," Jünger continues in "War as Inner Experience," "this war will be the axle which keeps

⁴⁹ Jünger, *Storm* 93, 81.

⁵⁰ Jünger, *Storm* 101.

⁵¹ Ernst Jünger, *Der Arbeiter* (Stuttgart: Klett-Clotta, 1982)177.

⁵² Jünger indicates his emphasis on the *Gestalt* when he says a front line officer must have a "heightened sense of Duty and honour;" for that, "suitable material and a fixed mould are required." Jünger, *Storm* 181.

⁵³ Jünger calls the battles of the First World War *Materialschlachten*, "battles of material." The word suggests how he might have come to conceive of the war's reorganization of matter into new *Gestalten*. The material consists of men, masses (in troop formation) and of the shards of shells that fall in storms as the platoon goes "over the top."

it whirring."⁵⁴ All around the landscape of war in *Storm of Steel*, bombs swing through the air and crash on the earth with "Hephaestean explosions."⁵⁵ From that "fire and flame," the new German man emerges, hardened by the experience of the war, "as from the anvil" - and Hephaistos, we might note, is not only the god of blacksmiths and volcanoes, but also the god of technology, the creator of the first automat (Pandora).⁵⁶

The *Typus* was Jünger's immediate response to the emotional experience of the First World War. It was a way of salvaging self-esteem and "forgetting" pain - in this case the pain of defeat. Forgetting, in the Nietzschean sense, is an ability which belongs to the strong individual, in whom active and reactive forces play their proper roles. Through his "power" of forgetting, he consciously reintegrates the harmful memories - he refuses to *store* them; he will not allow shock and trauma to overwhelm him and create *ressentiment*.⁵⁷ In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, Nietzsche had shown how reactive forces, which can corrode the natural strength of active forces and separate them from their potential, had atrophied what was noble: "the slaves' revolt in morality" happened "when *ressentiment* itself turns creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of those beings who, being denied the proper response of action, compensate only with imaginary revenge."⁵⁸ Jünger was reacting to what he perceived was a parallel decline in culture - he thought it had become steeped in "stereotyped" values, where order and security took precedence, while the old warrior ethos simultaneously went on the wane. Security, he thought, had

⁵⁴ Ernst Jünger, "Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis," in *Werke. Band 5. Essays I* (Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967) 13. My translation.

⁵⁵ Jünger, *Storm* 251.

⁵⁶ Jünger, *Storm* 314.

⁵⁷ Nietzsche, *Genealogy* 22-3. *Ressentiment* constitutes a "reversal of the evaluating glance." Nietzsche writes, "Whereas all noble morality grows out of a triumphant saying 'yes' to itself, slave morality says 'no' on principle to everything that is 'outside,' 'other,' and this 'no' is its creative deed." *Genealogy* 21.

⁵⁸ Nietzsche, *Genealogy* 21.

to be replaced by a new kind of ideal, an embracing of danger that would allow human beings to show their mettle. Similarly, Nietzsche, in *Beyond Good and Evil*, condemns the prevailing system of morals for curtailing an individual's "perilous tendencies" - he says this is set against the grain of the will to power, which is associated with teeteringly dangerous existence.⁵⁹

Even though the war proved that warrior virtues still existed, Jünger saw that it had not entirely dispelled the values of the bourgeois order. In *The Worker* he writes, "the situation in which we find ourselves . . . is that of anarchy concealed behind the delusion cast by the values become obsolete. This situation is necessary insofar as it guarantees the decay of those old orders whose fighting strength has proved insufficient."⁶⁰ The insight into "reality" given to him by the war, where he had been able to catch the first glimpses of the *Typus*, persuaded Jünger that Germany should submit to the destiny foreshadowed by the new technologies, for therein lay, he thought, the future balance of power. In an essay, "Total Mobilization" (1930), which anticipates elements of his later book, *The Worker*, he argues that the partial mobilization employed prior to and during the First World War should be superseded by total mobilization, transforming all spheres of life into a total war economy (Jünger thus pre-empted the Nazi Four-Year Plan, instituted in 1936, where state control was extended over labour and industry, effectively bringing in a "war economy in peacetime," with a focus on preparing for "military mobilization").⁶¹

⁵⁹ Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 119.

⁶⁰ Ernst Jünger, "The Worker: Domination and Form" (an extract from *The Worker*), in Kaes, Jay, and Dimendburg 376-7

⁶¹ This, as Rabinach notes, marked a change in Nazi ideology, precipitated by "the demands of an industrial society in crisis" - the earlier traditionalism gave way to "modernism and the cult of productivity and efficiency." Whereas before, technology had been almost demonized - "held responsible for the failure of liberal capitalism and the social ills of the pre-Nazi era" - from the mid to late 1930s onward, "technical rationality" came to be glorified "through aesthetics." Anson Rabinach, "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third

Total mobilization, Jünger avers, "is a mobilization that requires extension to the deepest marrow, life's finest nerve," where the collective energies of the "power supply of modern life" would be channelled into a single, "great current of martial energy."⁶² Every single activity would be canalized into a function for the good of the state. Every individual body would belong to the order of work, seamlessly connected to the totality of the state through a chain of energy that also dissolved that body as an individual entity. This cancellation of individuality is seen as being no great loss; rather, it is "the key to another world" - that is, the realm of the *Typus*, who is beyond individuality.⁶³ Jünger suggests that this is what will be necessary to win future wars, for he claims that Germany lost the previous war because large areas of its strength escaped total mobilization.⁶⁴ However, he does locate the origins of total mobilization in the country's past, in the army organization of the Prussian general Scharnhorst, who had scrapped mercenary armies and instituted universal conscription.

Partial mobilization had belonged to the essence of monarchy. Since the latter's collapse, Jünger declares, the idea of a warrior caste has been supplanted by the conscription of masses of men:

Likewise, because of the huge increase in expenses, it is impossible to cover the costs of waging war on a fixed war budget; instead, a stretching of all possible credit . . . is necessary to keep the machinery in motion. In the same way, the image of war as armed combat merges into the more extended image of a gigantic labour process. In addition to the armies that meet on the battlefields, originate the modern armies of commerce and transport, foodstuffs, the manufacture of armaments - the army of labour in general. In the final phase, which was already hinted at toward the end of the last war, there is no longer any movement whatsoever - be it that of the homemaker at her sewing machine - without at least indirect use for the battlefield. In this

Reich," *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 (1976): 43-74, 44, 55, 59.

⁶² Ernst Jünger, "Total Mobilization," translated in Wolin 126.

⁶³ Anton Kaes, "The Cold Gaze: Notes on Mobilization and Modernity," *New German Critique* 59 (Spring / Summer 1993): 105-117, 111.

⁶⁴ Jünger, "Total Mobilization" 131.

unlimited marshalling of potential energies, which transformed the warring industrial countries into volcanic forges, we perhaps find the most striking sign of the dawn of the age of labour. It makes the World War an historical event superior in significance to the French Revolution.⁶⁵

Jünger draws our attention to the mobilization already holding sway in our daily life, in its "inexorability and merciless discipline." But in his vision work is no longer composed of drudgery and toil - industrial production and Taylorized work processes are lifted to the status of an aesthetic spectacle, and celebrated as ends in themselves, while class struggle is totally removed from the picture. In this respect it participates in what Anson Rabinach (and Walter Benjamin before him) sees as the "aestheticization of politics characteristic of National Socialism."⁶⁶ What it does is take industrial relations away from politics (that is its covert ideology). Jünger's industrial utopia is one where labour is beautiful, almost sublime. This, too, would be the case with the policy adopted by the Third Reich's Bureau of the Beauty of Labour a few years later (from 1934 to 1939), where "the subordination of human subjectivity to industrial processes" was conveyed as "an aesthetic form."⁶⁷ Jünger announces,

With a pleasure tinged with horror, we sense that here, not a single atom is not in motion - that we are profoundly inscribed in this raging process. Total mobilization is far less consummated than it consummates itself; in war and peace, it expresses that secret and inexorable claim to which our life in the age of masses and machines subjects us. It turns out that each individual life becomes, ever more unambiguously, the life of a worker; and that following the wars of knights, kings, and citizens, we now have wars of workers.⁶⁸

During the First World War, he continues, "states transformed themselves into gigantic factories, producing armies on the assembly line that they sent to the battlefield both day and night, where an equally mechanical bloody maw took

⁶⁵ Jünger, "Total Mobilization" 126.

⁶⁶ Rabinach, "Aesthetics of Production" 43.

⁶⁷ Rabinach, "Aesthetics of Production" 44.

⁶⁸ Jünger, "Total Mobilization" 128.

over the role of the consumer." Within the "monotony of such a spectacle - evoking the precise labor of a turbine fueled with blood" is revealed "a severe necessity," "the hard stamp of an age in a martial medium."⁶⁹ Inscribed by a machinic logic, total mobilization everywhere produces the same; all things come to bear the hallmark of this totalizing tendency of technology and labour. Jünger had extrapolated from the confluence of machine logic and labour process; he believed the *Typus* would be generated out of the industrial masses - the fullest possibility of the First World War's "battles of material" would only be reached when the masses had surged forth "into crystallization," when the "image of martial operations is prescribed for peace time."⁷⁰ Only then would there be a utopia of worker-soldiers. The scale on which Jünger imagines this happening is planetary - his vision is of the total "unification of society," or, as a Nazi publication, *Beauty of Labour in Germany*, would put it in 1940, "one culture and one life form."⁷¹ It is a domination that is carried into the consciousness of the workers themselves, who now figure simply as cells, harnessed by the productive relations of the great community - no longer individuals, they are abstract components adorning a mass ornament.

Jünger was careful to characterize total mobilization as an envoy of the Eternal Will: "As a mode of organizational thinking, total mobilization is merely an intimation that the age is discharging upon us. Characteristic of this latter type of mobilization is an inner lawfulness, to which human laws must correspond in order to be effective."⁷² This "hidden impulsion" is concealed

⁶⁹ Jünger, "Total Mobilization" 129. Anton Kaes lists some of the ways in which symptoms of mass mobilization were already evident in the First World War: the large number of volunteers and reservists, the management of raw materials, ban on all exports, censorship, the fusion of political and military command, the curbing of individual liberty and the "subordination of everything to a function of the state." Kaes, "Cold Gaze" 113.

⁷⁰ Jünger, "Total Mobilization" 127, 128.

⁷¹ Hamacher 34; Wilhelm Lotz, ed. *Schoenheit der Arbeit in Deutschland* (Berlin, 1940), cited in Rabinach, "Aesthetics of Production" 51.

⁷² Jünger, "Total Mobilization" 134.

within progress and technology, but is by no means reducible to them. It belongs more to the realm of the "cultic," since it can't be explained in terms of economic causes and because its power lies in an appeal, which has all the "force of faith," to the masses, who are needed to participate. Yet Jünger's utopia falls short of the Sorelian idea of the revolutionary myth, since it purports to be less a call to action than a cold, objective extrapolation of the trends of modernization. Furthermore, Jünger emphasizes that the "technical side" of total mobilization, "is not decisive" for "its basis - like that of all technology - lies deeper."⁷³ Technology is the mode of Being holding sway that makes men and material come to presence in terms of their "readiness for mobilization." The incarnation of this mode of Being is the *Gestalt* of the *Typus*, to which corresponds "the totality of the world."⁷⁴

Jünger's fantasy of the *Typus* inhabits a post-bourgeois and post-democratic universal culture based on combat and war. It is a hierarchical state, dominated by an elite, the "new race, smart, strong, and filled with the will," who bear the stamp of those who fought in the war. The war, Jünger writes, "is not the end but prelude to violence."⁷⁵ It announces the coming of a new morality, where "the exposure of oneself to risk, even for the tiniest idea, weighs more heavily in the scale than all the brooding about good and evil."⁷⁶ Jünger discerned that the experience of danger, rather than being solely confined to the battlefield, was a central fact of modernity; the war was simply an exemplary arena for it: "among the signs of the epoch we have now entered belongs the increased intrusion of danger into daily life."⁷⁷ This, he writes in "On Danger" (1931), is a severe blow against "the bourgeois person who is

⁷³ Jünger, "Total Mobilization" 124, 129.

⁷⁴ Hamacher 34.

⁷⁵ Jünger, "Fire" 19.

⁷⁶ Jünger, "Fire" 20.

⁷⁷ Ernst Jünger, "On Danger," *New German Critique* 59 (Spring / Summer 1993): 27-32, 27.

perhaps best characterized as one who places security among the highest values and conducts his life accordingly." The bourgeois dream of "a space of absolute comfort" has moreover been contested by "the history of inventions," which "raises ever more clearly the question of whether . . . a space of absolute danger is the final aim concealed in technology."⁷⁸ Technical rationality, Jünger contends, has in fact led to the imbrication of danger in contemporary life. It was not just the battlefield that augured the coming of the *Typus* but also life in the city, another exemplary zone of danger, with its threat of car crashes, and machines going out of control:

We must penetrate and enter the spirit of the metropolis, into the real forces of our time: the machine, the masses, and the worker. For here lies the potential energy from which will arise the nation of tomorrow: and every European people is now at work trying to harness this potential. We will try to put aside the objections of a misguided romanticism which views the machine as in conflict with nature.⁷⁹

For Jünger, modernity has given rise to a new form danger, since now, in humanity's eternal struggle with "things, animals, or other people," the machine is always present, introducing a new dimension of risk into conflicts that we have always had with the elements: "Thus does the battle appear as a process during which the armored engine moves fighting men through the sea, over land, or into air. Thus does the daily accident itself, with which our newspapers are filled, appear nearly exclusively as a catastrophe of a technological type."⁸⁰ Further, as this last example suggests, "humanity's new relation to danger" has become "visible in an exceptional fashion" - through "pictures of demoniacal precision" taken through the photographic lens: "already today there is hardly an event of human significance toward which the

⁷⁸ Jünger, "Danger" 30.

⁷⁹ Jünger, "Großstadt und Land," *Deutsches Volkstum* 8 (1926): 577-81; translated in Werneburg 47.

⁸⁰ Jünger, "Danger" 31.

artificial eye . . . is not directed."⁸¹ Jünger's essay "On Danger" in fact belongs to a collection of photographs and reports entitled *The Dangerous Moment* (*Der gefährliche Augenblick. Eine Sammlung von Bildern und Berichten*). These photographs are "shock-photos" of catastrophes, natural and technological, such as earthquakes, boating accidents, and airplane crashes. In each case, the camera captures "the last second" of the crash, or the moment at which the occupant of a vehicle is flung out by "the impact of the collision."⁸² Jünger also edited an anthology of photographs called *The Countenance of the World War: Experiences of German Soldiers at the Front* (1930). In his leading essay in that anthology, "War and Photography," Jünger writes that "day in and day out," during the war, "optical lenses were pointed at the combat zones alongside the mouths of rifles and cannons . . . Indeed, we even possess pictures which originated in moments of close combat, lucky accidental shots of the camera, aimed by hands that relinquished the rifle or grenade for a second in order to click the shutter."⁸³ Jünger implies a fluidity between the action of tripping the camera shutter and that of releasing the gun, thus underlining a connection between the functions of the eye and the weapon. He does not exaggerate the extent of photographic activity during the war. Although official cameramen were also sent out, the pocket cameras that had become available by 1914 enabled every soldier to take photographs at the front, and photography was very popular with German and French soldiers (less so with the British - filming in the British sector was actually banned).

It was the war that fostered Jünger's reflections on the camera as an instrument of a cold, detached form of perception, distanced from the horror it was seeing. As Anton Kaes says, what the photograph effectively does in

⁸¹ Jünger "Danger" 31.

⁸² These photographs are reproduced in Werneburg 51.

⁸³ Ernst Jünger, "War and Photography," *New German Critique* 59 (Spring / Summer 1993): 24-26, 24-5.

"freezing the moment of danger" is raise "the traumatic shock to the level of consciousness."⁸⁴ This matches Jünger's own experiences of the battlefield, where a soldier could see himself and his surroundings in an objectified way, devoid of emotion - as if he were seeing himself from the outside. At the moment of danger, even possible death, the gaze intervenes, orchestrating a transition, as Huyssen says, from "an organic to an inorganic state, Freud's death drive at work."⁸⁵ Photography, in Jünger's view, belongs outside the realm of feeling: "one can tell that the object photographed was seen by an insensitive and invulnerable eye. That eye registers just as well a bullet in mid-air or the moment in which a man is torn apart by an explosion."⁸⁶ Jünger thought that human perception itself was becoming like that of the camera - and in this sense photography was another "face" by which the *Typus* expressed itself.⁸⁷ In "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" (1934), he writes, "not only are we the first living creatures to operate with artificial limbs, but we are also in the process of creating strange realms in which the use of artificial organs of perception facilitates a high degree of typical [*typisch*, as an adjective from *Typus*] accord."⁸⁸ Jünger believed that the war and its technologies (including apparatuses of seeing) had taught human beings to deal with the other shocks of modernity, those of the metropolis and of the catastrophes endemic to the technological world, by training the sensorium in a new form of perception (the subject of my next chapter). This new form of perception, like Benjamin's, was based on shock, but Jünger's emphasis on what it does is entirely different - it addresses itself to the horrors of modernity, and at the same time enables the aesthetic distancing of that horror. This detached perception trains an individual to see himself "as an *object*," that is, as inert and

⁸⁴ Kaes, "Cold Gaze" 108.

⁸⁵ Huyssen, "Fortifying" 16.

⁸⁶ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 208.

⁸⁷ Werneburg 54.

⁸⁸ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 208.

emptied of feeling.⁸⁹ Jünger calls it a "'second' consciousness." It allows the pain of military-industrial-urban experience to be turned into an aesthetic spectacle, now mastered by the gaze. Like the steel body, "this second, colder consciousness" is a defensive formation, protecting the self against the shocks of the modern world - it belongs to a person "who stands outside the sphere of pain."⁹⁰ It engenders someone who becomes more adapted to experiencing the shocks in a cool, indifferent manner - he or she gets accustomed, and is therefore more able to withstand pain. Jünger maintains furthermore that photography and the second consciousness go hand in hand with "the objectification of our worldview."⁹¹ As objectification increases, so does "the amount of pain that can be endured," even to the point where "pain can be regarded as an illusion."⁹²

The war, Jünger writes, was the "first great event" experienced through photographs, and this kind of treatment has been extended to all events "worthy of notice" since then - they have been similarly objectified, "surrounded by a circle of lenses and microphones and lit up by the flaming explosions of flash-bulbs."⁹³ In such cases, the event itself may be subordinated to its "transmission," having purpose only as "the object of a planetary broadcast." The living process thus obtains "the character of a slide prepared for the microscope," detached from its moorings in time and space, always at hand, available for repeated viewing. "These are signs," Jünger says, of "a great detachment," and of a "growing petrification of life." This objectification is enhanced by the fact that the artificial eye can "peer into spaces that are inaccessible to the human eye."⁹⁴ It "penetrates barriers of fog, haze, darkness,

⁸⁹ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 207.

⁹⁰ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 208.

⁹¹ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 208.

⁹² Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 210.

⁹³ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 209.

⁹⁴ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 208.

and even the resistance of matter itself." Jünger's point is that "this is our characteristic way of seeing," total objectification, where the world reveals itself merely as an array of inert objects; photography is just a felicitous "instrument" exemplifying this "new propensity in human nature." It is moreover a "cruel way of seeing," which "ultimately," Jünger says, "is a new version of the evil eye, a form of magical possession."⁹⁵ It is a way of tracking down, entrapping and liquidating one's enemy's "individual character." Just as a photograph "shoots" the object in a cold-blooded way, so technologies of seeing, such as cameras on board aircraft, enable one to target an enemy otherwise invisible on the ground. The need for concealment becomes imperative: "a military position becomes untenable at the moment when it could be detected in an aerial photograph."⁹⁶ Photography, therefore, is more than just a shield against feelings - it is a weapon, where seeing "is an act of aggression." It is therefore totally amenable to the "new type of person," the *Typus*.⁹⁷ Jünger prophesies that the conditions seen in the war, where prosthetic technologies of vision gain sway over human lookouts, "push us inexorably toward a greater flexibility and objectification. Already there are guns equipped with optic cells, and even aerial and aquatic war machines with optic steering mechanisms."⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 209.

⁹⁶ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 208-9.

⁹⁷ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 208.

⁹⁸ Jünger, "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" 209.

Shellshock, Cinema, and the Machine: Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*

During the First World War, in military hospitals across Europe, doctors made silent films of patients who were suffering from "shellshock." One of these shows a man in long shot, walking with a hysterical gait, helped by a walking cane. His legs are jerking and twitching uncontrollably. A second film gives a medium close-up of a man whose left arm is continually shaking. In a third, a man, who, we are told, had bayoneted a soldier in the face, is swallowing repeatedly. It is not difficult to see that many of these patients are performing the same rapid, mechanical movement, over and over again, in the form of spasms, tremors and tics. The intertitles additionally tell us that some of these patients are afflicted with severe stutters, mutism, or universal anaesthesia. They also tell us the apparent "cause" of the illness - burial by shellfire, for example; while informing us that the patients are suffering from "functional" disorders to be treated by hypnotic suggestion.¹

Breaking down under the effects of mechanized war, these bodies have themselves become machine-like. However, their involuntary movements are not those of ordered, rational body-machines. In these bodies, volition has become uncannily disconnected from motion; automatic, yet possessed by an unseen force. In naming the disorders "functional" (that is, showing a defect in the function of an organ, but with no corresponding somatic damage), the doctors were resistant to a psychical origin, even as their diagnosis to some extent presupposed it. As with cases of hysteria, an ailment normally associated

¹ These examples are taken from the following sources:

(a) *War Neuroses*. Netley 1917 and Seale Hayne Military Hospital 1918.

Videocassette. Wellcome Institute.

(b) *Funktionell-motorisch Reiz und Lähmungs-Zustände bei Kriegs eilnehmen und deren Heilung durch Suggestion in Hypnose*. Allgemeines Krankenhaus, Hamburg Eppendorf. Videocassette. Wellcome Institute.

(c) "Episode 5." *1914-18*. BBC. 9 Dec. 1996.

with women, it was clear that here, too, conflicts that could not be borne in the mind were being played out on the arena of the body; traumatic memories repudiated by the conscious mind were being displaced into bodily symptoms. As Monique David-Ménard writes, in *Hysteria from Freud to Lacan*, of the motor behaviour of hysterics, the bodily movements of the shellshocked men were "transferential manifestations of affect, processes of satisfaction, repetitions of an ambivalent situation in a return of the repressed."²

But what drove these doctors to film their patients? Why was photography chosen as the medium for recording their observations, in the place of, or as a supplement to, written case histories? Even though cases of shellshock had been seen before (for example, in the American Civil War and Russo-Japanese War), the doctors must have had the sense that they were documenting something new, and moreover, in doing this, they were using a new medium, cinema, which could be seen to have risen contemporaneously with the phenomenon of shellshock. They were using film to demonstrate what happens to bodies when they suffer (they become machine-like), a fact that the First World War showed on a mass scale; in their hands, film becomes the privileged medium for recording the effects of war. The doctors' deployment of film thus constitutes one instance in the early history of cinema where cinema is validated, as the process through which the reality of the shellshock victims' suffering, contested by many at the time, could be substantiated: film has the status of a testimony (what it shows must have basis in reality); in addition to that, it has a powerful, direct quality, able to reproduce the effects of suffering more vividly than written testimonials. For the doctors, cinema was a valuable weapon in confronting what was a serious problem at the time. However, in the same period, cinema was being attacked by others for being part of the same

² Monique David-Ménard, *Hysteria From Freud to Lacan: Body and Language in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 144.

problem. These early discourses about cinema deployed psychoanalysis and the tropes of the hysterical subject to lend support to conservative views of film. Some of these discourses asserted that cinema induced passivity into its spectators, others maintained that it terrorized its spectators through its shock-effects; but in both cases cinema was thought to produce the same kind of diseased automaton as that created by war. As we shall see, modernist films, such as *Metropolis* (1926), can be seen to respond to these debates about cinema in different ways, as well as responding, retroactively, to the historical trauma of shellshock and the wider anxieties about modernity to which it is inextricably related.

By filming their shellshocked patients, doctors were not only creating a testimony of the suffering caused by the war, but also of the efforts that they themselves had taken to alleviate that suffering. This was a testimony that could be shown to witnesses outside the hospitals in their own time, and could preserve their observations (of past suffering) for future witnesses as well. Again, we can look to the phenomenon of hysteria for an analogue and a precedent, to the collection of "instantaneous" photographs taken by Charcot, *Iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière* (1878-1881), which showed women seized with hysterical attacks.³ As with cases of male hysteria in the First World War, the hysterics at the Salpêtrière were assumed to be "faking it" - it was alleged that they were simply "imitating the disease that Charcot and his famous patients had prescribed for them."⁴ For Charcot, too, photography was a "weapon," one with which he could answer his accusers and prove that these diseases were not just his fanciful creation: "the truth is," he wrote in 1887, "that I am there absolutely only the photographer; I inscribe what I see."⁵

³ Linda Williams, *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and "the Frenzy of the Visible"* (London: Pandora Press, 1990) 47.

⁴ Michael Roth, "Hysterical Remembering," *Modernism / Modernity* 3.2 (1996): 1-30, 20.

⁵ Roth 20.

(But his comment also reveals that he has only substituted one fancy for another - the fantasy of passive recording, where the object under observation is not affected by the act of observation). Charcot had been inspired by Eadweard Muybridge, who, together with Etienne-Jules Marey and other chronophotographers, has become a key figure in the prehistory of cinema for his many thousands of still photographs of the sequential movements of animals and humans. Later, in 1891, Muybridge himself started taking serial photographs of women, in whom, this time, hysterical convulsions had been induced. His curiosity about the unknowns of movement (Leland Stanford famously asked him whether there is a point at which a galloping horse's legs all leave the ground at once) was easily channelled into fathoming the unknowns of women's desire - if a hysteric is a woman who has refused to give in to her desires, then those desires may well be apprehended by scrutinizing the bodily gestures by which her symptoms gave voice to those desires, that is, by scrutinizing the somaticization of the hysteric's desires, the somaticization of her traumatic past. What was invisible about female sexuality might now come to light, through a prosthetically-enhanced male gaze, for the photograph could *command* revelation from the patient; it could command what appeared to be elusive, beyond our grasp, to appear before us, rather like a ghost from a paranormal beyond - and indeed that photography was being used at this time to show evidence of spiritual phenomena (such as ghosts and fairies) is not entirely unrelated to what we are exploring here (it was believed, Michael Roth writes, that "photography could record this *materialization* of the beyond just as it had recorded the somaticization of the hysterical desire in a symptom.")⁶

Linda Williams sees the photographic activity of Charcot and others as "a voyeurism structured as a cognitive urge," probing for the secret believed to be disclosed when women are out of control: "it obsessively seeks knowledge,

⁶ Roth 16.

through a voyeuristic record of confessional, involuntary paroxysm, of the 'thing' itself."⁷ If the camera could capture the unseen jouissance of the female body - which it had been attempting since Charcot and Muybridge - then it was not such a big step to use it to frame the bodies of men who, as we shall see, had been assumed to have been "feminized" by the war, and whose affective states and bodily jouissance might now finally be read at a rate of 20 or so frames per second.

The concern of the doctors who treated hysteria in the nineteenth century, Roth writes, was with "the fragility and the malleability of memory," so perhaps it is not coincidental that they "sought to register their own work with permanence."⁸ But the nineteenth century was an era which showed an obsession with archiving and cataloguing - this obsession manifested in the various pathological museums that were established in this period, museums housing human skeletons and aborted foetuses, together with plaster casts, wax models and photographs that preserved the bodily contortions - the "signs of disease" - of hysterics, epileptics and "idiots."⁹ The desire to catalogue and preserve is a legacy of the scientific revolution (the belief that problems could be solved through the correct application of science); in this respect, the doctors of the First World War could be seen as marrying the testimonial force of film to the principle of rationality in order to combat the irrationality that was holding sway in their patients. But the desire to archive also goes hand in hand with the imperialist impulse, where the cognitive urge comes to be linked with the voyage of exploration, with the curator/ doctor archiving in order to showcase the exotic and manifold manifestations of disease. The shellshock films inherit something of this legacy, too - of the museum/ archive as a cabinet of curiosity.

⁷ Williams 48, 49.

⁸ Roth 19-20.

⁹ Roth 23.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century, photography had become the privileged mode of archiving in the pathological museums, and this is another background fact against which the doctors' adoption of cinema as a recording medium must be viewed. In filming their patients, doctors had implicitly accepted the indexical properties of photography: the films are being used to persuade us, the viewers, that what they show has reference in the real - that what we see has really been before the camera. The value of photographing the patients also lies in that medium's ability to give a material, and apparently incontrovertible, record of an objective phenomenon; it is one thing to read about the victims of shellshock, it is quite another to *see* them. Roth writes, "the photograph dispenses with words; nothing can be lost in the translation" - I think it is probable that the doctors treating shellshock were drawing on this kind of discourse, too. On the other hand, the shellshock footage does not support the view that images are totally self-transparent, for inserted written texts orient us through the images. But because these are moving images, their persuasive power is even greater than still photographs, for they allow us to see, on an immediate-real level, the inscription of psychical suffering on these men's bodies - bodies which are running by themselves, outside of their owners' rational control - since the signs of their suffering *reside* in movement, a rapid and repetitious form of movement that we recognize as diseased. From this view, the doctors' decision to represent shellshock sufferers on film becomes much more comprehensible, for rapid movement is precisely what can be captured by the mechanical eye of the cine-camera, with its fast shutter-speed and short exposure time, and precisely what can be represented when the footage is put through the projector (where the still photographs are shown in quick succession). Bodies that have become machines are reconstituted through a mechanical apparatus; they become machines under the spectatorial gaze of cinema. Thus, cinema, a form of mechanical reproduction, is what makes it possible for machine-like bodies to

be seen for the first time, by a public. The mechanical eye, seeing in place of the "naked eye," attests to the existence of what was hitherto unseen, and hence hitherto unverifiable - an affect held to be in the mind.

In Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) we are presented with another hysterical body-machine rendered under the spectatorial eye of cinema, this time in the form of a worker at the assembly-line. Chaplin's tramp character is busy tightening screws on the ever-accelerating conveyor-belt as the products travel towards and past him. He has to run alongside the belt to keep up. The work is so all-consuming that he begins to perform the same, jerky mechanical movements even when he is away from the assembly-line. He twitches and shakes uncontrollably, spilling his fellow workman's bowl of soup when he tries to carry it. After causing chaos in the factory, he is packed off to a psychiatric hospital to recover from his nervous breakdown. In Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* workers are likewise shown as puppet-like automatons, repeating the "prescribed mechanical actions" demanded by the productive rhythm of the Taylorist factory - "a bleak, Expressionist version of Chaplin's *Modern Times*," as James Donald puts it.¹⁰

Set in Depression America, *Modern Times* seems removed from the experience of the First World War; *Metropolis* is somewhat closer historically, and its links with the war have already been suggested. Andreas Huyssen, for example, writes that the Expressionist view of technology operative in parts of *Metropolis* (most of all in its representations of the workers at their machines) emphasizes its "oppressive and destructive potential," and "is clearly rooted in the experiences and inexpressible memories of the mechanized battlefields of World War One."¹¹ This implies a connection between war memory, trauma

¹⁰ Maurizia Boscagli, *Eye On the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century* (Colorado: Westview Press, 1996)154; James Donald, *Sentimental Education: Schooling, Popular Culture and the Regulation of Liberty* (London: Verso, 1992) 8.

¹¹ Andreas Huyssen, *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture and*

and the worker's body. This chapter will suggest that interwar filmic narratives showing, on the one hand, the frenzy of the labourer at his machine, and on the other, machines going crazy (in the case of *Metropolis*, a female machine), are caught up in the debate concerning the breakdown and feminization of the male body in the rationalized, mechanized conflict of the First World War, as manifested in the phenomenon of shellshock. I will argue that the question of the connections between the shellshock films, *Metropolis*, and *Modern Times* may be focused through concerns voiced in early discourses about cinema, where spectatorship comes to be seen under the sign of hysteria.

Before I go on to address the problem of shellshock, these opening remarks call for some further situating. As an umbrella term for all kinds of nervous illness or breakdown in war, including neurasthenia and "soldier's heart", shellshock itself consolidated debates concerning the nature of shock in the prehistory of war trauma - in the railway crashes and industrial accidents of the nineteenth century. The shaking, tic-ridden bodies of shellshock patients stand in the cross-fire between pre-war values about efficient masculinity and Fordist systems of production in postwar cultural representations. Marx had already shown how the machine was embedded in capitalist structures, but the reconsideration of the notion of shock provoked by the First World War precipitated new readings of commodity society, readings which took the unconscious into account. Not only commodification, but also art and film came to be seen in terms of shock. The worker's experience at the machine was construed as a paradigm of the processes at work in technological culture at large; shellshock could be interpreted retrospectively as a product of commodity relations, and shock became the very trope in which the uncanny disturbances of modernity were couched.

Real Victims: Shellshock and its Symptomology

In Chapter One, I stated that Taylorism redefined the nature of work in the factory: productivity was speeded up by breaking up the work process into single tasks to be performed in accordance with a "calculated" and "rigorous" time scheme.¹² F.W. Taylor initiated an intensified mode of capitalist production, which necessitated "a new type of individual," a human motor who knows no fatigue, "capable of performing 'automatically' the gestures indicated by the assembly line process" - "automatically" in that the worker should not have to think about what gesture to perform or which muscle to move while he is working.¹³ In this scheme it was necessary to eliminate excess - anything which might "interrupt this dream of smooth mass production," above all, the sexual instinct, which would dissipate energy elsewhere - a point made by Gramsci, who endorsed Taylorism as a step towards the liberation of the worker.¹⁴ Henry Ford, who took Taylorism further by introducing the moving assembly line in his factories, actually monitored the private lives of his workers. After two years of experiment, Fordism was fully operative by 1915. It was not simply the mass production of standardized objects, but actually revolutionized the organization of the production process itself. A "hierarchy" of interchangeable standardized and subdivided parts and a "parallel hierarchy" of machine tools made the parts into the end commodity. An unskilled Taylorized workforce repeated segmented and standardized movements, overseen by engineers, supervisors and designers, at a "continuous, sequential" assembly line. The latter "transferred the parts through the whole process," so that the worker never had to move, or even stop to pick something up.¹⁵

¹² Boscagli 131.

¹³ Boscagli 147.

¹⁴ Boscagli 147. For Gramsci, it constituted a step towards liberation since it freed the worker's mind for other things.

¹⁵ Peter Wollen, "Cinema /Americanism /The Robot," *New Formations* 8 (Summer 1989): 7-34, 8.

Fordism quickly became a "world view"; the word summed up life in a commodity society, where the principle of the mechanical reproduction of the same artefact was being extended to ever more spheres of life.

But civilian economic relations were not the first context in which such an organization of men and machines were encountered. Wolfgang Schivelbusch writes that in the modern army, "individuals are for a time mechanized, or even subsumed, into an organizational scheme that is completely abstract and exterior to them."¹⁶ New capitalist productivity, he argues, first manifested in the European armies, in the military combat machines, where individuals were merely "the executive organ of an authority exterior to themselves." (Early civilian productive forces arose concomitantly or immediately after this). In this new tactical organization, a thousand cavalrymen gathered their cohesive strength to "deliver *one* blow." The definition of "shock" in the OED since the seventeenth century refers to this military clash: "A sudden or violent blow, impact or collision, tending to overthrow or produce internal oscillation."¹⁷

By the eighteenth century, a revolution in weaponry - from pikes and halberds to hand firearms - turned warfare into an even more abstract organization. It was comparable, Schivelbusch says, "to the change, in industrial production, from a craft to an assembly-line mode."¹⁸ This gave rise to a new meaning of the word "shock." Apart from relating to the military clash, it came to denote a medical term, applying to "the consequences caused, by means of the use of firearms, in the organisms of the affected soldiers," and as such described "the concussion and pathological general state of the victim." The change in weaponry also affected the way in which a combatant received a

¹⁶ Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *The Railway Journey: the Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century* (Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986) 160.

¹⁷ Schivelbusch 153.

¹⁸ Schivelbusch 154.

wound: whereas a medieval duellist kept in a state of "alert expectation" for a wound, the wound afflicted by the mass use of firearms "would appear unexpected, suddenly occurring, invisibly from nowhere."¹⁹ Schivelbusch summarizes the consequences of this for the notion of "shock," and although his account takes for granted an opposition between nature and culture, nature and technology, he does situate shock in terms of commodity relations:

Now "shock" described the kind of sudden and powerful event of violence that disrupts the continuity of an artificially or mechanically created motion or situation, and also the subsequent state of derangement. The precondition for this is a highly developed general state of dominance over nature, both technically (military example: firearms) and psychically (military example: troop discipline). The degree of control over nature and the violence of the collapse of that control, in shock, are proportionate: the more finely meshed the web of mechanization, discipline, division of labour etc, the more catastrophic when it is disrupted from within or without.²⁰

In the First World War, the trends described by Schivelbusch were taken to an unprecedented extreme. As we saw in Chapter One, the war deployed forms of destructive firepower that were devastating in their effects. These new technologies were able to dismember bodies and scatter them into pieces as never before. As Eric Leed argues, the war directed attention to the terrifying power of technology, which came to be seen as an "autonomous" reality in its own right: "Dissociation of technology from its traditional associations made it strange, frightening, demonic. It was removed from the context in which it was comprehensible as the instrument of production and distribution - functions which made life possible and European culture dominant. It was 're-situated' into a context of destruction, work, and terror, where it made human dignity inconceivable and survival problematical. What was once familiar, a matter of pride and an engine of progress, was made

¹⁹ Schivelbusch 155-6.

²⁰ Schivelbusch 157-8. This definition would also work for the railway crash.

monstrous and strange."²¹ The alienation induced by the new war technologies was compounded by the transferral of advanced assembly-line principles into the organization of the army. The high velocity shells that were used in continuous bombardment were mass produced in munitions factories. Indeed, the munitions factory is one of the features of modern industrial warfare which Martin Stone elicits as conducive to the "problematic nature of shellshock" - the other is the employment of an unskilled workforce on the battlefield, that is, civilian recruits who had been trained only minimally, mainly by drill. Both are hallmarks of the "Taylorized industrial enterprise."²²

This problem was heightened by conscription - although it was only introduced in Britain in 1917, the French and German armies were largely made up of conscripts right from the start. The war, as Leed argues, pointed up the affiliation between industrial discipline in civilian life and alienation in the trenches, where the combatant was separated from the "means of destruction."²³ It subsumed soldiers and their weaponry into an abstract, exterior schema of men and material. The powerlessness of the individual in this war was much exacerbated by the stalemate that formed early in the war, as both sides dug themselves into trenches, unable to pursue an offensive, precisely because of the lethal artillery and machine guns they found facing them if they advanced, and also because tactics, in contrast to the technology, were antiquated. The trench networks extended back for miles on either side of "No Man's Land": each line was dedicated to a particular task or position.

²¹ Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) 31.

²² Martin Stone, "Shellshock and the Psychologists," in *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*, ed. W.F. Bynum, R. Porter and M. Shepherd, Vol. 2 (London and New York: Tavistock Publications, 1985) 259. It was problematic because Field Marshall (later General) Haig thought it a waste of time to teach tactics to volunteers. What was required of them was simply to maintain physical presence and obey orders, thus putting the pressure of maintaining discipline on officers.

²³ Leed 31.

What added further to this feeling of powerlessness in the trenches was the fact that men risked being shot for desertion if they became overcome with fear. They had to keep their feelings firmly in control so as not to destroy army morale, and this was dictated as much by pre-war values about what constituted "manly" behaviour as by troop discipline. Men were neither to complain nor exhibit distress.

In the face of this rationalization, the bodies of soldiers began to show signs of breakdown. By the end of the war, 80 000 cases of shellshock in British forces had passed through army hospitals; 194 300 were recorded in German soldiers.²⁴ Even after the Armistice, many thousands continued to receive pensions for "neurasthenic disablement" or "psychiatric conditions" and others experienced the delayed onset of symptoms many years after the war.²⁵ The uncanny and threatening aspect under which shellshock appeared was reported back at home by the press from early on in the war. Journalists wrote of "the uncanny effect of shells," and on October 31, *The Lancet* referred to the many accounts of the war which alluded to the exploding shells which left their victims "in life-like groups . . . the whole suggesting a group of waxwork bodies at Madame Tussauds."²⁶ As these accounts suggest, shellshock was at first thought to have strange, unknown physiological origins. Indeed the very term "shellshock," coined by C.S. Myers, suggests this - it was thought to be a "commotional shock," produced as the sudden rise of atmospheric pressure made minute haemorrhages in the brain or organic lesions in the spinal

²⁴ Paul Lerner, "Irrational Minds / Rationalized Bodies: Psychiatry and Industry in World War One," unpublished paper 13n9.

²⁵ Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War* (London: Reaktion Books, 1996) 189, 122.

²⁶ Cited in Ted Bogazc, "War Neurosis and Cultural Change in England 1914-22: The Work of the War Office Committee of Enquiry into 'Shell-Shock,'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 24 (1989): 227-256, 234.

pathways of the central nervous system (that is, shock as physiological lesion).²⁷

This somatic view was widely held by many doctors. Many of them persisted in this belief to the end of the war. Other doctors, like the neurologist, F.W. Mott, although they never gave up the somatic view, allowed it to be slightly amended by evidence of a psychological nature. Mott expounded the physiological causes of shellshock at a lecture he gave in 1917:

The term "shell-shock" is applied to a group of varying signs and symptoms, indicative of loss of functions and disorder of functions of the central nervous system, arising from sudden or prolonged exposure to forces [physical or chemical] generated by high explosives. The forces producing shell-shock are most commonly generated by the explosion of large shells, but also of mines, aerial torpedoes, whizz-bangs, trench mortars, bombs, and hand-grenades filled with high explosives.

In a large number of cases, although exhibiting no visible injury, shell-shock is accompanied by burial. Again, cerebral or spinal concussion may be caused by sand-bags, hurled from the parapet or parades of the trench, striking the individual on the head or spine. The soldier may be concussed by the roof or wall of the dug-out being blown in, or he may be driven violently against the wall of the trench or dug-out, or blown a long distance, simply by the strength of the explosion.²⁸

Mott, very reasonably, distinguished those who had suffered an actual physical disturbance with the corresponding somatic or functional damage from those in whom no physical disorder could be discerned. What is at stake here is not the credibility of the somatic view of shell-shock (which could not be disputed in many cases), but the contempt accorded to those who had no physical injury but seemed to be suffering from the same symptoms. Some soldiers had never been near a shell-blast nor been buried alive under debris, but in time they broke down all the same, many of them after exposure to the mangled bodies of

²⁷ Bourke 115.

²⁸ F.W. Mott, "Mental Hygiene in Shell-Shock, during and after the War," *The Journal of Mental Science* 58 (1918): 467-488, 467-8

friends or enemies, who *had* been blown apart by the war's technologies of destruction. Mott recognized that such symptoms of breakdown were akin to hysteria and neurasthenia, but this very fact discredited these men in his eyes; he calls them "shell-shy," and states that psychological symptoms alone do not warrant the sending-back of soldiers, for they had "only been subjected to the experience of war which every soldier must undergo" at the front.²⁹

But as I mentioned before, shellshock was not an entirely new phenomenon - it was diagnosed and treated by Silas Weir Mitchell in the American Civil War, and during the Franco-Prussian and Russo-Japanese wars cases of psychological breakdown were also reported, although little of therapeutic value was gleaned from them.³⁰ Furthermore shellshock was seen to fall into an already known category of illnesses, "traumatic neuroses," which occurred "after severe mechanical concussions, railway disasters and other accidents involving a risk to life."³¹ Industrial accidents loomed large in the latter category: "defects of speech, tics, paralyses" had already been the province of medical experts and lawyers dealing with the issues of simulation, risk, compensation and insurance before the war.³² The question of delayed injury had already been examined vis-à-vis railroad trauma (popularly known as "railway spine"), and as with shellshock after it, there had been a shift from purely physiological explanations of the symptoms to a psychological one: John Eric Erichsen, whose writings on post-traumatic illness encapsulated the dominant view of the 1860s that symptoms were based in somatic damage, was challenged by Dr Page, who introduced the concept of "nervous shock" to

²⁹ Mott 469.

³⁰ Lerner 1.

³¹ Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *On Metapsychology: Penguin Freud Library Vol. 11*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 281.

³² Daniel Pick, *War Machine: The Rationalization of Slaughter in the Modern Age* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993) 250.

elucidate the symptoms which patients exhibited after accidents. Nevertheless, even though he was an exponent of the somatic view, Erichsen foregrounded the experience of fright as a factor in railroad trauma, and thus laid the framework for Freud's later exploration of the subject.

The railroad's power to induce trauma lay in its infliction of psychic strains on the entire body of the traveller, which was "subjected to a degree of wear and tear" that was unknown in pre-industrial travel. As the *Book of Health* (1884) notes, the passenger "for the time being, becomes part of the machine in which he has placed himself, being jarred by the self-same movement, and receiving impressions upon nerves of skin and muscle which are none the less real because they are unconsciously inflicted."³³ Added to the railroad's "peculiar jerking vibration," which imparted mechanical shocks to the body, there was the anxiety of collision, the potential violence of the accident, which even after habituation to this mode of travel, re-evokes the "demonic nature of the first railroads" - "the crash of collision, the roar of explosion and the cries of the maimed people - a production which," Ernst Bloch writes, "knows no civilized schedule."³⁴ The threat of death and accident that had been repressed the more people became accustomed to rail travel came back in "the form of a cataclysmic return" in the railway crash.³⁵ Nineteenth century reactions to the railroad therefore prefigured the way in which technology came to be perceived in the First World War: aligned now with death, it was viewed by witnesses and victims of railway accidents as monstrous, as a "harbinger of chaos."³⁶

As anatomical investigation during the war increasingly revealed no somatic damage in those who had been diagnosed with shellshock, the term

³³ Cited in Schivelbusch 113.

³⁴ Schivelbusch 118, 130-1.

³⁵ Jeffrey T. Schnapp, "Crash (Speed as Engine of Individuation)," *Modernism/Modernity* 6.1 (January 1999): 1-49, 26.

³⁶ Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* 70.

"shell-shock" came to seem inappropriate. Even Myers, who had invented the term, campaigned for its replacement by the acronym, N.Y.D.N (Not Yet Diagnosed [Nervous]). But even this term caused anxiety, and doctors hesitated to use such an imprecise term. Many believed that, like the epithet "shellshock," the term positively encouraged men to sham nervous breakdowns.³⁷ The acronym seemed to help blur the boundaries between the manly and the unmanly, between the real sufferer and the malingerer. The similarity of the symptoms to those of hysteria likewise constituted a barrier of resistance. Although male hysteria had been recognized as early as 1828 by George Burrows, and later in the nineteenth century confirmed by Charcot, doctors serving in the war were simply not prepared for this large-scale outbreak of hysterical symptoms, and the feminization of men that it implied. In the early part of the war, where no physical wound could be discerned, a soldier could easily be accused of feigning the symptom, in which case he could be convicted by court martial (this happened to 3000 men) or even shot for cowardice (346 men in all faced execution by the firing squad in the British army). The view of shellshock as feigned began to coexist with the understanding that it might be due to an emotional disturbance created by warfare itself. An article on shellblindness in *The Times* in April 1915 quotes an oculist, saying, "These cases . . . are to be regarded as 'examples of injuries or wounds to consciousness' . . . It would seem that as the result of severe and sudden shock the conscious mind, with its high attributes of control and determination, is thrown out of action; the subconscious mind intervenes."³⁸ Shellshock began to be explained by recourse to garbled versions of Freudian psychoanalysis, a framework which accounted for how, when the nervous system remained "anatomically intact," such severe disturbances of function

³⁷ Bogazc 244.

³⁸ "Shellblindness: the Problem of Wounds to Consciousness," *The Times* 8 April 1915: 6.

could occur without any gross injury to the organ.³⁹ In reconsidering its assumptions regarding the aetiology of shock, the medical profession was forced to give way at least to a certain degree to Freudian theories.

The factors in psychological breakdown, as enumerated by the War Office Committee of Inquiry into "Shellshock" shortly after the war, were held to be exhaustion, inability to sleep, guilt after witnessing the death of companions, and, for officers, the pressures of responsibility, the fear of showing fear; and the stalemate of the war after November 1914.⁴⁰ The Committee was by no means unduly sympathetic to the psychological view of "shell-shock" (the "mental" causes appear as just one category among many others), but some members did make concessions: Lord Herne spoke of the "novel nerve-shattering" conditions of modern warfare, where artillery, machine guns and barbed wire triumphed over human "valour."⁴¹ That is, any man could break down: not just the weak, but also the most hardy. Many of the doctors treating "shellshock," however, were not so eager to embrace this idea. Mott, even as he approaches this kind of understanding, ultimately leads away from it, suggesting that the psychological factors in themselves were not enough to deter otherwise healthy men - experience of an actual shell-blast had to be added to the psychological causes. He argues how the conditions of modern trench warfare predisposed "a neuro-potentially sound individual" to shellshock:

Living in trenches or dug-outs, exposed to wet, cold and often (owing to shelling of the communication trenches) to hunger and thirst; dazed or stunned by the unceasing din of the guns; disgusted by foul stench, by the rats and by insect tortures of flies, fleas, bugs, and lice, the minor

³⁹ Sigmund Freud, "Memorandum on the Electrical Treatment of War Neurotics" (Manuscript dated 23.2.20), in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, Vol. 17 (London: Hogarth Press, 1955) 212.

⁴⁰ Bogacz 233.

⁴¹ Bogacz 233.

horrors of war, when combined with frequent grim and gruesome spectacles of comrades suddenly struck down, mangled; wounded or dead, the memories of which are constantly recurring, and exciting a dread of impending death or of being blown up by a mine and buried alive together constitute experiences so depressing to the vital resistance of the nervous system that a time must come when even the strongest man will succumb, and a shell bursting near may produce a sudden loss of consciousness, not by concussion or commotion, but by acting as the "last straw" on an utterly exhausted nervous system.⁴²

Even those who were in the business of treating psychological disorders couldn't refrain from casting judgement on those who had "succumbed" psychologically to the war, and whose functional disorders were a result of this. The military doctor A.F. Hurst, extolling the virtues and effectiveness of psychotherapy, proceeds to demean his patients, by suggesting it is "the weak in spirit" who can be cured by this way.⁴³ Doctors were also affected by pre-war discourses of racial and national degeneration and prejudices which made them believe that certain social groups (for example, the Irish, or the lower classes) were predisposed to mental illness.⁴⁴ Mott writes, "if there is an inborn timorous or neurotic disposition, or an inborn or acquired psychopathic taint . . . it necessarily follows that such an one will be unable to stand the terrifying effects of shell-fire and the stress of trench warfare."⁴⁵ In such cases, the victims themselves were blamed rather than the atrocious conditions of the war (in Britain, this tendency increased after the introduction of conscription). Yet "shellshock" was actually a great leveller of social background and class - it seemed that nobody really was immune, and in this way it did much to make the border between sanity and insanity - held to be sacrosanct before the war - more permeable. Shellshock threw uncertainty into the very concept of madness, suspended as it was between what seemed to be contradictions: yes,

⁴² Mott 470.

⁴³ A.F. Hurst, "Nerves and the Men (The Mental Factor in the Disabled Soldier)," *Reveille* 2 (November 1918): 260-68, 260.

⁴⁴ Bogazc 237.

⁴⁵ Mott 471.

the men were mad, but then again, given the peculiar conditions, they were not. It was itself a No Man's Land kind of illness.⁴⁶

However, the implications this held for notions of gender and class were far too unsettling for some. W.H.R. Rivers, who perhaps of all the military psychologists of the time was most committed to the notion of war-shock as an exclusively psychological disorder, developed an elaborate class theory of the neuroses. Rivers believed that "many of the symptoms following the shocks and strains of warfare depend on the repression of painful experience."⁴⁷ He thought that the helplessness and passivity of the men in the trenches had helped bring about illness, together with conflicts in the mind between the unconscious instinct of self-preservation (which tells a man to run away) and conscious thoughts of social and national duty (telling him that he ought to stay, that he ought to banish his fearful thoughts). In the face of these impossible demands, the soldier represses and censors his unconscious thoughts, and takes flight into his nervous symptoms. The symptoms to which a man flees were dependent on his rank and class. Private soldiers, whose military training had been "mechanical" and thus had "enhanced" their suggestibility, produced hysterical reactions to the war.⁴⁸ They adopted physical symptoms which immediately incapacitated them from participating in the war - symptoms like paralysis, mutism, and various anaesthesias (symptoms which could all be "produced by hypnotism or by a state of potent suggestion").⁴⁹ Officers, on the other hand, whose training was aimed more at the use of "initiative and independence," could not be content with such a

⁴⁶ Bogacz 250.

⁴⁷ W.H.R. Rivers, "Freud's Psychology of the Unconscious," *The Lancet* 1 (1917): 912-14, 914.

⁴⁸ W.H.R. Rivers, *Instinct and the Unconscious* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920) 211, 130.

⁴⁹ Rivers, *Instinct* 206.

"crude solution."⁵⁰ Their symptoms were more complex: they developed "anxiety-neuroses," marked by sleep disorders, tremors, tics, and stuttering.⁵¹

Although he did take it upon himself to introduce some of Freud's ideas to the British public in *The Lancet*, Rivers was essentially antagonistic to psychoanalysis. In particular, he was doubtful about Freud's emphasis on sexuality in the formation of pathological complexes.⁵² First of all, he thought that the instinct of self-preservation was more relevant than sexuality in war neuroses and in other psychological disorders, and secondly, he felt that war neuroses were totally different from the neuroses of peacetime (another way of discounting Freud's sexual theories of the mind).

Rivers was not alone in rejecting Freud's sexual view; in fact, his theory was typical of the way in which the role of sexuality was excluded from explanations of war neurosis. Yet of all the theories discussed so far it is Rivers' theory which touches most on the plight men found themselves in, and emphasizes what Elaine Showalter sees as the "lesson" of shellshock - that "powerlessness could lead to pathology."⁵³ Facing charges of unmanliness if they showed signs of objection to fighting, men found themselves in a comparable situation to women. "Silenced and immobilized," they were "forced, like women, to express their conflicts through the body. Placed in intolerable circumstances of stress, and expected to react with unnatural 'courage,' thousands of soldiers reacted instead with the symptoms of hysteria."⁵⁴ Their symptoms constituted a form of complaint which they were otherwise unable to articulate. Male homosexuality may have been part of the range of emotions that had to be repressed in the trenches. Certainly, some

⁵⁰ Rivers, *Instinct* 208.

⁵¹ Rivers, *Instinct* 206.

⁵² Rivers, "Freud's Psychology" 913.

⁵³ Elaine Showalter, *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980* (London: Virago Press, 1995)190.

⁵⁴ Showalter 171.

element of eroticism, written out in non-psychoanalytic accounts, was intermixed with the fear and apprehension of death. Karl Abraham, a member of Freud's circle, suggested that sexuality did play a role in war neurosis (in the form of narcissistic "traits").⁵⁵ Ernest Jones, a psychoanalyst working in England, rejected Rivers' theory of self-preservation, and put forward the notion of narcissistic-neuroses, where it is precisely a libidinal investment that is at stake.⁵⁶ Freud himself suggested that it was possible to reconcile a theory of the war neuroses with the sexual theory which predominated in diagnoses of the disorders of peacetime.⁵⁷ But in many of these psychoanalytic accounts, where sexuality does emerge, it has the effect of turning the blame on men for their less than manly, even feminine, behaviour - for their narcissistic predisposition to neurosis, or for their mother-fixations. Almost imperceptibly, the blame is shifted to women, specifically, to the mother.⁵⁸

In treatment, military doctors insisted that patients be kept away from feminine influence. They were to be "neither pitied nor 'molly-coddled'" - discipline had to be "maintained at all costs."⁵⁹ Vigorous treatment was promoted in order to counteract the feminization to which the men had supposedly ceded. But this was also necessitated by the manpower shortages arising from the increasing number of soldiers from combat zones being put out of action on account of nervous illness. With the need to get these men quickly

⁵⁵ Karl Abraham, *Clinical Papers and Essays on Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac, 1979) 61, 63.

⁵⁶ Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psychoanalysis* (London: Balliere, Tindall and Cox, 1950) 300-1.

⁵⁷ Sigmund Freud, "Introduction to *Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses*," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, Vol. 17 (London: Hogarth Press, 1955) 208.

⁵⁸ Freud's 1920 text, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," is no exception; in the boy's game of fort/ da, used as an allegory of the symptoms of war neurosis, it is, in the first instance, the absence, or death, of the mother that is being negotiated.

⁵⁹ Bogazc 244.

back onto front lines, fast-acting therapies were put into practice. Once doctors accepted that in functional disorders, the "seat of disorder" was in the patient's mind rather than, for example, in the arm or leg, they began to think that the disorders could be cured "instantaneously" by suggestion. "The great majority of soldiers sent to hospital on account of fits are really suffering from hysteria," one medical officer declared: "many men have become pensioners and are given three doses of bromide for supposed epilepsy where a single dose of psychotherapy would have effected a cure."⁶⁰ Other so-called rapid cures were found, such as persuasion (which involved convincing a patient by appealing to his rational mind) and an abridged version of analysis (doctors could not afford the Freudian luxury of fifty-minute sessions over an extensive period of time). The treatment of war neurosis grew into an efficiently managed system. The army created "a chain of specialized medical treatment centres," from local casualty centres to special military hospitals at home, where various therapies - suggestion, hypnosis, re-education - were used either to recall the soldier to his duty in order to send him back to the front or to rehabilitate him for civilian work.⁶¹ Occupation was another recommended treatment: soldiers were given tasks that ranged from "feminine" pursuits such as basketry to more "masculine" jobs and games - J.M. Winter has suggested that a soldier's trajectory through this range of occupations, from his arrival at the centre, nervous and enfeebled, to his departure, was meant to mark the soldier's gradual reacquisition of "full, masculine combat status."⁶²

Although the absence of organic causes for these disorders compelled doctors to tackle the relation between the body and the psyche, the institution of the quick cure confirms that they still regarded their patients as malingerers. Moreover, such cures simply did not work for certain patients, like the

⁶⁰ Hurst 262.

⁶¹ Bogacz 235.

⁶² "Episode Five." *1914-18*.

neurasthenics.⁶³ As Freud pointed out after the war, in the testimony he was asked to give concerning the treatment of war neurosis, doctors disregarded "the psychological distinction between conscious and unconscious intentions."⁶⁴ They viewed their patients' symptoms as resistance to the war in a most literal sense. Therapy was often a matter of rekindling patriotic and masculine spirit, and of rooting out objections to fighting; in Rivers' case, of turning "energy, hitherto morbidly directed, into more healthy channels."⁶⁵ This reveals that the notion of trauma that these psychiatrists were working with approximates to conscious anxiety, and this even applies to those who assimilated psychoanalytic ideas. No wonder, then, that some of their treatments resembled punishments. Some intransigent doctors used electric shock therapy (faradization). This treatment was very popular in Germany, but we know of one doctor in Britain who carried it to violent extremes: Dr. Yealland, of Queen's Square, London. Equipped with his "imposing array of electrical machines, coloured lights, and other strong suggestive influences," he would have no truck with accounts of nightmares or anxieties, and subjected his patients to cigarette burns and hot plates on the tongue.⁶⁶ Through the "therapeutic use of terror," his intention, and that of other doctors, was to make the hysterical symptoms more unpleasant than active service, using shock as a "counter weapon to the psychogenic symptoms of war trauma."⁶⁷ The severity of the treatment was designed to strip the men of the advantage their illness gave them. It mattered only that the patient cease to produce the symptoms; methods such as Yealland's did not aim for the patient's recovery,

⁶³ Stone 253.

⁶⁴ Freud, "Memorandum" 213.

⁶⁵ Showalter 184.

⁶⁶ Mott 478.

⁶⁷ Brigid Doherty, "Pedantic Automaton: Montage, Prosthetics and the Ideology of Work in Berlin Dada," unpublished paper 17.

but "at restoring his fitness for service."⁶⁸ Although less brutal, Mott also favoured the rapid cure: new patients were encouraged to meet old ones who had been suffering from a similar symptom, with the intention of introducing into their minds the conviction that they could be cured prior to treatment. Success in therapy, for Mott, was only a matter of "reactivating" the patient's (conscious) will.⁶⁹

After giving witness about the cruelties in the use of electric shock treatment, Freud once again turned his attention to war neurosis in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," and restored the place of the unconscious in the psychopathology of shock. Freud took as one of his starting points the puzzling phenomenon of the dreams occurring in traumatic neurosis, which characteristically took dreamers back to the terrifying scenes that were the occasion of their breakdown, scenes from which they woke up "in another fright."⁷⁰ Such dreams seemed to contest the psychoanalytic finding that dreams were premised on the fulfilment of wishes, for these dreams repeatedly took patients back to scenes that were, apparently incontrovertibly, extremely unpleasurable. In order to take account of shellshock, and other phenomena where the repetition of unpleasant experiences were clearly at stake, Freud found he had to modify his own theory about the dominance of the pleasure principle in mental processes.

Some of this territory has already been covered in Chapter One, where we saw that in Freud, "traumatic" describes "any excitations from the outside which are powerful enough to break through the protective shield [of consciousness]."⁷¹ The influx of stimuli is so overwhelming that even consciousness, the resilient outer layer of the psyche, cannot support it. In this

⁶⁸ Freud, "Memorandum" 214.

⁶⁹ Bourke 118.

⁷⁰ Freud, "Beyond" 282.

⁷¹ Freud, "Beyond" 301.

respect, Freud seemed to be returning to the old medical meaning of trauma as a breach in an organ (here, the mind). However, in a turn that radically departs from what he calls "the old, naive theory of shock," he gives "aetiological importance" to the experience of fright. Fright "emphasizes the factor of surprise," unlike, for example, "anxiety," which bespeaks a certain preparedness for danger.⁷² Freud suggests that the condition of fright is accompanied by the receptive system's lack of readiness for the stimuli. The shock that gives rise to fright acquires its pathogenic power from its violent unexpectedness: the psyche's binding functions are overridden, and, as a result, the experience is not integrated by consciousness. Unmitigated as it is, the shock enters the unconscious. The trauma becomes a gap or "wound" at the heart of the patient's experience: the affect that could not be mastered at the time lingers like a "foreign body" in the psyche.⁷³

The latency of the experience is crucial to the pathology of Freudian trauma - the experience only has its effect belatedly, when it takes possession of the body of the patient. Inescapable nightmares, and other symptoms marked by a demonic repetition, such as tics, tremors and other mechanical movements, testify to the persistence of the affect. By repeating the traumatic experience in the form of these symptoms, the psyche tries to "master the stimulus retroactively."⁷⁴ The illness comes about as an attempt at restitution; the repetition is activated in order to install the anxiety (preparedness for danger) that was missing in the first instance, in other words, to bind psychically the impressions of the traumatic event by instituting the "hypercathexis" of the receptive systems that was lacking in the initial fright (that is, a "supplementary charge of instinctual energy" is directed where it is needed).⁷⁵ It was this that

⁷² Freud, "Beyond" 303, 282.

⁷³ J. Laplanche and J-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Karnac, 1988) 466.

⁷⁴ Freud, "Beyond" 304.

⁷⁵ Freud, "Beyond" 303; Laplanche and Pontalis 191.

led Freud to assume - problematically - that psychogenic trauma was irreconcilable with physical trauma. For, in the event of an actual wound, the body mobilizes energies to take care of the area in pain immediately. This would forestall mental trauma, since the body is already in a state of attention. Nevertheless, as Laplanche and Pontalis point out, Freud's theory of psychogenic traumatic neurosis also emphasizes its somatic character - it is "the disruption (*Erschütterung*) of the organism" that causes an "influx of excitation," as well as fright (*Schreck*), and this threatens the body's cohesion.⁷⁶

Freud's idea of trauma as restitution would seem to suggest that the repetitive symptoms move a patient towards health. The binding functions serve the pleasure principle, and to all appearances pleasure has once again asserted its dominance in mental life. This, however, is not the case, for the repetition of unpleasant experiences led Freud to postulate the existence of death drives within the psyche, which were more fundamental than the pleasure principle, and which actually underlay libidinal drives. One of the examples of repetition that Freud cites is his grandson's game of fort/ da - the boy stages his own (and his mother's) disappearance and reappearance, as if he desired self-extinction. Comparably, in the terrible recurring dreams of war neurotics, where they were brought back to scenes of death and dissolution again and again, it seemed that, as Maud Ellmann says, they were "repeating death as if it were their desire."⁷⁷ The external violence of the shocks (of war, or else of commodity relations) never meets an entirely innocent, unmarked subject; it comes into contact with a violence that is already there within. In the repetition of the symptoms of neurosis, it is the satisfaction, or bizarre jouissance, of these death drives that is being managed.

⁷⁶ Laplanche and Pontalis 472.

⁷⁷ Maud Ellmann, *The Poetics of Impersonality: T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987) 109.

The literal quality of the symptoms in war neurosis bears this out; there is almost no attempt at symbolization, and this is perhaps where war neurosis diverges from the mechanisms of hysteria: "These patients are mimes, they're acting the part they played when they were hit," wrote M.D. Eder, a follower of Freud.⁷⁸ One of the cases he cites is of a man with a "claw hand" - the fingers of his right hand were continuously semi-flexed for months after he had recovered from bayonet wounds on the right side of his body. Eder writes: "in the unconscious he was still clutching the rifle; he was still fighting the good fight."⁷⁹ Retaining the notion of symbolization in Freud's study of hysteria, Eder notes the linguistic nature of bodily symptoms - that the unconscious "causes words to materialize in symptoms" - even though the evidence he gives is of a literal nature, for example, a patient who said under hypnosis that the "doctor put my back up" got a rigid back.⁸⁰ Trauma thus becomes what Ruth Leys calls "mimetic affection," or "identificatory dissociation."⁸¹ Although the idea attached to the affect has been repressed, the affect nonetheless exerts its continuous presence in the symptoms, which are actually a reliving of the affect belonging to the trauma, a reliving that takes place in the present in the form of a mimetic identification (it is a reliving or acting out of the trauma). Although the affect may in cases be "blocked," these patients can never escape it - it is simply there, ever-persistent.

I've already suggested what breaks "the soldierly spirit" and causes neurosis is the effect of living with the dead, whose cut up and strewn bodies lie in the mud for weeks on end.⁸² These shellshock sufferers are "minds the

⁷⁸ M.D. Eder, *War Shock: the Psychoneuroses in War Psychology and Treatment* (London: William Heinemann, 1917) 54.

⁷⁹ Eder 58, 24.

⁸⁰ Eder 63.

⁸¹ Ruth Leys, "Traumatic Cures: Shell-Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Summer 1994): 623-662, 646.

⁸² Wilfred Owen, Letter to his mother, read in "Episode Five." *1914-1918*.

dead have ravished."⁸³ It is the affect tied to the witnessing of gruesome deaths that persists in the psyche as a foreign body, from which they can never flee, and by which they become possessed.

The First World War doctors' use of the camera to reveal what was formerly hidden (an affect in the mind) is a not far away from the idea, championed by Benjamin and another Frankfurt School critic, Siegfried Kracauer, that camera shots speak the involuntary and adventitious. Benjamin suggested that "the camera introduces us to unconscious optics as does psychoanalysis to unconscious impulses."⁸⁴ Film has brought about a "deepening of apperception" for the whole optical and acoustical spectrum, akin to that introduced by psychoanalysis: "things which had heretofore floated along unnoticed in the broad stream of perception" have now become isolatable and "analyzable."⁸⁵ Kracauer, in his 1927 essay "Photography," welcomed the prosthetic power of the photograph, which enabled us to extend our sensory and cognitive faculties to achieve a fuller comprehension of material reality.⁸⁶ In relation to film, too, his ideas were similar to Benjamin's. In *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological Study of the German Film* (1947), he writes, "the screen shows itself particularly concerned with the unobtrusive, the normally neglected." Through close-ups and other devices, one might see glimpses of inner life, as it "manifests itself in various elements and conglomerations of external life." In the silent cinema, the slightest actions become "the visible hieroglyphics of the unseen dynamics of human relations."⁸⁷ This optical unconscious of film, Kracauer implies, became undermined by the introduction

⁸³ "Minds the Dead have Ravished." *Shellshock*. Channel 4. 8 Nov. 1998.

⁸⁴ Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations* (London: Fontana, 1992) 230.

⁸⁵ Benjamin 229.

⁸⁶ Thomas Y. Levin, "Introduction," in Siegfried Kracauer, *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*, trans. Thomas Y. Levin (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995) 21.

⁸⁷ Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological Study of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947) 7.

of sound, when the explicit came to take the place of the implicit, and he was not alone in expressing this kind of opinion; the advent of sound in film, as we shall see, was thought by many to constitute a vulgarization of cinema.

But even as Benjamin and Kracauer were celebrating the revolutionary potential of film, and even as the First World War doctors were trying to establish the value of cinema in documenting and understanding this strange new disease, others were protesting against cinema on the grounds that it *produced* hysteria. Anxieties about bodies that ran by themselves outside any rational control - with symptoms that mimetically reproduced the trauma - overlapped with anxieties about cinema, the machine that mechanically reproduces reality; the spectatorial body played upon by its images was seen to be dangerously similar to the convulsive-hysterical subject.

"My thoughts have been replaced by moving images": the image as an assault (I)

These links between war trauma and cinema have to be seen against the backdrop of a generalized concern about modernity itself as an "assault on the senses."⁸⁸ Even though Freud's acute concern about shock in "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" has as its most immediate reference-point the phenomenon of shellshock, anxieties about the shocks of modernity as a whole are what form the backdrop of the essay. The general concerns that lay behind Freud's theory of shock were what attracted Benjamin to it in his effort to conceptualize shock, memory and modernity in the context of the work of Proust and Baudelaire. He was particularly drawn by Freud's insistence on the complex intermingling of memory and consciousness. In "On Some Motifs in Baudelaire" (1939), Benjamin suggests that the shock which has been

⁸⁸ Mary Ann Doane, "Temporality, Storage, Legibility: Freud, Marey and the Cinema," *Critical Inquiry* 22 (Winter 1996): 313-343, 322.

"cushioned" by consciousness "lend[s] the incident that occasions it the character of having been lived in the strict sense." That is, the impressions "remain in the sphere of a certain hour in one's life" - they enter what he calls *Erlebnis*. On the other hand, those shocks which aren't "parried by consciousness," and which go directly into the unconscious, are available for recollection by what he names, after Proust, "mémoire involuntaire."⁸⁹ These shocks haven't happened to the subject as a lived experience: they don't leave permanent traces on consciousness, but are, as Freud said, "transmitted to the systems lying next within and it is in them that [their] traces are left."⁹⁰ (That is, they do not enter *Erlebnis*, but they do enter experience, or what Benjamin calls *Erfahrung*). Without the intercession of consciousness or reflection, there is "nothing but the sudden start, usually the sensation of fright which, according to Freud, confirms the failure of the shock defence."⁹¹

As we saw in Chapter One, it is the accelerated rhythms of modernity that occasion such thoughts on our lack of readiness to receive the powerful onslaught of the techno-industrial world, or our belated reaction to given stimuli. For Benjamin, film was the emblem of modernity seen in this way, and filmic consciousness was the heir to the "*kaleidoscope* equipped with consciousness" belonging to the flâneur in his experience of shock with the urban crowds: "Whereas Poe's passers-by cast glances in all directions which still appeared to be aimless, today's pedestrians are obliged to do so in order to keep abreast of traffic signals. Thus technology has subjected the human sensorium to a complex kind of training. There came a day when a new and urgent need for stimuli was met by the film. In a film, perception in the form of shocks was established as a formal principle."⁹² In "The Work of Art in the

⁸⁹ Benjamin 157-9.

⁹⁰ Freud, "Beyond" 296.

⁹¹ Benjamin 159.

⁹² Benjamin 171.

Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (1936), Benjamin conceives cinema as an assault on the senses, and compares it to the art of the Dadaists: "It hit the spectator like a bullet, it happened to him, thus acquiring a tactile quality." Film, he argues, has a similar tactile dimension, based as it is "on changes of place and focus which periodically assail the spectator."⁹³ Between these changes there is no time to reflect, no time to stop and let the mind wander in its own associations. As soon as the eye apprehends one scene it is immediately exchanged for another. Benjamin quotes Duhamel's observations on the nature of film, "I can no longer think what I want to think. My thoughts have been replaced by moving images."⁹⁴ This incessant change in the images "constitutes the shock effect of the film, which, like all shocks, should be cushioned by a heightened presence of mind."⁹⁵ Although film's attack on the senses in Benjamin's account is non-gender-specific, he frequently implies a male spectator, as this last example, with its hint of a need for a defence against the trauma, might suggest.

Benjamin was not alone in putting cinema at the centre of experiences of modernity. Sabine Hake's study of early twentieth century German critics' response to cinema reveals that film was frequently conceived as a series of shocks, and widely compared to the other shocks of modern urban existence, well before Benjamin came to engage with the topic. But, as we shall see, even though some early observations about the nature and effect of cinema parallel those made by Benjamin and other members of the Frankfurt school, these observations were often used to uphold conservative attitudes to film. The idea of producing art with the aid of a machine meant that cinema, from its inception to the establishment of corporate interests and the rise of "dream factories," was a target for fears of mechanization. These fears of

⁹³ Benjamin 231.

⁹⁴ Benjamin 231.

⁹⁵ Benjamin 232.

mechanization were displaced into fears of feminization. In early popular accounts, cinema's attack on the spectator's senses was both seen in terms of a seductress overpowering "a weak, emasculated audience" (the castration anxiety implicit in this makes the spectator feature as male) and as a predator, battenning on a "helpless victim" or "unwilling accomplice" (thus putting the spectator in a feminine position).⁹⁶ Such accounts point to what Lynne Kirby calls a "technological seduction fantasy," which is "every bit as terrifying - and thrilling - as the fantasies of Freud's hysterics."⁹⁷ Again and again, the leitmotif is rape, a will to submission. Cinema came to be viewed as a kind of "hypnotic apparatus," for, as Kirby says, it "presupposes" many of the components which are involved in hypnosis: "a suggestible subject, an apparatus that entails physical immobility, vision as the means of seduction" - in hypnosis, the proverbial swinging pendulum - "and psychic regression." Just as in hypnosis, so with cinema spectatorship: "the borders of the ego relax with respect to identification with the camera, the fiction, and the apparatus itself, such that the cinema becomes for the subject a 'hypnotist function.'"⁹⁸ To say that cinema hypnotizes its spectators is tantamount to saying that it hystericized its spectators, and this was in keeping with Charcot's findings (since the traumatic paralyse he observed bore similarities to the experimental paralyse he induced by hypnotic suggestion, he established that hypnosis was "a form of hysteria").⁹⁹

In all these discourses, the feminization that cinema implies is associated with a perceived crisis in gender relations. On the one hand, they kept faith with the gendered assumptions of earlier views about the hysterical condition

⁹⁶ Sabine Hake, *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany 1907-1933* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993) 52.

⁹⁷ Lynne Kirby, *Parallel Tracks: The Railroad and the Silent Cinema* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997) 69.

⁹⁸ Kirby 154.

⁹⁹ Roth 2; Kirby 66.

(so too with the conventional gendering of concepts such as passivity, vulnerability and submission): men who succumbed were unmanned, and female spectators were thought to be the ones most vulnerable to the hypnotic suggestion (they are thought to be the most passive). Yet, on the other, these discourses express the anxiety that the distinctions between masculine and feminine have become unfixed, just as debates about male hysteria in the war did.¹⁰⁰

Other accounts emphasize the panic induced in the spectator, rather than passivity, but once again it is the hystericization of the spectator that is at issue. Critics situated cinema in terms of "big-city psychology:" in 1912, Hans Kienzl wrote that "the soul of the big city, this constantly rushed soul, staggering back and forth between cursory impressions that are as unique as they are unfathomable, embodies the soul of cinematography."¹⁰¹ Others, in their recourse to military metaphors - using verbs like "*flickering*, *flashing*, and *flaring*" - imagined the viewer as being "under fire," they spoke of "the bombardment of the senses."¹⁰² This proximity between spectatorship and war-shock is also suggested in Walter Benjamin's essay via the notion that the spectator is constantly assailed by shocking images that are like bullets.

But the account that most exemplifies this kind of response to cinema is the story surrounding the first screenings of the Lumière Brothers' *Arrival of a Train* (1895). The Lumières filmed the train's axial movement towards the camera, and once the approaching train passes beyond the camera, off-screen, it moves into what would "logically" be "the space of the spectator."¹⁰³ The visual image therefore would appear to be jumping out at the spectator. As mentioned in Chapter One, early audiences allegedly reacted to the film by

¹⁰⁰ Kirby 72.

¹⁰¹ Hake 93.

¹⁰² Hake 30.

¹⁰³ Kirby 62.

rearing back in panic, believing that the train was heading straight for them. Here the characterization of the spectator falls back on popular representations of hysteria - as "exaggerated fright," expressed through bodily reactions - but these representations nevertheless derive from the historical diagnosis of psychological trauma.¹⁰⁴ Although the actual responses are hard to verify now, this story has come to be the legendary primal scene of cinema, and it does in fact illuminate some of the structures of filmic spectatorship as "visual trauma," emphasizing as it does "the uncanny and agitating power of the image."¹⁰⁵ The trauma of watching this, and any other film, has much to do with the immobility of the spectator; war trauma, as we saw, was in part accounted for by the helpless and immobile position that men were forced into by trench warfare, only, with this film another analogy comes to mind, "the proverbial woman tied to the tracks and assaulted or traumatized by the train."¹⁰⁶ This analogy returns us to the seduction/ rape scenario raised above in relation to our first set of popular early discourses about cinema (cinema spectatorship as passivity). As Kirby suggests, the two types of discourse are not particularly distinguishable from each other:

In theoretical terms, the assaulted spectator is the hysterical spectator. The fantasies of being run over and assaulted or penetrated produce a certain pleasure in pain - beyond the pleasure principle and in the realm of the repetition compulsion - which is as much about the will to submission (to loss-of-mastery) as it is about will-to-mastery or control (one might even say "suspension of disbelief" as submission).¹⁰⁷

What the legend surrounding *Arrival of a Train* gives us to understand is that a "hysterical premise" underlies film spectatorship as a whole, not just the

¹⁰⁴ Kirby 68.

¹⁰⁵ Tom Gunning, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)credulous Spectator," in Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 819, 820.

¹⁰⁶ Kirby 67.

¹⁰⁷ Kirby 71-2.

spectatorship of this film. As Kirby says of the Edison/ Porter film, *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show* (1902), which employs the rustic figure of Uncle Josh to parody the Lumière spectator's "primitive-naive" response to cinema, "Uncle Josh's reactions can be read in relation to shock - the shock not only of the train image," for the latter recalls the railroad trauma that provided an antecedent for shellshock, "but of the filmic image: the panic of projection."¹⁰⁸ Both legend and parody clearly emphasize the factor of surprise that Freud and his predecessors held to be conducive to the experience of shock: the image as a violent and unexpected intrusion into the sensorium of the body. And, as Kirby writes, "the victim of railway brain" - the term which supplanted railway spine in cases of psychological shock - "is also the victim of cinema brain, of the aggression of the apparatus."¹⁰⁹ But if railroad trauma forms the paradigm for cinematic shock in the earliest cinema, shellshock was to become an increasingly prominent paradigm later on; the two, in any case, are related - hysteria is common to both.

Tom Gunning, in his essay, "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)credulous Spectator," has shown that violence and the shock factor of the Lumière film came down to the novelty of the movement-image. In certain theatres, the film was first presented as a series of static photographs, building suspense up to the moment when the images were finally shown again, this time in movement, thus making the moment of movement all the more astonishing.¹¹⁰ Cinema was displaying, and capitalizing upon, its own art of illusion, and it was this surprise - that the apparatus could provide the illusion of life-like movement - that stunned and thrilled early audiences.

Early films were shot and projected at a rate of 16-20 frames per second; increasingly, this was changed to 24 frames per second, especially after

¹⁰⁸ Kirby 68.

¹⁰⁹ Kirby 70.

¹¹⁰ Gunning 822.

the introduction of sound, which necessitated a uniform speed of projection. The projector flashes 50 times per second - the rate needed to produce critical flicker fusion and so give an impression of continuity to the images through which it shines (although, how this aspect of cinema works is still a mystery; up to fairly recently it was thought to be based on the persistence of vision, and even critical flicker fusion has to be supplemented by other factors).¹¹¹ This means that each frame is projected onto the screen twice; the projector shutter breaks the light beam both when a new frame enters the gate and while it is still there.

In Emilie Altenloh's 1914 study, *Zur Soziologie des Kino (On the Sociology of Cinema)*, nervousness and "an inexhaustible need for new stimuli" are numbered among the characteristics of cinema; its "stimulating sequence of fleeting images" exercised audiences "in the new modes of sensory perception."¹¹² Connecting cinema to the other ephemerality of modern living, and with other popcultural forms such as the fairground, magic show and panorama, Altenloh draws on the term "scopophilia" (*Schaulust*), pleasure in looking: for her, the term describes "a permanently shifting desire. Taking the place of direct contact, it attaches itself to parades, traffic accidents, shop windows, and popular festivals." Altenloh anticipates Benjamin in locating cinema at the heart of commodity culture - cinema is seen to uphold "the process of industrialization, but from the side of recreation."¹¹³

For Benjamin, cinema not only mirrored the experience of the flâneur being jostled in the crowd, but also the "experience" of the worker at his machine: "That which determines the rhythm of production on the conveyor

¹¹¹ Critical flicker fusion describes the fact that when a beam of light is broken at a rate greater than 50 times a second it seems (to human vision) that there is only one continuous stream of light. In early showings of film, where there were less than 50 flashes a second, audiences could see the flicker effect.

¹¹² Hake 46, 48.

¹¹³ Hake 48.

belt is the basis of the rhythm of reception in the film."¹¹⁴ Re-interpreting Marx in the light of the development of the assembly-line, Benjamin observes that the article being worked upon at the conveyor belt comes within the range of the stationary (and unskilled) worker independently of his volition and moves away "just as arbitrarily" - this is endemic to the Fordist nature of the work process. The connection between related stages of production are totally elusive to an individual worker's apprehension, since segments of manual labour are partitioned off from one another. Marx wrote that "the worker does not make use of the working conditions. The working conditions make use of the worker; but it takes machinery to give this reversal a technically concrete form."¹¹⁵ The factory subjects workers to a kind of drill, where they have to adapt themselves to the machines, learning to "co-ordinate 'their own movements with the uniformly constant movements of an automaton."¹¹⁶ The machine activates a "reflecting mechanism" in the worker. In that there is an element of risk, the worker resembles a gambler: "the jolt in the movement of a machine is like the so-called coup in a game of chance. . . . [E]ach operation at the machine is just as screened off from the preceding operation as a coup in a game of chance is from the one that preceded it."¹¹⁷ The worker is competing with something that evades his grasp; every claim that the work process makes on him is independent of the others, and so comes as a surprise, a shock for which he is not prepared.

Early cinema audiences were largely made up of people whose lives had been profoundly shaped by the forces of modernization, for example, low-skilled workers, secretaries and shop-girls.¹¹⁸ Benjamin's argument implies that, while rooted to their seats in the cinema, these workers were assailed by

¹¹⁴ Benjamin 171.

¹¹⁵ Benjamin 171.

¹¹⁶ Benjamin 171-2.

¹¹⁷ Benjamin 173.

¹¹⁸ Hake 46.

impressions from all sides in a scenario that was structurally identical to their experience in the workplace. But whereas he, and Kracauer, championed cinema as the art of the masses, Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, two Frankfurt school critics writing in the shadow of the German dictatorship, drew a more pessimistic view of cinema for many of the same reasons (indeed, in some respects, the latter's view of cinema is a continuation of the early conservative discourses of cinema).

Both Benjamin and Kracauer discerned that distraction, rather than contemplation or concentration, was the mode of reception elicited by cinema, and this was what they both interpreted as a freedom for the masses. With its shock effect, film "meets this mode of reception halfway," Benjamin wrote. In the era of the mechanical reproduction of art (exemplified by film), the "aura" of the work of art disintegrates, and together with it, the pretensions of bourgeois "high" culture. The public is put in the position of a critic or examiner, and, all the better for the masses, "this position requires no attention."¹¹⁹ For Kracauer, the term distraction held more ambiguity; it could be said to epitomize the way he thought mass culture could be tipped in either direction - towards commodification or towards redemption. The masses' need for distraction could be their only chance to recognize the world in which they lived for what it was: the training they had received from the shocks of modern urban industrial life equipped them for this. For Kracauer, montage reflected the disorder of society and the architecture of picture palaces embodied distraction in external form - if the venue and activity of filmic spectatorship presented the workday tensions of audiences, whose lives had been deeply affected by industrialization, then that, he says in "The Cult of Distraction" (1926), offered them the opportunity of an illumination that might otherwise never arise: "Here, in pure externality, the audience encounters itself, its own

¹¹⁹ Benjamin 233-4.

reality is revealed in the fragmented sequence of splendid sense impressions. Were this reality to remain hidden from the viewers, they could neither attack nor change it; its disclosure in distraction is therefore of moral significance."¹²⁰

But when distraction becomes an end in and for itself, as it does in Hollywood films, it becomes reactionary. For Kracauer, the dance performances of the Tiller Girls exemplified this side of distraction: "these products of the American distraction factories," he wrote in "The Mass Ornament" (1927), "are no longer individual girls, but indissoluble girl clusters whose movements are demonstrations of mathematics."¹²¹ Their formations recall both the military and Taylorist/ Fordist drills: in them, the capitalist production process "runs its secret course in public." Such mass ornaments are "the aesthetic reflex of the rationality to which the prevailing economic system aspires," but their signs are abstract and empty; they resist comprehension of what they really signify.¹²² As such, the mass ornament is a relapse into mythology, which "betrays the degree to which capitalist *Ratio* is closed off from reason."¹²³ The problem of capitalism, for Kracauer, is not that it rationalizes too much, but that it rationalizes "too little": its rationality stops short of making man and his needs the basis of its "socioeconomic organization."¹²⁴ "The capitalist production process" is "an end in itself."¹²⁵

Kracauer's idea that the contradictions in a culture's ideology might be read and analyzed in the "surface" details of cultural products, and that mass culture makes these ever more visible and analyzable to its participants in their mode of distraction, bespeaks a progressive attitude to film and popular culture. Not so when he comes to tackle the situation of the female spectator,

¹²⁰ Kracauer, *Mass Ornament* 326.

¹²¹ Kracauer, *Mass Ornament* 75-6.

¹²² Kracauer, *Mass Ornament* 78-9.

¹²³ Kracauer, *Mass Ornament* 84.

¹²⁴ Kracauer, *Mass Ornament* 81.

¹²⁵ Kracauer, *Mass Ornament* 78.

in "The Little Shop Girls Go to the Movies" (1927). There, the negative gendered connotations of distraction, hitherto in the background, come to the fore, as he takes the sales-girls to task for not seizing upon the superficial details in the critical way that he endorses. Women too easily become victims of what they see, easily seduced because they lack the appropriate detachment that has been drilled into male workers (as Hake says, "it might be argued that women only seemed more 'stupid' because they were not yet fully integrated into the industrial workforce.")¹²⁶ Where the figure of woman appears, distraction suddenly becomes indiscriminate consumption - spectacle is tipped over onto the side of commodification.

Kracauer's essays of the 1920s emphasize cinema as a spectacle, to show how far the pretensions of "high art" had left been behind; the latter is only "rehearsing anachronistic forms that evade the pressing needs of our time."¹²⁷ Adorno and Horkheimer, however, writing after the Second World War, present the obverse of this view of cinema and mass culture as shock and distraction, they see the spectator incorporating a "degraded" form of spectacle.¹²⁸ All spectators are implicitly like Kracauer's shop-girls, unquestioningly enthralled by what they see. The experience of fascism, where the ease with which the masses submitted to state spectacle had been irrefutably demonstrated, plays a role in explaining why Adorno and Horkheimer were more pessimistic about the popular meaning and commodified structure of film. The totalitarian demagogue with mass influence provided another analogue for the hypnotic function of cinema. In the aftermath of the Second World War, Kracauer also advanced a more pessimistic view of film. In *From Caligari to Hitler*, he tries to show "how

¹²⁶ Hake 267.

¹²⁷ Kracauer, *Mass Ornament* 326.

¹²⁸ Vicky Lebeau, *Lost Angels: Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1995) 22.

expressionist cinema reflected the rise of the Hitlerian automaton in the German soul."¹²⁹ But whereas Kracauer's study is largely one of themes and motifs (and is therefore limited to an "external viewpoint"), Adorno and Horkheimer, like Benjamin, attempt to get "inside" cinema "in order to show how the art of automatic movement . . . was itself to coincide with the automization of the masses, state direction, politics become 'art': Hitler as filmmaker." As Deleuze says, "the revolutionary courtship of the movement-image and an art of the masses become subject was broken off," as these thinkers tried to confront cinema *as* a hypnotic apparatus: to examine its relationship with the historical image of the dictator's mesmerizing hold over the masses.¹³⁰

Adorno and Horkheimer's anxieties about cinema centre around the fact that it is an art-form based on mechanical reproduction. They thought this made art into a commodity, "marketable and exchangeable like an industrial product," giving rise to a "culture industry."¹³¹ For Adorno and Horkheimer, cinema was a way of extending Fordist principles; not only is it itself stamped with an "assembly-line character," it aids and abets the standardization of all spheres of life.¹³² In the culture industry's endless repetition of "the same thing," it is "the rhythm of mechanical production and reproduction" that has triumphed, with its promise that nothing will change.¹³³

Whereas Kracauer had seen liberatory potential in the fact that films reflected the workers' reality, Adorno and Horkheimer see this as a resource for enchaining the masses, a mere drill through which their industrial lives have already trained them. They didn't believe that this freed the masses for the

¹²⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: the Time Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone, 1989) 264

¹³⁰ Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 264.

¹³¹ Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, trans. John Cumming (1944; London: Verso, 1992) 158.

¹³² Adorno and Horkheimer 163.

¹³³ Adorno and Horkheimer 134, 137.

critical faculty that Benjamin and Kracauer insisted upon. The sound films, they wrote,

are so designed that quickness, powers of observation are undeniably needed to apprehend them all; yet sustained thought is out of the question if the spectator is not to miss the relentless rush of facts. Even though the effort required for his response is semi-automatic, no scope is left for the imagination. All the other films and products of the entertainment industry which [the spectators] have seen have taught them what to expect.¹³⁴

In this way, the culture industry is seen to be "occupying men's senses from the time they leave the factory to the time they clock in again the next morning with matter that bears the impress of the labour process they themselves have to sustain throughout the day."¹³⁵ When watching films, "the ostensible content" in fact recedes: "what sinks in is the automatic succession of standardized operations."¹³⁶

In Adorno and Horkheimer's writing, cinema again creates hysterical-passive subjects, hypnotizing them in order to persuade them of the virtues of the capitalist social order, to persuade them to accept the status quo. On the one hand, the viewers are said to be "willing" victims, yet, on the other, we are told, "capitalist production so confines them, body and soul," that they haplessly submit "to what is offered them."¹³⁷ Cinema joins forces with advertising, and again, the link with hypnosis and the leader manipulating the crowd is clear: cinema, advertisers, hypnotists, and totalitarian demagogues all attempt to seduce their addressees by "emotional, irrational, and, in psychoanalytic terms, unconscious means that played to the subject's desire."¹³⁸ As in hysteria, the rational ego is put out of action, leaving behind a subject that is dominated by affect, and therefore vulnerable to suggestion. The

¹³⁴ Adorno and Horkheimer 127.

¹³⁵ Adorno and Horkheimer 131.

¹³⁶ Adorno and Horkheimer 137.

¹³⁷ Adorno and Horkheimer 133.

¹³⁸ Kirby 162.

"speaking masks" of cinema resolve themselves into writing so that they can be read as the command "be like," and, in obedience to these fixed, mortified faces, cinema-goers "assimilate themselves to what is dead."¹³⁹ Identifying with false ideals, Adorno's spectators lose the distinction between themselves and what is shown on the screen; their mimeticism suggests their automatism. Cinema, itself a mechanical art-form, turns the spectatorial body into a machine, virtually identical to the convulsive bodies witnessed in the war, for the forcible production of this imitative behaviour recalls, Adorno says, "the motor reflex spasms of the maimed animal."¹⁴⁰

Modernist Cinema: the image as an assault (II)

Such views of cinema, from the early popular discourses to Adorno and Horkheimer, contend that filmic spectatorship is inescapably based in hysteria; these views, in the main, reveal a conservative attitude towards the cinema. In what ways, then, did film-makers who wanted to create a more forward-looking vision of cinema respond to this? "Narrative cinema," Kirby writes, "absorbs the hysterical premise for its own purposes, managing and controlling shock in its spectator. . . . If, as is commonly asserted, the repression of discontinuity is what classical, invisible editing is all about, then we could say that continuity editing is about the control of trauma as well."¹⁴¹ In the following section, my contention will be that modernist cinema, narrative and documentary, makes use of the hysterical premise for its own purposes by *foregrounding* disruption, and by bringing to consciousness the hypnotic function of cinema (that is, it brings to consciousness the passivity of the spectator). It puts affect back into relation with the rational ego. The way this

¹³⁹ Theodor Adorno, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*, ed. J. M. Bernstein (London: Routledge, 1993) 82.

¹⁴⁰ Adorno 82.

¹⁴¹ Kirby 69-70.

is achieved is not only through editing (montage as disruption), but also by creating images of thought in images of movement.

This argument about modernist cinema owes much to Deleuze's response to Bergson, who claimed that cinema cuts up and reconstitutes movement as a succession of instants - of any-instant-whatevers.¹⁴² In other words, it derives movement from immobile sections (the frames, the any-instant-whatevers), which are passed through the abstract and "impersonal" time and motion of the apparatus. This, Bergson thought, was a misguided view of movement. If you theorize movement in this way, he argued, you will never be able to circumscribe it, movement will always happen behind your back, as it were. He illustrates this with Zeno's paradox, which, he says, only works if one accepts this false view of movement. Zeno confused movement - which is indivisible, it may not be cut up into parts that are exterior to each other - with the space covered, which *is* divisible. Movement, Bergson claimed, happens in concrete duration; movement expresses the change in the duration or the whole (it is the differential, or the qualitative change of state, that matters). In duration, the present isn't added to the past, but grows out of it.

Deleuze contested Bergson's dismissal of cinema by arguing that in its images of movement, cinema creates images of thought, in exactly the way Bergson understood thought. According to Deleuze, the shot constitutes a mobile section of duration, since "it relates movement to a whole that changes."¹⁴³ He contends that Bergson's critique applies only to cinema in its most primitive state. With its stationary, fixed camera, and frontal view, early cinema, Deleuze implies, was overly attached to theatrical conventions, with its urge to have the camera situated in "the best seat in the stalls." This puts the

¹⁴² Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (1907; New York: Dover Publications, 1998) 307-308.

¹⁴³ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1992) 22.

spectator on "an invariable set," where there is "therefore no communication of mutually referring sets" (ie. no translation through the whole). The shot is made from a purely spatial point of view, "indicating a 'slice of space' at a particular distance from the camera, from close-up to long shot (immobile sections): movement is therefore not extracted for itself and remains attached to elements, characters and things which serve as its moving body or vehicle." In the primitive cinema, "the image is in movement rather than being movement-image."¹⁴⁴ Although it was one of the earliest films made, the Lumières' *Arrival of a Train* already shows signs of an attempt to break out of those strictures. One might argue that it was less susceptible to Bergson's critique, because of the way they positioned the camera - not parallel with the train, as the people standing on the platform are, but from an angle, enabling them to film the train's movement towards the camera, and therefore extract movement from the moving vehicle in a novel and effective way.

But Deleuze avers that only when the camera was freed from its fixed position was the movement-image able to come into its own in classical cinema. Through the mobile camera and montage, cinema produced mobile sections of duration, in which each image expresses a change in the whole and is rationally linked to the whole.¹⁴⁵ With the mobile camera, cinema was liberated from the fixed points of view that belong to natural perception. This mobile viewpoint, as we have seen in Chapter One, was prefigured by the mailcoach, and railways. When the viewer's platform is put into accelerated motion, when one sees the landscape from a moving machine "ensemble," the

¹⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 24.

¹⁴⁵ In "modern" cinema - cinema after the Second World War, in Deleuze's account - the fixed shot would be rediscovered, but by then its meaning had changed; it came to express a direct image of (non-chronological) time, as in Tarkovsky's notion of the "pressure" of time in the shot. With the breakdown of rational, associational links after the Second World War, cinema gave rise to a representation of time based on irrational cuts and the duration of long takes. Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 22.

landscape itself seems as if it is moving: early accounts of such travel describe this sensation of seeing the landscape come alive, spinning past, in terms of looking through the viewing-slot of a zoetrope (a drum-like device in which images on strips of paper could be seen to move when the drum was rotated).¹⁴⁶ Travellers found themselves undergoing ever quicker changes in position, with "images" passing by so fast that it was impossible to grasp them - the shocks of these sudden displacements were added to an overall "stimulus overload," both from the jolts of the moving vehicle, and from the sight and sound spectacle upon which they feasted their ears and eyes.¹⁴⁷ In cinema, the mobile camera became "a *general equivalent* of all the means of locomotion that it shows or that it makes use of - aeroplane, car, bicycle, foot, metro."¹⁴⁸ Mounting the camera on a train or car extended the possibilities of the movement-image for the creation of shocks - it gave the effect of pulling the spectator through space, that is, of being stationary and in motion at the same time. Some of the earliest films, dating from 1897, were shot from the front of a moving train; they were known as "panoramas" or "phantom rides."¹⁴⁹ Hale's Tours, a nickelodeon amusement which started in 1905, made use of this device, using panoramas to give customers the "illusion" of being on a moving train while being seated in an authentic railway car, "an illusion reinforced by the rocking back and forth of the train car."¹⁵⁰ The "cinema of attractions" (Gunning's phrase) and the "imagination of disaster" - where the analogies between the cinema and the train were taken to its "logical" extreme in the filming of actual collisions (railway crashes were frequently shown in the early

¹⁴⁶ Schnapp, "Crash" 25.

¹⁴⁷ Anton Kaes, "Leaving Home: Film, Migration, and the Urban Experience," *New German Critique* 74 (Spring / Summer 1998): 179-192, 182.

¹⁴⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 22.

¹⁴⁹ Barry Salt, *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis* (London: Starword, 1992) 32.

¹⁵⁰ Kirby 46.

cinema) - set the precedent for a more knowing kind of spectator, as opposed to the passive-hysterical kind in early discourses of cinema.¹⁵¹ It was a precedent that some kinds of modernist cinema were to draw on, too.

As Kracauer notes, the mobile camera is able to connect "successive visual elements in such a way that they are forced to illuminate each other." Even with a basic mobile camera, where the camera was fixed to its tripod, pan-shots can relate one point of the scene to another. The next step was a camera on a tripod moving on rails. With a fully mobile camera, used in F.W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924), camera movements could be used to interrelate the different sets of the film - they "serve to familiarize the spectator with spheres and events irretrievably separated from each other. Guided by the camera, he is in a position to survey the frantic whole without going astray in the labyrinth."¹⁵² Seen in this light, the movement-image provides a metaphor for rational thought, where all the associational links are readable. This is the aspect in which classical montage in particular appears in Deleuze's writing. But beneath that rational picture there is also the violence and disorientation inherent in the fast movements from one place to another, and in the shock of juxtapositions.

While the camera is still somewhat subject to the relative immobility of human vision, montage departs from that restriction altogether, for it is a construction - "the pure vision of a non-human eye."¹⁵³ In a manifesto called "Film Directors: a Revolution," the Soviet documentary film-maker Dziga Vertov announced the emancipation of the camera from the imperfections of human vision: "Freed from the obligation of 16-17 frames per second, freed from the limits of time and space, *I can contrast any points in the universe,*

¹⁵¹ Gunning 825, 829; Kirby 60-1.

¹⁵² Kracauer, *Caligari* 105.

¹⁵³ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 81.

wherever I might fix them." What the mechanical-eye / I creates, "the montaged 'I see' is a new manner of creature, too:

I am the cinema-eye. I am the constructor. I have set you down, you who have already been created by me, in a most amazing room, which did not exist up to this moment, also created by me. In this room there are 12 walls filmed by me in various parts of the world. Putting together the shots of the walls and other details I was able to arrange them in an order which pleases you.¹⁵⁴

In *Man With A Movie Camera* (1928), Vertov creates an imaginary city, made up of shots taken from Odessa (the garden), Moscow (street scenes, which are interrelated with details from other cities), and from the Ukraine (the mining sequence). Montage allows the complete deterritorialization of the image: a fact summed up by a shot in which the eponymous cameraman (played by the film's actual cinematographer, Vertov's brother, Mikhail Kaufman, who arranged all the shots) appears inside a beer glass; this superimposition, achieved by the cine-eye, gives a common standard of measurement to things that are otherwise totally unlike. The shots in the first reel of the film metaphorically introduce the operation of the mechanical eye by showing us close-ups of mannequins in shop windows, or cars with prominent headlights, which are then interchanged with shots of streets, giving the impression - through an editing effect used plentifully in narrative film, the Kuleshov effect - that these inhuman eyes are looking at the streets.¹⁵⁵ Part of Vertov's agenda was to draw attention to the montage conventions of narrative film - which disguise the cut between shots to offer the illusion of smooth continuity - and put them to subversive uses. One of the other subversive uses of the Kuleshov

¹⁵⁴ Dziga Vertov, "Film Directors: A Revolution," *Screen Reader* 1 (1977): 280-90, 285-6.

¹⁵⁵ The Kuleshov effect describes the way in which spectators assume that shots given in a series are spatially linked (when there are no establishing shots). Vertov's creation of an imaginary city, too, depends on the Kuleshov effect.

effect in *Man With a Movie Camera* is in the parallel editing between a sleeping (middle-class) woman and the cameraman setting off for a day's shooting, giving the spectator the impression that she is dreaming about him. But Vertov's point is that this is *not* her dream - although he does connect the sleeping woman with a poster of a fiction film, shown in another shot (the connection also affirms that the fiction film is a bourgeois art form, which has no relevance for the masses). This sequence is therefore a wake-up call to the masses, urging them to relinquish their passive submission to the fiction film, and to rise to the challenge of an altogether different kind of film, which demands a different kind of spectatorship. While persuasion of the masses in early conservative discourses on film takes place through the suggestibility of a feminized-submissive spectator, in Vertov's film-making it takes the form of a modernist play on disruption. And the figure of the woman - the urban, working woman - within the film is used to advance an argument about the possibility of a new kind of spectator - no longer a passive consumer of visual texts, but a producer.

Vertov started his career making newsreels, and during the civil war, he filmed in Agit-Prop trains, which travelled to the most distant and backward areas of the country, in order to promote the Revolution's ideas there; the films were shown to audiences on board. (The origins of his film-making career and his subsequent fascination with filming the movement of trains link him to the cinema of attractions and the imagination of disaster - and the disorientating effects he creates from train footage in *Man With A Movie Camera* reaffirm that legacy.) Vertov's documentary filming was itself premised on revolutionary ideas. Vertov believed, as the Italian Futurists did before him, in carrying perception into things, into matter, thus exploiting the radical possibilities inherent in montage - creating what in Deleuze's terminology is known as

"molecular perception." In Vertov, "cinema as machine assemblage of matter-images" expressed the vision of Communist Society.¹⁵⁶ Through a dialectic of matter, Vertov thought it was possible to "reconcile a non-human perception with the overman of the future, material community and formal communism."¹⁵⁷

Vertov's dialectic lies at the heart of his aesthetic of disruption - and it has to do with his theory of intervals: "the whole trick lies in this or that juxtapositioning of visual features, the whole trick lies in the intervals," he said.¹⁵⁸ It rests on montage's ability to contrast any two points in the universe, and therefore to show a "correlation" between two images which, because of their distance, might seem "incommensurable" to human vision. Although this is intended to make perception more fluid, or even "gaseous," as Deleuze calls it, the effect of these intervals on the spectator is still one of disruption, because our vision is always one step or more behind the machine vision of montage.¹⁵⁹ Vertov implies that humans could be assimilated to the machine by their adaptation to the shocks of the film. In *Man With A Movie Camera*, the accelerated rhythms of the film are related to the accelerated rhythms of work in the city, which are themselves speeded up in the film. In one sequence, the quick changes in the position of the camera, copying a shuttle going to and fro, are visually related to a woman folding cigarette packets, and she herself is shown competing with a cigarette-packing machine. The implication is that in speeding up her movements, she can easily adapt herself to the speed of machines, both of the industrial machines, and of the montage-machine. In a later sequence we see close-ups of spectators, who had taken their seats in the prologue of the film, cross-cut with shots of the screen - one of the images they

¹⁵⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 85.

¹⁵⁷ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 83.

¹⁵⁸ Vertov 287, 289.

¹⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 84.

see is of a train heading straight towards them; the spectators are shown responding to the rhythm of the shots, not in the hysterical-passive mode, but with alertness: cinema as affect is married to rational cogitation.

Undercranking (which causes the film to appear speeded up) is part of Vertov's aesthetics and politics of disruption - he was interested in dislocating and concentrating "visual phenomena," not only through the speeding up or freezing of time, but also through unusual or fast cutting, and these are designed to raise spectator consciousness in the process of shocking him or her. In sections of the film black frames are cut into the shot, giving the effect of black flashing. The faster they appear the more startling the sequence gets - the interval between the black frames and the picture frames becomes smaller and smaller. The first time this occurs in the film is when we see the cameraman filming an approaching train. We first see him positioned on the side of the track; this is followed by shots taken from underneath the train as it heads straight into the spectator's line of vision. Rapid cross-cutting gives us a montage of the movement of the train from many different angles, with canted frames cut in showing us the train from the side. When, finally the heady, disorientating sequence stops, the cameraman is seen climbing out of a pit underneath the railway track. This, as Jean-Louis Baudry observes, constitutes another shock-effect of the film: when the film work is interrupted, revealing its own artifice or its technical base; it is a return of what is repressed in the ideology of film.¹⁶⁰

Not only do we see the cameraman at work, we also see the editor, Vertov's wife, Elizaveta Svilova, viewing and cutting up the very strips of the film we are watching. The most aggressive montage sequences of the film are those which feature her: her eye-movements are interrelated with the

¹⁶⁰ Jean-Louis Baudry, "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus" (1970), in Braudy and Cohen 354.

movements of the camera-eye, as it pans, rotates, and tilts up and down; the eye of the human montage-maker is shown becoming the cine-eye. The quick changes of the images in these sequences where the editing becomes faster and more frenzied, makes viewers feel as if they themselves are in delirious motion. The rapid beat of these shots summarizes the shock-effects of the film, and directly relates them to the technological apparatus of cinema, whilst also revisiting shots shown earlier in the film - shots conveying the swift and ephemeral stimuli of the metropolis, its accelerated rhythms and the speed of modern modes of transportation and industrial machines. As the film extracts their dizzying movements - their fast rotations and repetitions - these are all put on a par with the speed, the assault, and the hypnotic power of the movement-image, whilst also being interrelated with the gaze and body of the working woman (the editor), the revolutionary forerunner of the communist overman of the future. But even as a swinging metronome pendulum appears in the final sequence of the film to remind us of the analogy between the cinematic apparatus and hypnotism, the hypnotic function of the movement-image is carefully controlled by the discontinuity of montage: defamiliarization provides a corrective to spectator passivity.

Vertov, and his rival Eisenstein, both believed that shock was intrinsic to the movement-image, and especially to montage. Although Eisenstein was forever ridiculing Vertov's addiction to machines, he himself spoke of the shock-effects of montage in terms of the machine: he compared the idea that arises from a "collision" of independent shots to the explosions of an combustion engine that drives a machine forward.¹⁶¹ For both directors these shocks were emancipatory. Inspired by their work, Deleuze articulates a similar

¹⁶¹ Cited in Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: the Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 1989) 27; See also Sergei Eisenstein, "The Montage of Film Attractions" (1923), in *Selected Works, Volume I: Writings, 1922-34*, trans. Richard Taylor (London: Bfi, 1988) 46.

viewpoint in his writing on cinema, where he reveals the role of shock in cinema's "psychomechanics." As the violence of the movement-image develops its vibrations in a moving sequence, it imparts a series of shocks which embed themselves within us, "*communicating vibrations to the cortex, touching the nervous system directly. . . . Automatic movement gives rise to a spiritual automaton* within us, which reacts in turn on movement."¹⁶² (In "bad" cinema, Deleuze adds, the violence of the image is degraded into "the figurative violence of the represented.")

Deleuze's formulation recalls Benjamin's claim that technology has trained the human sensorium, and that cinema responded to the demand for shocks by making the reception of shocks the basis of perception. Benjamin noted that the quick changes of image in cinema give the spectator no chance to think or reflect. Deleuze similarly observes that cinema steals our thoughts; instead of experiencing our own thoughts we are compelled to experience the images on the screen as our thoughts. When we are dispossessed of our thoughts, we become assimilated to what Deleuze calls the "psychological automaton" - we find ourselves obeying an internal mechanism which cinema has installed in us, and in which cinema has trained us.¹⁶³

But Deleuze emphasizes that it is through this very powerlessness to think that cinema actually empowers us to think - to think, he says, quoting Maurice Blanchot, the "unthinkable." The movement-image forces us to think under shock; thoughts enter with the shock.¹⁶⁴ Shock, for Deleuze, becomes the very image of what it means to think, but in terms of a violent interpolation, or animation, from the outside: "the material automatism of images . . .

¹⁶² Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 156-7.

¹⁶³ *Cinema 2* 263. The difference between the spiritual and psychological automaton seems to be that the latter no longer depends on the outside; he/ she is controlled from within.

¹⁶⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 157.

produces from the outside a thought which it imposes."¹⁶⁵ Deleuze further makes the connection between the psychomechanics of cinema and its representations:

Cinema, considered as psychomechanics, or spiritual automaton, is reflected in its own content, its themes, situations and characters . . . If cinema is automatism become spiritual art . . . it confronts automata, not accidentally, but fundamentally. The French school never lost its taste for clockwork automata and clock-making characters, but also confronted machines with moving parts, like the American or Soviet schools. The man-machine assemblage varies from case to case, but always with the intention of posing the question of the future. And the machines can take hold so fully on man that it awakens the most ancient powers, and the moving machine becomes one with the psychological automaton pure and simple, at the service of a frightening order: this is the procession of somnambulists, hallucinators, hypnotizers-hypnotized in expressionism, from *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari* to *Testament of Dr Mabuse* via *Metropolis* and its robot.¹⁶⁶

This is how, then, we can situate *Metropolis* in relation to these debates about the hysterical premise of cinema spectatorship and the hypnotic function of cinema - not, as Kracauer does in *From Caligari to Hitler*, where the film is viewed as prefiguring the rise of the Hitlerian automaton in the German soul.

But one inescapable fact would seem to confirm Kracauer's thesis, and to prevent the argument that I am about to put forward. After all, Goebbels and Hitler did see something in *Metropolis* that was amenable to their ideology: it is well known that Goebbels approached Lang and asked him to make Nazi films.¹⁶⁷ (Although Lang refused, and left for America, his wife, Thea von Harbou - who wrote the novel on which the film is based - stayed behind and joined the Nazi party.) There is, too, the fact of Lang's cold, ornamental style - his crowds, for example, are always nearly anonymous blocks moving in perfect formation (a point of contrast might be Alfred Hitchcock's individuated, idiosyncratic cockney-catholic crowds in *Sabotage* [1936], the crowds from

¹⁶⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 179.

¹⁶⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 263.

¹⁶⁷ Kracauer, *Caligari* 164, 248.

which Hitchcock himself came). This military regimentation of the masses in *Metropolis* is also what seems to support Kracauer's view - for him, they foreshadow the Nuremberg rallies (the filmic potential of which was realized in Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 Nazi propaganda film, *Triumph of the Will*). And, finally, there is the overt, conservative message of *Metropolis'* finale, which easily translates into an allegory of capital manipulating the masses. The lesson of Maria's parable - "between the brain that plans and the hands that build there must be a mediator. It is the heart that must bring about an understanding between them" - is fulfilled at the end of the film, when the Master of Metropolis, Joh Frederson, shakes hands with the foreman, and the mediation of the Master's son, Freder, and Maria herself, "consecrates this symbolic alliance between labour and capital" (*Figure 18*). Nothing has really changed - the masses are just as oppressed as they were before - only the industrialist, by achieving "intimate contact with the workers," is now "in a position to influence their mentality." Through the medium of "a heart accessible to his insinuations," he is able to tighten his control and manipulate them even further.¹⁶⁸

But isn't this to view the film retrospectively, without taking into account the more immediate context from which it springs? As Thomas Elsaesser says, what Kracauer does in *From Caligari to Hitler* is interpret history in terms of the motifs taken from expressionist cinema - the totalitarian demagogue as hypnotizer of the masses - and then use the films to demonstrate that they reflect that history: the procedure is tautological.¹⁶⁹ It is rather different to assert that *Metropolis* is responding to debates about cinema itself, which is what is being argued here. *Metropolis* is an example of the art-cinema

¹⁶⁸ Kracauer, *Caligari* 163.

¹⁶⁹ Thomas Elsaesser, "Social Mobility and the Fantastic: German Silent Cinema," in James Donald, ed. *Fantasy and the Cinema* (London: Bfi, 1989) 25.



Figure 18 The Alliance between Labour and Capital in *Metropolis*

Publicity Still supplied by the British Film Institute

responding to mass culture, to the many thousands of commercial films that were flooding the market in Germany at that time.

After the First World War, Germany underwent a period of hyper-inflation, chiefly as a result of its inability to meet its war debt. During this time, the film industry did not really suffer - the masses were as willing as ever to pay to go to the movie theatres. However, in the period of "stabilization" following the receipt of American loans (organized by the Dawes Plan of 1924, to bring the German economy out of inflation), the film industry did begin to suffer, because the establishment of the gold standard made German exports expensive. And it was Hollywood that saved it - American investors began to help finance German productions, but only after German cinemas were increasingly opened up to American films. A quota was established whereby for every American movie that was allowed into the German market, a German film had to be produced; since they perceived that it was in their interest that more of these so-called "quota films" should be made, the Americans invested heavily in German film companies, even producing quota films themselves.¹⁷⁰

Although this was what enabled Ufa (*Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft*) to finance the huge cost of *Metropolis*, the film itself constitutes a critique of both German and American massified culture, and this itself is situated into a generalized critique of modernity. *Metropolis* belongs to the tradition of German silent cinema, which, despite its influence on commercial cinema (for example, in Hollywood *film noir*), has always been an "alternative" or "counter-cinema," conceived in opposition to mass-commercial film production in Germany and America.¹⁷¹ Directors like Lang, Paul Wegener, Murnau, and Robert Wiene, as Elsaesser says, "saw themselves very much as part of an offensive to make the cinema respectable for bourgeois

¹⁷⁰ Kracauer, *Caligari* 133.

¹⁷¹ Elsaesser 24, 32.

audiences, and to give it the status of art."¹⁷² What we see in *Metropolis* is high art seeking to reassert itself, establishing modernist techniques of disruption within the film form, appealing to a "self-selected" portion of the audience, to show that cinema was not incompatible with intellectual thought.

In its opposition to mass-commercial cinema, *Metropolis* can be seen to negotiate the threat that mechanical reproduction poses to art. In the capitalist production process, as Marx said, the products of the worker's labour rear up in an uncanny and alien form; for the artist and intellectual, relations to the modes of cultural production had changed, too - a development which cinema played a significant role in bringing about. One of the most common motifs in the German fantastic cinema is, as Elsaesser writes, that of the sorcerer's apprentice, "that is, the creation and use of magic forces which outstrip their creator and over whom he loses control."¹⁷³ It is a romantic motif that "returns with particular vehemence in the machine age." This is the way, Elsaesser suggests, history is registered in the films - in a displaced form. History thus objectified returns in the text as the repressed, as the uncanny - in *Metropolis*, in the shape of the robot going out of control; it is under this aspect, too, that the traumatic memory of the First World War re-emerges in the film text.¹⁷⁴

Kracauer's argument about *Metropolis* revolves around the perception that it makes distraction and spectacle into an end in itself - all the surface fragmentation and multiplicity of images are unified into one "all devouring decorative scheme."¹⁷⁵ Yet, the film is actually highly self-conscious about its use of spectacle, and of its use of technology to produce spectacular effects. To realize its vision of the city of the future, and the Tower of Babel sequence of which Kracauer writes so disparagingly, it employed what was then a state of

¹⁷² Elsaesser 32.

¹⁷³ Elsaesser 30.

¹⁷⁴ Elsaesser 37.

¹⁷⁵ Kracauer, *Caligari* 150.

the art technique, the Schüfftan process - a "mirror device," in which a camera with two lenses is used to focus two independent images, one of models, the other of actors, "onto a single strip of film."¹⁷⁶ In the Tower of Babel sequence, this technique is actually revealed for what it is: as Maria tells her fable of the need for the heart to mediate between the hands and brain, a shot showing the vision of the tower rising to the stars is followed by a cut to a shot of the model of the tower, surrounded by those who had conceived the idea of it. We are shown the actors and the very model which, in the preceding shot, appeared in such different proportions. The filmwork is disrupted to disclose its own technical base: the illusion is stripped away, to remind the spectator that all is not what it seems.

In this gesture, the film signals its ambivalence towards the deployment of spectacle and towards cinema as a machine for creating fantasies. The effect is of defamiliarization, preventing the spectator from naturalizing the images in the way he or she is wont to do, making rational thought momentarily extinguish spectator passivity. But if this form of consciousness-raising belongs to a more general modernist style, the other forms of consciousness-raising in the film draw on expressionist *mise-en-scène* to put forward its critique of machine culture. In expressionist cinema, high-contrast lighting, oblique angles in set design, and the exaggerated gestures of the actors are used to convey extreme states of mind. Not all of these are consistently present in *Metropolis*, but the film does rely on an expressionist aesthetic to present the alienation of the workers at their machines, to show how they, themselves, are being reduced to machines, when they are trudging, somnambulistically, to and from the workers' city. The opening of the film is sombre: the darkly-lit machine rooms and the dark clothes of the workers all serve to link the machines with death, the death of the human personality (*Figure 19*). The expressionist sets

¹⁷⁶ Kracauer, *Caligari* 149; Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* 68.



Figure 19 The Workers of Metropolis

Publicity Still supplied by the British Film Institute

show the workers alienated from the means of production - at the Paternoster machine, we see individual workers partitioned off from the totality of the production process, the ends and meaning of which are beyond their grasp. Engaged at their particular tasks, in their separate cubicles, or at separate parts of the production line, the workers respond to each claim that the work process makes on them with a reflex-reaction. The routine makes them only partly present; the reaction is a trained and automatic one. Because of the segmentation of work, each claim - or jolt of the machine - comes somewhat randomly, as a surprise or shock for which the worker will not be prepared.

The oblique angles that inform the set design in other expressionist films reappear here, inscribed onto the workers' bodies, in their jerky, mechanical movements: struggling to keep in time with the machines, they stagger from one switch to another at the arbitrary behest of the indicators. Distortion and discontinuity, the former a stylistic device of expressionism in particular, and the latter a stylistic device of modernism in general, are incorporated into the workers' performance to portray their miserable submission to the machines.

The film emphasizes that it is the accelerated rhythms of a Taylorist or Fordist regime that is responsible for the contortions of the worker's body. And the way that it brings this insight into the spectator's consciousness is through montage, most strikingly in the scene where an exhausted Freder is shown, having exchanged places with a worker, at a circular machine. The Taylorist superimposition of a calculated time scheme onto the body of the worker is shown *through* superimposition, as the glowing figures of the ten hour clock begin to appear on the machine's dial face, and one of the machine's pointers starts ticking round as if it were the second hand. But as the pointers form into the shape of a cross, with Freder's arms outstretched in the crucified position, an intertitle interposes ("Father, Father, I did not know that ten hours can be torture"), and the film's critical impulse gives way to inappropriate

mythologizing; this has the effect of muffling the meaning of the preceding shots. A cinema of rational thought, controlled affect, gives way to distraction, pure affection - Lang's concession to von Harbou, perhaps.

In another montage sequence implicitly presented as Freder's epiphany, the accident at the Paternoster Machine, mythologizing serves to clarify, as well as obfuscate, the issue. As the machine overheats, billows of smoke arise from it, and, one by one, workers are sent hurtling down to the deaths. In Freder's montage vision, the machine turns partly into a demon's face (Moloch's); the opening at the centre of the machine, with its revolving cranks, becomes a huge mouth, with prominent teeth. The image that we then see, of columns of workers trooping up the gangway to be sacrificed in the maw of the machine, is a barely veiled allusion to the First World War, where millions of young men were sent off to die or become physically or psychically crippled, among the terrifying machines of war.¹⁷⁷ But Freder's vision suggests something more - the maw of the machine recalls the fear of castration and its attendant motif, *vagina dentata*. The machine's relation to death is associated with the figure of woman, who symbolically returns us to the hysterical male body feminized by the war. The First World War returns in this scene *as the repressed*, with the woman-machine as an uncanny remainder of a trauma that has not been managed or controlled.

This is what forms the basis for the film's introduction of a female robot (*Figure 20*), the robot which the inventor Rotwang ostensibly creates as a replacement for the living (male) worker, "a machine in the image of man, that never tires or makes a mistake."¹⁷⁸ More than to replace human labour, his

¹⁷⁷ Anton Kaes, "The Cold Gaze: Mobilization and Modernity," *New German Critique* 59 (Spring/ Summer 1993): 105-117, 111.

¹⁷⁸ When the robot is first introduced, parallel editing connects Freder working at the dial machine, unable to keep up with the indicators, to the scene in Rotwang's house, thus, as Matthew Biro says, "thematically interrelating" the

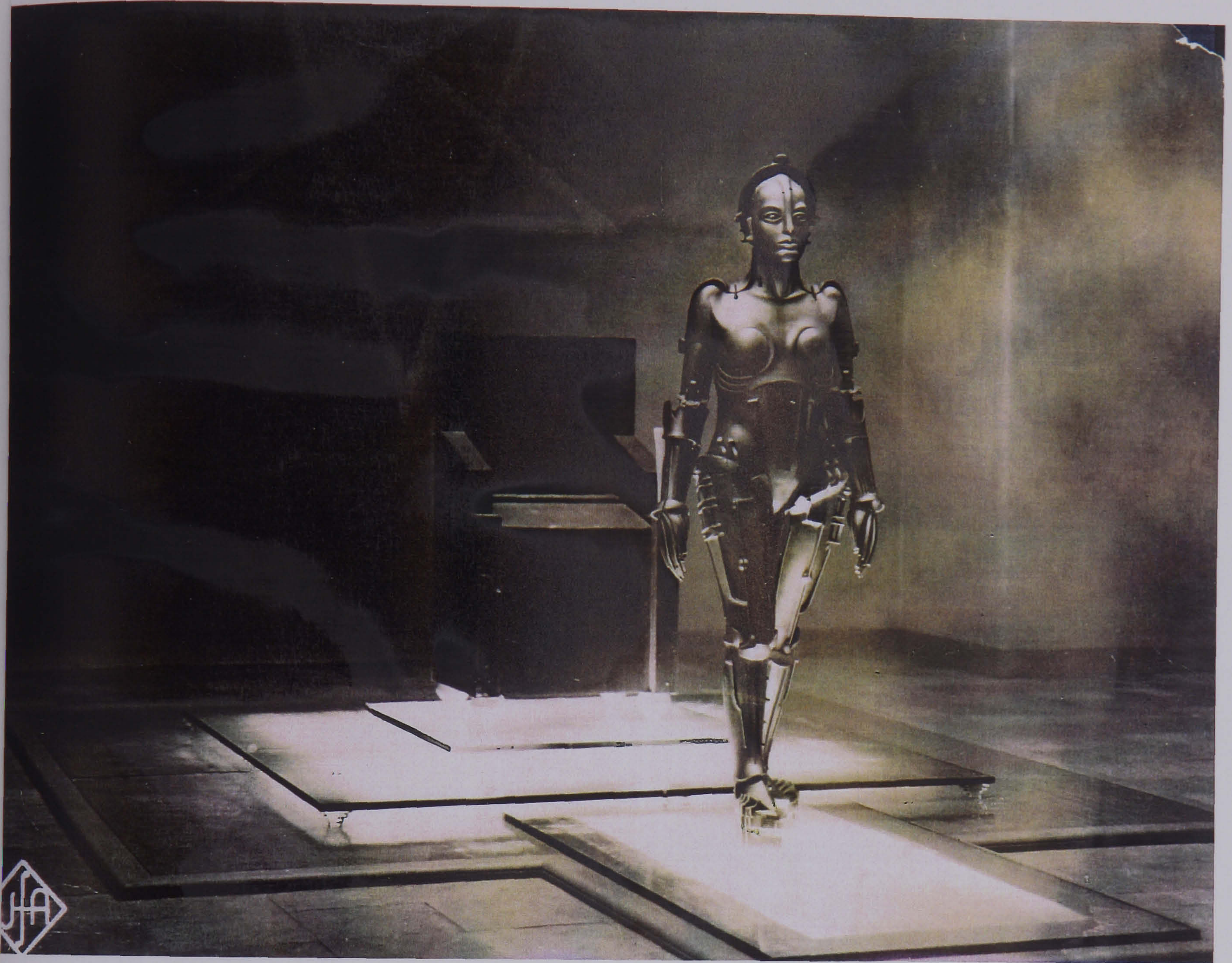


Figure 20 *Metropolis'* Female Robot
(BFI Still)

workers body - susceptible to exhaustion - "to patriarchy's replacement for human labour." Matthew Biro, "The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture," *New German Critique* 62 (Spring/Summer 1994): 71-110, 89.

creation of a female robot is an attempt to govern the feminine, seen elsewhere to take hold of the war neurotic and cinema spectator alike, making them into figures driven solely by affect, out of rational control. His act of parthenogenesis, using occult powers first to bring the robot into being, and then to suffuse it with the likeness of Maria, is an attempt to place this dangerous force under male command. In the "good" Maria, this dangerous force resides in her maternal, nurturing qualities - and, if we recall the debates on shellshock, we can link this to the way in which mothers were held to blame for the soldiers' feminization. In his laboratory, Rotwang seizes her maternal qualities for himself, and puts them to his own uses, reconstructing Maria according to his own specifications (*Figure 21*). He subdues her and makes her lie passively, so that the finished product may look like his own creation: procreation without the aid of woman. This parthenogenesis, however, is not without its sexual metaphors - the movements of the machines, the bubbling of liquids, and the concentric circles of light passing up and down the robot's body, together with the other electric arcs flashing between her and Maria, figuratively trace the lineaments of a sexual coupling. Under Rotwang's supervizing gaze, Maria's features are superimposed on the robot - a new, differently-fashioned Maria opens her eyes, lavishly outlined with mascara, and stares brazenly at the camera at the end of this sequence.

In the figure of the female robot in *Metropolis* mass culture as woman (the hystericized, feminized spectator) and the diseased automaton-body of the shellshock sufferer converge. As a mechanical double, the robot epitomizes cinema as mechanical reproduction, while the body of the woman carries the displaced tropes and affects of the hysteria of the male "automaton". This is why, even though she is seen by Rotwang and Fredersen as something they can tame and control (it is Fredersen who asks for the robot to be made in Maria's likeness), she inevitably goes out of control, inducing hysteria and chaos. The historical truths (the change in relations of the modes of production *and* the

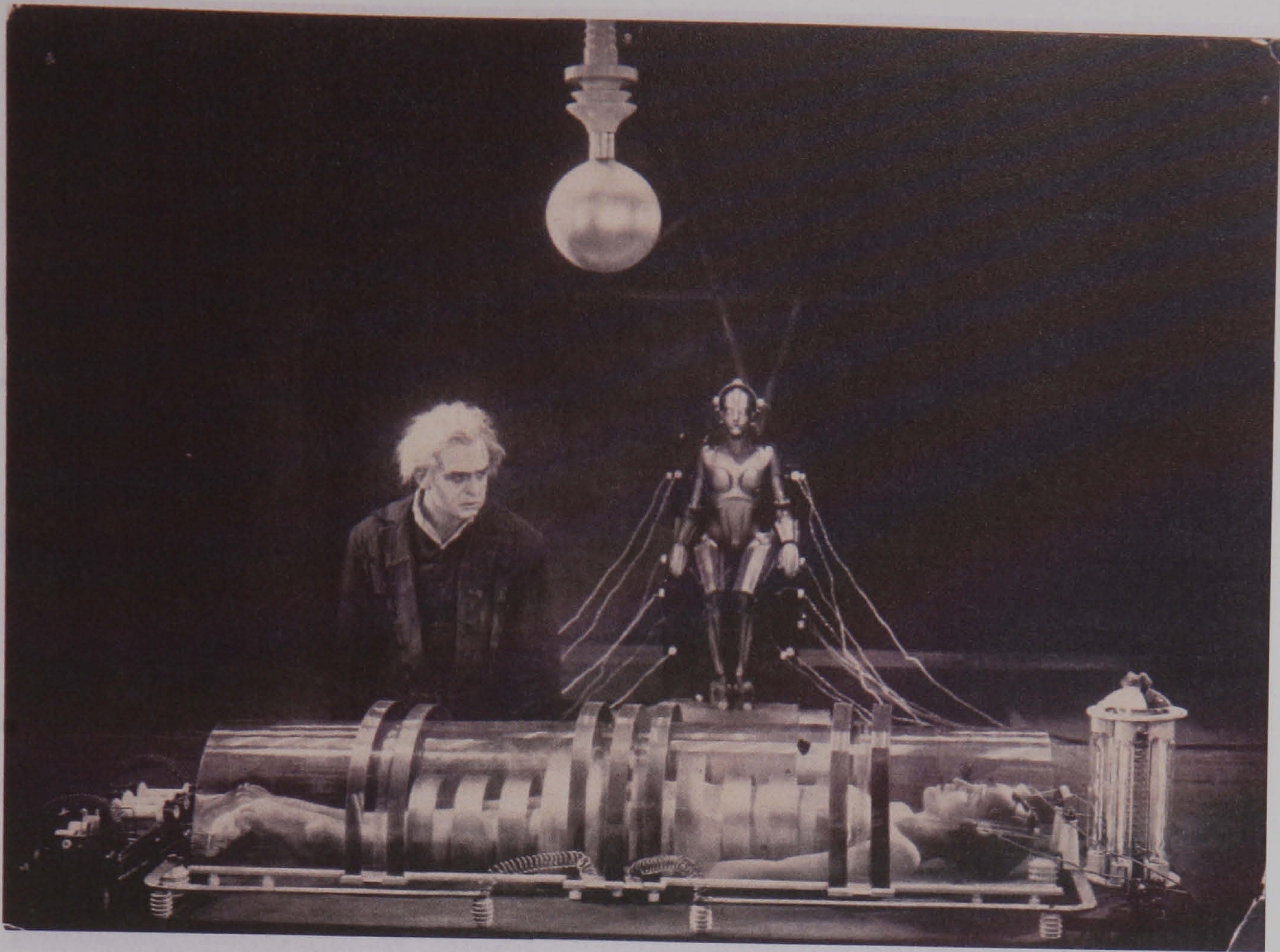


Figure 21 Rotwang's Laboratory

BFI Still

problem of shellshock) that have been negotiated and transformed in the film text erupt into the narrative with all the force of the repressed, precisely because the displacement has "left its own trace" - it has shown itself to be "an unequal substitution, a 'failed' transformation."¹⁷⁹ Thus, history takes the form of the uncanny and fantastic. the product of labour or desire confronts its producer as "an alienated self-image."¹⁸⁰ And hence, the motif of the sorcerer's apprentice: instead of simply sowing discord among the workers, as Fredersen commands her, the robot Maria incites them to rebel, and sabotage the machines. From the workers she extorts "glaring eyes and twisted, angry expressions."¹⁸¹ She makes them commit acts of madness that actually endanger their own kin (destroying the machines results in the flooding of the netherworld of Metropolis, potentially drowning the workers' children). The havoc she inspires is directly related to her unbound sexuality. As a femme fatale, each of her gestures is a provocation and a demand - from the way that she walks with one hip raised to the way that she rouses the crowd. She is shown inciting both upper-class and working-class men to sexual and social insubordination. The working-class women, who have hitherto remained in the background, appear to furnish the scenario of hysteria and chaos, when they join the male workers in the insurgency. Gone are the regimented blocks of bodies that Kracauer described as the leitmotif of the film; in their place now is the haphazard, turbulent flow of bodies, as the workers rush to destroy the machines, with the ensuing flooding of the city metaphorically underlining this upsurge of instinct over rational control.

¹⁷⁹ Elsaesser 31.

¹⁸⁰ Elsaesser 37.

¹⁸¹ Fritz Lang, *Metropolis* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989), 93. This is a screenplay based on a shot by shot viewing of the film, with a transcript of the English titles, and excerpts from Thea von Harbou's novel. The original screenplay has been lost.



Figure 22 The Feminine-Maternal

BFI Still

This bears out Huyssen's argument that in *Metropolis* fears of technology have been displaced onto fears of female sexuality; the machine that runs by itself, outside male control, is clearly coded as perverse female sexuality.¹⁸² But as well as referring back to the hysteria of war, the figure of the woman allows the film to meditate on the nature of cinema itself, not only when she takes the form of the robot Maria hypnotizing the masses, but also as the real Maria (*Figure 22*). When she appears under the aspect of the "good" Maria, she is virginal-looking and maternal (but, as I suggested above, her nurturing and emotional qualities are part of her threat to the male order of *Metropolis*). This does not mean, however, that she is not a sexual creature - she is still, especially in early parts of the film, suffused with sexuality; this is borne out by the way in which she appears as a spectacle for the male gaze, first for Freder, then for Frederson and Rotwang, and for the gathering of male workers in the catacombs. She is not as far apart from the "bad" Maria, who is all sexuality, as the story tries to make out; indeed, Huyssen points out, they are less separate creatures than two sides of the same fantasy.¹⁸³

The real Maria has a hold over the masses - this is precisely why Fredersen takes an interest in her - and she also has the power of producing images *for* the masses, as the Tower of Babel sequence shows: to subdue the workers she shows them moving pictures. Thus, the power of the cinema to persuade the masses is proven even before Maria - as a robot - stages her second spectacle, for the all-male gathering at Rotwang's party, where, dressed in an exotic robe and a fan-like headdress, standing on an ornamental urn supported by slaves (then by the statues of the Seven Deadly Sins), Maria twirls around half-naked, mesmerizing the guests, unchaining their libido, reducing them to slaving, lustful consumers of distraction (*Figure 23*). These

¹⁸² Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* 77.

¹⁸³ Huyssen, *After the Great Divide* 74.



Figure 23 Woman as Spectacle

BFI Still

dandies become no better than the enthralled and occupied masses in conservative discourses on cinema, but here their passive submission to spectacle is brought to the conscious level for us: the film shows us a montage of the faces of the men looking at Maria, then, in a few frames, these are further broken up into eyes. The film cross-cuts between shots of Maria dancing and the montage of eyes, until finally one huge eye dominates the frame.

Where the film presents Maria's ability to produce spectator hysteria, in order, as it does here, to subvert spectator passivity, it often employs the experimental techniques of art-cinema, as when Freder bursts in on his father and the robot Maria together, a primal scene-type encounter that induces in him symptoms not unlike those of hysteria. His hallucinations form the basis of a montage sequence, where flashing discs of light move towards the camera, and where Freder falls, against a black background, through ribbons of light (effects produced possibly by scratching onto the negative). Here, the formal features specific to art-cinema are mobilized to challenge the audience and keep it in a state of attention: art-cinema's answer to mass-commercial cinema and its passive-hysterical subject.

Cinema of the Burlesque: from the Image to the Voice

Chaplin's reply to the debates about cinema and the historical trauma of shellshock is of an entirely different order. *Modern Times* responds to recent history, the Depression which followed the stock market crash of 1929, and its critique focuses on American industrialism. That critique hinges on Chaplin's profound identification with the crisis in male subjectivity brought about by the war, which can be seen both in his identification with the factory milieu, and in his identification with what he saw as a parallel crisis in film itself. Made under the aegis of an independent film company, United Artists, established by Chaplin himself, together with Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and D.W.

Griffith, his films are situated on the fringes of classical Hollywood narrative. This does not, however, make them modernist films, and, as we shall see, although Chaplin employs modernist techniques of disruption, they appear more as parodies in his films, lacking the full force of the modernist critique of a German Lang or a Vertov.

Like *Metropolis*, *Modern Times* shows the destructive side of the standardization of life, with men increasingly being turned into machines, not only in the factory but also in their domestic lives - as the send-up, halfway through the film, of a married couple shows. It too emphasizes the rationalization of time, with its opening shot of a clock, followed by shots of workers streaming into the factory, with a non-diegetic insert of herds of sheep (this gives us the first instance in which modernist techniques - here, the associationist montage common in European cinema - is turned to the purposes of burlesque). The accelerated motion of the conveyor belt becomes the standard by which all bodies are forced to move in urban-industrial society - this is shown to be an impossible demand, especially given the spectre of unemployment that looms over this film of the Depression. Indolence and inactivity are simply not allowed, unless, of course, you are head of a corporation - the president of the factory is shown barking commands to speed up the production, while he himself leisurely reads the paper. When Chaplin's tramp character attempts to take a cigarette break in the bathroom, the president immediately reprimands him, via a telescreen, "Quit stalling, get back to work." It is in trying to keep up with the speed of the machines that the tramp ultimately suffers a nervous breakdown - it is down to the deleterious effects of trying to assimilate an ultimately unassimilable speed. "The mechanism" to which the worker has entrusted himself, as Benjamin says of gamblers, "seizes" him "body and soul," so that he is "capable only of reflex

action."¹⁸⁴ To read the tramp's fitful bodily reactions as hysterical poses no problem, and the connection with overwork also ties in with another, related discourse popular in America: stress neurasthenia.

Even outside the factory, speed - incessant movement - is the order of the day. Leaving the psychiatric hospital, where he has recovered from his nervous breakdown, he is told by his doctor to avoid excitement. Yet, the implication, underscored by the montage sequence that begins with Chaplin on the hospital steps, is that such avoidance is impossible, given the nervous overstimulation offered by city scenes. This montage sequence parodically recalls Vertov's *Man With A Movie Camera*: it uses superimpositions (of a man holding a drill with high-angle shots of the busy streets, showing a train, crowds, and traffic) and canted frames (of motor cars swinging past) to produce the effects of disorientation and disruption. However, despite this use of the image to create a sensation of overwhelming shock, the film tends increasingly to employ camera angles and framings to facilitate visual jokes, thus reaffirming the aspects of the image that are "friendly" to Chaplin's tramp persona. That is, the film moves away from the modernist aesthetics of disruption (and hence from a modernist critique of modernity - or cinema - as shock) to a celebration of the individual, who is shown triumphing over corporate forces. One sequence which shows this transition beginning to take place is that in the shipworker's yard, where the tramp is told by his superior to find a wedge: in the first shot we see him trying to dislodge a piece of wood which he thinks meets the specifications he has been given; he pulls it out from under a large, but not yet identifiable, object; in the second shot, taken this time from a slightly different position, we see the latter - actually a ship - gradually drift out to sea and sink. As Deleuze suggests, the heart of Chaplin burlesque lies in filming action "from the angle of the smallest difference from another

¹⁸⁴ Benjamin 174.

angle," and this then "discloses the enormity of the distance between the two situations."¹⁸⁵

Even the factory at the beginning of the film offers opportunities for Chaplin to exercise the talent for which he is known - where, as Deleuze says, "a very slight difference introduced into the object will induce opposable functions or opposed situations."¹⁸⁶ In other words, Chaplin deploys the liberating strategy of turning objects, however momentarily, to purposes different from those for which they were intended, as when, for example, he puts the monkey wrenches (formerly used for tightening bolts on the assembly-line) on his head, using them as "Pan Ears."¹⁸⁷ A fixation to bolts on the assembly line can be turned into a fixation on the breast; cinema as shock turns into cinema as distraction, as a recovery of the lost breast when Chaplin, in his frenzy, chases a woman who has bolt-like decorations on the bosom of her dress. And when, shortly before, the tramp, ever more frantic on the production line, jumps onto the conveyor belt, enters into the chute and slides in amongst the cogs of the machinery, still performing the same action with his wrenches on the bolts of the cogs, he turns the factory into an idyllic nursery (*Figure 24*): the arena of oppression is transformed into an arena for indulging a child-like innocence (this is further suggested by the musical-box soundtrack).

Yet the size of the sets in comparison to the characters gives a sense of the domineering or overwhelming in the image, and this violent domination by an imposing outside is personified by the machine. As Deleuze points out, Chaplin's comedy relies on tools - transformation is the potential of tools - and this is why, when he comes "face to face" with machines, "he clings to the idea of a huge tool which is automatically converted into the opposing situation."¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 169.

¹⁸⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 169.

¹⁸⁷ Mark Winokur, "Modern Times and the Comedy of Transformation," *Literature/ Film Quarterly* 15.4 (1987): 219-226, 220.

¹⁸⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 169.

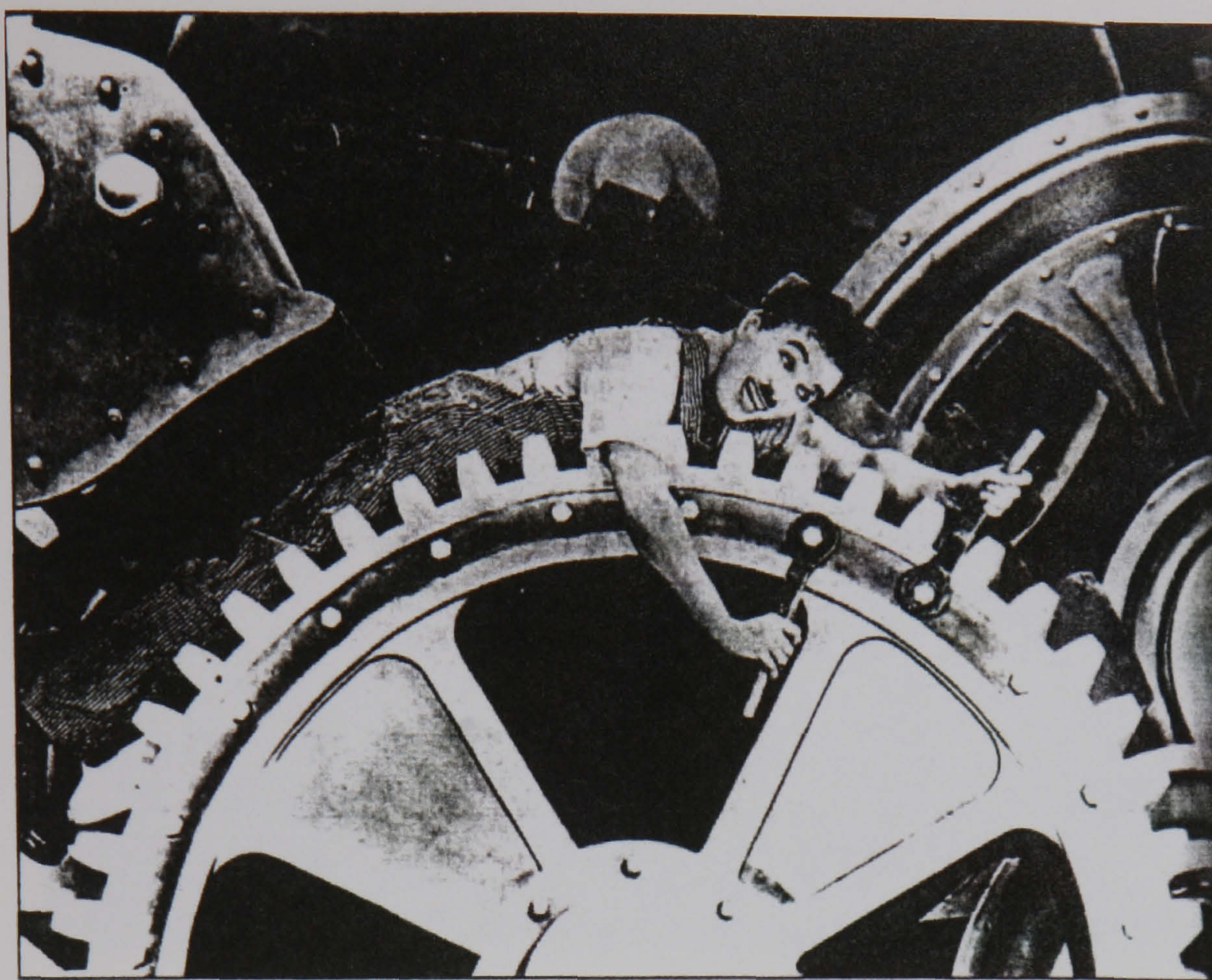


Figure 24 The Factory turned into a Nursery



Figure 25 The Pellows Feeding Machine

Chaplin's critique of machine age society is an extension of the principles of his comedy. Chaplin, Deleuze says, demonstrates that "'a mere nothing' is enough to set the machine against man, to make it an instrument of imprisonment, immobilisation, frustration and even torture, at the level of the most elementary needs."¹⁸⁹ As Deleuze notes, "the two great machines of *Modern Times* confront man's simple need to eat by setting up insuperable difficulties." The first of these is the Pellow's Feeding Machine (*Figure 25*), designed to eliminate the need for a lunch-break, and "automatically" feed the worker at the assembly-line, so as to optimize production, and help the corporation keep up with its competitors. Its mechanisms are intended to demand the minimum effort on the part of the worker - "no energy is required to cool the soup," for example - so that energy dissipated elsewhere does not lessen the energy he expends in his work. When put on trial run, with the tramp as the guinea pig, the machine runs smoothly at first, but then goes berserk. In an attempt to repair the machine, one of the inventor's colleagues absent-mindedly puts some of its steel nuts onto the revolving plate, where they are subsequently forced into Chaplin's mouth by the automatic food-pusher.

Chaplin's socialist critique, like that of Kracauer, bears on the idea that the rationalizing impulse of capitalist production is itself a form of unreason - it seems only to be an end in itself. It is seen to be bent on increasing production at the expense of catering for the actual needs of human beings, whilst also seizing human beings and putting them to uses for which they were not suited.¹⁹⁰ The demands that the capitalist work process and the whole urban-industrial complex make on the individual are figured in the montage and size of the sets - and in this, as we have seen, Chaplin's critique doesn't go as far as a Vertov or an Eisenstein - but also, and more radically, in the presentation of

¹⁸⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 169.

¹⁹⁰ Winokur 220.

sound, which becomes, not a complement to the visual image, but a frightful addition to it. As Deleuze recognizes, "Chaplin is at once one of the directors who most mistrusted the talkie, and one of those who made a radical, original use of it." Zizek, too, notes that "Chaplin was far more than usually aware of the traumatic impact of the voice as a foreign intruder on our perception of cinema."¹⁹¹ Where Chaplin responds most keenly to debates about the hysterical premise of cinema is with respect to the sound cinema, commonly seen to be a vulgarization of the cinema, as I mentioned earlier. *Modern Times* figures the shock-effects of cinema in terms of sound as an invasion into the sensorium: dialogue is abandoned in favour of the appurtenances of the silent cinema (mime, intertitles, and a descriptive musical soundtrack), yet it is still a sound film. From the beginning we can hear the ambient noise of the factory machines, and the sound of cranking as they are speeded up. When sound occurs in the film, it is always intrusive, extorting a claim or issuing a command. From the president's barking commands over the loudspeaker, to alarms announcing the beginning of a work-shift, to the record of the Mechanical Salesman (advertising the Pellows Feeding Machine), to police sirens and whistles (ordering prisoners to attention) and radio commercials - all these evoke a sudden start in the tramp character. They are a traumatic disruption of the body - shocks for which the tramp is always ill-prepared. (Even the musical soundtrack, with its brass instruments, at times adds to the frenzy, although this cannot be counted as conducive to the specific effects being sought here, since it belongs to the devices of the silent cinema).

In his interpretation of *Modern Times*, Mark Winokur writes: "in a medium that depends for its aesthetic effects on silence, sound, Chaplin seems to say, can only successfully or reasonably convey information about tyranny or

¹⁹¹ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 172; Slavoj Zizek, *The Plague of Fantasies* (London: Verso, 1997)130.

oppression."¹⁹² This seems convincing, especially as Chaplin was to go on to make a satire of the German dictatorship, and we know that radio was a medium fully exploited by the Führer (this also forms the background of Adorno's critique of mass culture; his critique is intensified by the introduction of the mechanical reproduction of sound).¹⁹³ In *Modern Times*, sound is linked with its critique of commodification and standardization - in the sequence where the Pellows Feeding Machine is introduced to the president of the electro-steel corporation, a condemnation of sound cinema (the means of advertisement is a record, which refers to the way in which dialogue was first added to the visual image in cinema) is joined to a condemnation of advertising and the market economy in general. The film also emphasizes lack of freedom in society as a whole - witness the childcare authorities that will not leave orphaned children alone, the delinquency police who hunt down the tramp's friend, the gamin (she is wanted for "vagrancy"), and the authoritarian policemen who shepherd the tramp away on several occasions, once in the assumption that he is a communist leader. The tramp's episodes lead increasingly to his imprisonment, or arrest; the tramp, in fact, comes to be quite happy in jail - it is one of the only places that guarantees food and shelter. When, during his first stay in prison, the radio announces "the good news" that he is to be released from prison, this is only apparently good news. Having (half-unwittingly) prevented a jailbreak, the tramp has been installed in a "comfortable cell." The world outside holds no such comforts - we have already seen the brawl, which is set against the general background of

¹⁹² Winokur 226.

¹⁹³ Although, unlike Deleuze, Adorno thought Chaplin failed sufficiently to undermine fascism in his final speech in *The Great Dictator* (1940), where his Jewish barber character finds himself replacing the Führer at the megaphone; "the ears of corn blowing in the wind at the end . . . give the lie to the anti-Fascist appeal for freedom." The shot emphasizes the sameness intrinsic to a culture of domination. Adorno and Horkheimer 149.

unemployment, in which the gamin's father is killed, and the newspapers announce only strikes, mobs and breadlines.

But what Winokur's argument misses out is that in *Modern Times*, sound is in fact presented as a surplus, as a presence that addresses "me" without at times "being attached to any particular bearer," and which threatens one's self-identity.¹⁹⁴ It is not there to anchor the representation of bodies as it is in many other films. In the sequence in which the tramp is forced to have tea with the prim Minister's wife, for example, the noise of their gurgling stomachs far exceeds what it would be in reality, in fact it is peculiarly artificial; the sounds are magnified to underscore the awkwardness, as well as the comedy, of the situation, thus also emphasizing the soundtrack's removal from the pro-filmic reality (it is recorded after filming, using the image as its guide).¹⁹⁵ The barking of the dog belonging to the Minister's wife adds to this surplus, unwanted noise, together with the radio that the tramp switches on, in the hope of concealing the noise. The radio simply heightens his embarrassment, by at once advertising pills for "gastritis." Taking this cue, the Minister's wife takes out her pills from her handbag, and proceeds to take them, but not before startling Chaplin, who now has his back turned to her and is reading the paper, with the noise of her water-spray. In Chaplin, film almost approaches what Michel Chion calls the *rendu*, where sound no longer simply "accompanies" the pictures, but seizes us "on an immediate-real level."¹⁹⁶ Sound comes to figure as the rage of the real, as that which returns as an insistent, material, traumatic reality. Only later in *Modern Times* is sound re-integrated as a viable symbolic form, in the tramp's song in the cafe, together with the applause he receives.

¹⁹⁴ Slavoj Zizek, "The Undergrowth of Enjoyment: How Popular Culture Can Serve as an Introduction to Lacan," *New Formations* 9 (Winter 1989): 7-29, 8.

¹⁹⁵ John Belton, "Technology and Aesthetics of Film Sound," in Braudy and Cohen 383.

¹⁹⁶ However, with his *rendu*, Chion had in mind in particular "contemporary techniques of sound recording and reproduction." Zizek, "Undergrowth" 19.

But even then, he cannot remember the words. When he begins performing, the sleeve cuffs, on which the words are written out, fly off; under pressure from the crowd, who have begun heckling him, he sings - but in gibberish. The episode articulates doubts about the tramp character's survival in the sound regime, while hinting that he might, just, find ways around it.

It was hearing about the factory-belt system in Detroit that gave Chaplin the idea for *Modern Times* - "a harrowing story of big industry luring healthy young men off the farms who, after four or five years at the belt system, became nervous wrecks."¹⁹⁷ Taking the relation between neurosis and the assembly line as its premise, the film interlaces this with the intrusion of the mechanical reproduction of sound into cinema. In the jerking, shaking body of the tramp as an assembly-line worker, and in his startled reactions, the symptoms of shock, as they were mediated by the experience of the war, become the paradigm for what threatens men in the traumas arising from civilian capitalist forces.

This chapter has attempted to discuss two related problems: firstly, that of shellshock, and secondly, discourses about cinema, in which a fundamental equivalence is drawn between the shocks of film and those of war. The hystericization and feminization of the subject is crucial to both, as are commodity relations. I have tried to show how individual film texts took up the challenge posed by these problems. The documentary shellshock films answered it by showing the validity of cinema as a medium for recording the effects of the war, while modernist cinema (Vertov, Eisenstein, Lang) made shock into the basis of its aesthetic - in the form of disruption - with the intention of awakening spectators from their customary passivity, and thus countering the affect-ridden spectatorial body with a cinema of rational thought. The cinema of the burlesque (Chaplin), on the other hand, parodied

¹⁹⁷ Charlie Chaplin, *My Autobiography* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966) 377.

techniques of disruption and displaced them onto the intrusive effects of sound. Both Lang's film and Chaplin's negotiated the problem of shellshock retroactively through the medium of the worker's body, shown to be inscribed with the very same automatisms as the shellshock sufferers, but whereas in Lang, the historical reality of shellshock is transformed and displaced onto the figure of the female automaton, in Chaplin, it is a history more immediate to the film which is worked through and transformed - the Depression and the problems of American industrialization which it brought into focus. The latter are dealt with through a comedy of transformation and through the heroic-individualist survivalism of the tramp character.

DEATH AND MACHINE TECHNOLOGIES

The Machine That Never Stops: Drive, Repetition and Reproduction in the *Alien* and *Terminator* Films

As Barbara Creed has observed, contemporary science-fiction and horror films seem to be fascinated with the maternal body and its processes (the *Alien* quartet, 1979-97), with men becoming women - giving birth to another creature (Ridley Scott's *Alien*, 1979), to themselves (James Cameron's *Terminator*, 1984), or to themselves in another form (John Carpenter's 1982 remake of *The Thing*; David Cronenberg's *Fly*, 1986).¹ The latter, as she recognizes, is not a new theme - we have seen it at work in *Metropolis*, and before that, in the fantasies of the Futurists. However, in recent decades the theme has come to be reflected in cinema with a new intensity, inspired by developments in reproductive technologies, such as I.V.F. and cloning. Birthing, especially when mediated by technology, has become associated with an uncertain future. In contemporary film, the maternal has become the site of the monstrous, the immoral, the implacable: a machine that runs by itself. The maternal has become conflated with the death drive.

The maternal occupies a key place in Hollywood's family romance - and as far back at least as *Rosemary's Baby* (Roman Polanski, 1968), American cinema has presented the family as a mechanism that has gone awry. This was particularly evident in the horror films of the 1970s, with the psychopathic family of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (Tobe Hooper, 1974), and the demonic children of *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973) and *The Omen* (Richard Donner, 1976). In each case, the monster is a product of the family: a product of parents who not only put their careers before their children (as in

¹Barbara Creed, "Gynesis, Postmodernism and the Science Fiction Horror Film," in Annette Kuhn, ed. *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema* (London: Verso, 1990) 216.

The Exorcist and *Rosemary's Baby*), but also serve as reminders to their children of the Oedipal anxieties to which all mortals are prone. Like those pronounced to be practising un-American activities in the McCarthyite rhetoric of the 1940s and 50s (communism at home), the family constitutes an enemy within, an internal threat against which the American citizen must muster forces, just as he or she might an enemy from without (such as communism abroad): such anxieties about preserving the frontiers of the self from encroachment from within and without might be said to be characteristic of American culture (it is reflected in a wide range of Hollywood film genres - the western as well as science-fiction horror). In these horror films, and in the discourses upon which they draw, the family - more specifically, the mother - is held accountable for what has gone wrong in American culture at large. In this, they recall another discourse of the 1940s, "Momism," in which the condition of the mental health of American men was blamed on their mothers (when in fact the problems were a legacy of the Second World War). At that time, Lucy Fischer states, "the charge that American culture was warped by 'Momism' reverberated everywhere."²

Post Second World War films such as *The Terminator* and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (James Cameron, 1991) echo these sentiments of the 40s, and marry them with contemporary concerns - that our cultural institutions are not there to nurture us, but to destroy us. In contemporary culture, this view of the maternal-familial gone awry has led to a "struggle to control that which has discredited the paternal function," a struggle which is enacted in contemporary narratives in the form of men giving birth in order to abrogate the maternal for themselves.³ As this implies, the theme of "becoming woman" is inextricable

² Lucy Fischer, "Mama's Boy: Filial Hysteria in *White Heat*," in Steven Cohen and Ina Rae Hark, eds. *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1993) 80.

³ Creed, "Gynesis" 216.

from a crisis in masculine confidence. After the Civil Rights movement and the experience of Vietnam, (white) American masculinity found itself again contested by 1970s and 80s feminism. Taken together, as Judith Newton says, the various forms of feminism stood as a collectively disruptive force - disruptive not only of the traditional sexual division of labour, but also, potentially, of late capitalism itself.⁴

This chapter discusses the *Alien* and *Terminator* films as patriarchal texts - despite their active, enterprising heroines - which offer solutions to the crisis in male narcissism from the male spectator's point of view. As such, they provide reassurance that masculinity can reproduce itself in the face of these various onslaughts.⁵ The films additionally provide us with plots which involve us in murder, suspense, repetition, and the figure of a primordial being, where identification with the death drive is licensed, controlled and channelled; in other words, they provide a safe, vicarious outlet for impulses of the id.

I. The Maternal Function Mechanized

Terminator's solution comes in the form of a cult of individualism, which is set against faceless, corporate forces, in fact those very forces which have allowed nuclear apocalypse and planetary conquest by computer-generated machines to take place in the future: the revolutionary Skynet defence supercomputer, built by the Cyberdyne Systems Corporation, becomes "smart" and decides human fate "in a microsecond - extermination." After the nuclear war, survivors are rounded up into concentration camps, where they are stamped with a barcode and used for labour while they await termination. Outside, in the war zone, Terminators, Hunter-Killer patrol aircraft and caterpillar-tracked ground vehicles - all built by Skynet - search out and destroy the remaining humans. In

⁴ Judith Newton, "Feminism and Anxiety in *Alien*," in Kuhn 84.

⁵ Susan Jeffords, "Can Masculinity be Terminated?" in Cohen and Hark 247.

this totalitarian dystopia, uniformity and death are revealed to be at the heart of technical rationality.

A staple criticism of the *Terminator* films has been to point out, as Constance Penley does, that the films seem to bear out Fredric Jameson's argument about the decay of the utopian imagination in the late-twentieth century - we are unable to conceive the future other than in terms of an Armageddon.⁶ But the disaster scenarios of the films can be seen as symptoms of a very real cultural anxiety, one that was at its height in the Reagan era, but has lessened since the end of the Cold War in 1989; *Terminator 2* responds to this by forestalling the apocalypse - there the future can for the first time be looked upon with hope, although it is imagined only to hold the unknown, like a highway at night, the analogy made by the closing sequence. As Pat Gill remarks, the 1980s witnessed a "confidence in a world made safe by state-of-the-art weaponry" (S.D.I., the anti-ballistic missile system proposed by Reagan, and commonly known as "Star Wars," made a particular mark on popular consciousness). But it betrayed, she says, "a psychic undertow of profound technological apprehension. Media representations intuitively draw on this apprehension in their portrayals of the uncanny evil twin of the technologically secure(d) world."⁷ *Terminator* is exemplary of this trend, yet, as Penley suggests, it can be seen as a "critical dystopia," which points to tendencies in the present that provide the conditions for the nightmare future - not only in the military decisions being taken today, and the science that helps to realize them, but also in our everyday encounter with machines that either fail or work against their human users at critical moments.⁸ The film shows "the unintentionally harmful effects of technology" in telephones that are out of

⁶ Constance Penley, *The Future of an Illusion: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis* (London: Routledge, 1989) 121.

⁷ Pat Gill, "Technostalgia: Making the Future Past Perfect," *Camera Obscura* 40-1(May 1997): 163-179, 165.

⁸ Penley 125.

order, or allow messages to be picked up by those for whom they were not intended, and devices - Ginger's walkman and Silberman's pager - that prevent these characters from hearing or seeing the approach of an assailant.⁹ Its mise-en-scène of the present day, as Penley says, is filled with details of the ordinary, day-to-day machines that surround us, and its critical impetus is carried through this organizing aesthetic, now thought to be the hallmark of Cameron's films: "tech-noir." This can be seen as Cameron's contemporary-dystopian reworking of 1940s film noir: machines define the look and texture of his films, and provide the rhythm of the shots, while shadows and strong back-lighting create a dark, ominous atmosphere in their predominately urban sets, which are mostly shown at night, particularly in *Terminator* - harshly-lit streets, alleyways, and car-park interiors.

However, this critical impulse is cancelled out by the films' espousal of romantic notions of the individual and "guerrilla-like small-group resistance."¹⁰ In this post-holocaust world, humanity is, we are told, close to going out forever, but for "one man," who teaches the survivors to fight back, and leads them to victory against the machines. In this respect the *Terminator* films are of course no different from other late-twentieth century science fiction films and dystopias, from *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) to *The Matrix* (Wachowski Brothers, 1999): there is always the chosen one, the prophesied saviour - Luke Skywalker, Neo (an anagram of "One"), here, in *Terminator*, John Connor (no prizes for guessing what his initials stand for).¹¹ As in *Star Wars* and *The Matrix*, the emphasis on the individual in *Terminator* has an ideological function: it conceals the fact that collective action is what is really needed to answer social problems. It thus provides narcissistic gratification for male spectators, who can be assured that even in this bleak, dehumanizing future,

⁹ Penley 124.

¹⁰ Penley 122.

¹¹ The initials stand for James Cameron as well as Jesus Christ.

individual acts of male heroism can surmount all. But *Terminator's* cult of the individual exceeds the other films. John Connor's fate and that of the world are intertwined - a narcissistic fantasy of the first order. If he were to become extinct, so would all the world.

It is this narcissistic fantasy that drives the plot - battles won in the future must also be consolidated in the past. So when Skynet sends two of its Terminators back in time to wipe out John's existence - one to a time before he was born, to strike at Sarah Connor, his mother (in order to perform a "retroactive abortion," as the disbelieving psychiatrist Silberman calls it in the first film), and the other to strike at John as a child - the adult John sends two warriors, one human, the other a machine (a reprogrammed 800 series Terminator), back in time to ensure his own birth and survival. It turns out that Reese, the warrior sent back in time to save his mother in the first film, and who dies in the process, is in fact his father. John sends him back precisely so that he may be fathered, otherwise, as the pregnant Sarah admits at the end of the first film, leaving messages for her as yet unborn son in her cassette recorder, he "could never be." Towards the end of this final sequence, set at the Mexican border, a boy takes a Polaroid picture of Sarah - it is shown to be exactly the one that Reese had in his hands in the earlier "future flashbacks," a photograph given to him by John, and through which Reese falls in love: "I came across time for you, Sarah," he tells her.

What gives the films their power is, in the first instance, this idea of the kiss across time, between a man from the future and a woman from the present. It is haunting because, as Penley suggests, it is "an act of love pervaded by death."¹² As she emphasizes, it is the *fact* that it is pervaded by death that is affecting, not the *performance* (which is rather perfunctory in the film). It is shadowed not only by the fact that Reese is to die, but also by the death of

¹² Penley 134.

time, which the nuclear holocaust marks. But the films also put death at the heart of this kiss across time in the way that they introduce machines to engineer this romance, to produce this coupling. The romance in question is a family romance that goes across time, which is also a form of reproduction across time, and in which, as we shall see, death is heavily imbricated.

Two structures of identification or mimesis (the drive to be like) can be seen to be at work in the film: the narcissistic desire to make the other into me (John's apocalyptic desire to be who he is) and the totalitarian desire to make the self into the other (the machines' utopia of death and uniformity). The two, one might argue, are not really distinguishable - they both involve imposing one's will on others. The mother would seem to be an obstruction to the narcissistic fantasy that the film is putting forward, for she breaks the magic circle between desire and wish-fulfilment (she threatens to turn the male back into a dependent being). So would the family, since it introduces an unwanted determinism into the subject, once again threatening the fantasy of narcissistic omnipotence. *Terminator* solves this problem by re-imagining the mother as an extension, or prosthesis, of the male self and by doing away with the family altogether: what we are offered instead is a family romance of the maternal giving birth to the future, with the son as the mother, too, able to manufacture himself through the technological displacement of time, and with the aid of another machine - the Terminator.

"What's it like when you go through time?" Sarah asks Reese, who replies, "white light . . . pain. . . like being born, maybe." When the travellers appear in the film's present, they are naked, curled up foetus-like, in a bubble. The fantasy of time-travel is, as Penley suggests, a primal scene fantasy, where the child, here John in the guise of a substitute, a "father" chosen by himself, returns to the time of his conception, so that he can be both witness to and a participant in his own creation. The primal scene fantasy bespeaks a compulsion to repeat - but as well as being a return *to* the repressed, it is a

fantasy of being in complete control of one's origins, "that is of being mother / father of one's self" (thus being in control of those who control oneself).¹³ In other words, it is a fantasy of parthenogenesis, where the feminine is controlled by being reduced to a purely biological status (the mother as the son's prosthesis). The father, on the other hand, is accorded symbolic, rather than purely biological status. John sends him back in time because he knows that Reese is his father, but the fantasy also enables an idealized identification with the father (he has, presumably, hand-picked Reese for his manly virtues, his soldierly prowess).

The Terminator is what furnishes the occasion for this conception - used as the living womb, he is what allows the death of the father and birth of the son, thus permitting the illusion of self-generation. In their automatism the machines readily function as signs of the death drive, and apprehensions of the death of culture are condensed into the figure of the Terminator - he directly materializes fantasies of a death drive at work at large. The films unleash these machines that seek to wipe out John's traces as an intimation of the absolutely other that haunts culture and beckons it towards its end, even as the machines are shown to be foundational for *his life*. This makes the machine, the maternal and the death drive into interchangeable categories - the film suggests their fundamental equivalence.

As we have seen, the son of the future steps back in time to create himself in the past: this, as Susan Jeffords notes, is "repetition *as* reproduction . . . as self-reproduction."¹⁴ In "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," Freud put repetition "on the track of the death drives"; the death drive can never be adduced on its own (it keeps "silent in clinical practice," that is, it effaces its

¹³ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994) 49. In this, it also suggests a "denial . . . of generational time - that is to say of one's position in time in relation to others."

¹⁴ Jeffords 247-8.

traces) and can only be known by the phenomena showing the compulsion to repeat that speak on its behalf.¹⁵ Such phenomena bear the mark of the demonic, and *that* is what gives rise to insight, for Freud. The demonic reveals "an irrepressible force," which otherwise remains hidden. It is, as Derrida puts it in *The Post-Card*, "already persecutory, by means of the simple form of its return, indefatigable, repetitive, independent of every apparent desire."¹⁶ In *The Terminator*, the death drive is put at the heart of John's self-reproduction; so too in the plot which carries it. Since John has already been born in the future, Reese must already have come back to Sarah in the past, and must do so again an infinite number of times; Reese must keep returning to the past to seed the rebel leader of the future, and thereby always dying before he is born. The second film takes this circularity of cause and effect even further. We learn that the technology that would make the revolutionary supercomputer possible (and hence the events that spiral into genocide and the earth's conquest by machines) is derived from relics from the future - the debris and microprocessor left by the first Terminator sent back through time to destroy Sarah, but which *she* managed to destroy by flattening it in a hydraulic press in an automated factory. "All my work is based on it," admits Dyson, the director of Special Projects at the Cyberdyne Systems Corporation, where the microchip and arm of the first Terminator has been secretly kept in a high-security vault. The time-loop paradoxes make the narrative structure of the films regress infinitely into a cycle of repetition: there is never a first time, an origin (at which John Connor or the machines of the future are conceived), neither is there is a last time (repetition is always at the origin).

¹⁵ Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle," in *On Metapsychology, the Penguin Freud Library, vol. 11*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 329.

¹⁶ Jacques Derrida, "To Speculate - On Freud," in *The Post-Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) 341.

If the pleasures of watching these films partly reside in their repetitive structures, which spectators enjoyably reconstruct, then might not those pleasures themselves be bound up with the death drive - filmic spectatorship as enjoyment of the id? Where the *Terminator* films most demonstrably allow us to enjoy the id is in their presentation of a primordial being, the Terminator himself, who is at one and the same time the most sophisticated (most technologically-advanced) entity and the most brutish. It is this combination that makes him both attractive and frightening. "That Terminator is out there," Reese tells Sarah in the 1984 film. "It can't be bargained with. It can't be reasoned with. It doesn't feel pity or remorse, or fear. And it absolutely will not stop. . . . Ever! Until you are dead." This, he later adds, is what the Terminator does; in fact "that's all he does!" He has no converse with human codes or feeling, and he is bent on purpose alone - completing his mission - and he is prepared to blast everything in sight. In the words of Žižek, he persists only in "one demand," and he repeatedly insists on it: "I demand something and I persist in it to the end."¹⁷ Often filmed from a low-angle, to emphasize his monstrosity, and at ground-level, to show his feet crushing things in his path as he advances inexorably on towards his target, the Terminator forms a crucial site of identification for viewers of the film. As Cameron says, "everybody likes to be able to be the Terminator for a moment . . . they want to respond in a fashion which is without any conscience. It's a psychological fantasy which is a release for people" (a fantasy, we might add, of omnipotent narcissism).¹⁸ The

¹⁷ Žižek is drawing on Lacan's distinctions between need, demand and desire. "A drive is a demand which isn't caught up in the dialectic of desire." In the normal state of affairs, a demand would involve something else, it would get entangled in the "dialectical trickery" of desire: "I demand this, but what do I really want?" Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan through Popular Culture* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995) 21-2.

¹⁸ Ana Marie Bahiana, "James Cameron and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*," *Cinema Papers* 84 (1991): 20-25, 24.

Terminator films, in other words, allow us to release impulses from the id: to enjoy them vicariously through the cinematic images.

The pure drive which the Terminator reflects is our own, and not surprisingly, he looks uncannily like us: "machine underneath . . . but sort of alive on the outside," as the child John describes the Terminator's physique in the 1991 film. This "monster" can pass for human, it sweats, has bad breath, "everything," and this makes it "very hard to spot," Reese tells Sarah. This is where the source of anxiety - and the root of identification - lies. The Terminator embodies the fear of a mechanical otherness at work behind an apparently ordinary human exterior: ostensibly normal (cultured, civilized) on the outside, but on the inside, brutish, amoral, absolutely instinctual.

The films' presentation of the Terminator offers the other side of John's narcissistic fantasy of making the other into himself - the totalitarian/ fascist fantasy of making the self into the other. The Terminators are infiltration units, designed to blend in with their surroundings. They have mimetic capabilities, which help them to track down their prey, and which underscore their drive *be like* - as Roger Caillois says of the mimetic compulsions of insects and psychasthenics, these machines are "similar, not similar to something, but just *similar*."¹⁹ They are likeness machines, able not only to mimic voices, but also, in the case of the second film's T1000 Terminator, who is made of a mimetic polyalloy (a form of liquid metal), the gestalt of objects and people with which he comes into contact: he is capable of sampling and copying any object of roughly similar mass (but not complicated machines with moving parts). The copy then kills the original.²⁰ In his asexual replications, the T1000 figures the

¹⁹ Roger Caillois, "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia," trans. John Shepley, *October* 31 (Winter, 1984): 17-32, 30.

²⁰ Doubling is not only a theme but also a technique in *Terminator 2* - significantly, the film deploys two sets of actor twins: Linda Hamilton and Leslie Hamilton Gearren for the original and copy of Sarah and Don and Dan Stanton for the hospital guard. During the finale in the steelworks, where the

biotechnology of cloning, and also - since his mode of reproduction involves the substitution and take-over of the original's body - viral copying. The characterization of the machine repeats *en abyme* the narrative machine that (re)produces the family romance: it recapitulates, at another level, the efforts of the adult John to give birth to himself, again and again, for all time.

The Terminators' brutal murders and violent becomings also point up the amoral quality of film-viewing (the cultural enjoyment of the id), something that the "maim-only" policy of the reprogrammed Terminator in the second film does little to remedy.²¹ He learns from the child John that killing people is wrong, and, as a default measure, simply shoots them in the leg instead when protecting his charge - as spectators, we are asked to applaud him for his "temperance," but nonetheless continue to take pleasure in the images showing him shooting, or violently throwing people across the room, or through windows, and generally causing havoc and collision on the roads. *Terminator 2* spectacularly fails to deliver the moral corrective it promises, for violence, particularly technological violence, is what the films thrive on. On the one

T1000 turns himself into a copy of Sarah in order to lure John, Linda Hamilton plays the copy, while her twin plays the original, who reappears to "confront [the] impostor." In the special edition of *Terminator 2* there is an additional scene where the twins feature: Sarah, John and the 800 series Terminator are seen to be positioned in front of a mirror while Sarah extracts the terminator's CPU. In fact there is no mirror, just an empty frame: Linda Hamilton, Schwarzenegger and Edward Furlong are themselves the mirror images, facing their doubles on the other side - a puppet for Schwarzenegger, with Leslie Hamilton "mirroring Linda's movements on the puppet." The film also uses a number of stunt doubles, including an amputee, Larry Johnson, for the scene where the T1000's legs snap off in the freezing temperature released by a tanker's hold of liquid nitrogen. Jody Duncan, "A Once and Future War," *Cinefex* 47 (August 1991): 4-59, 57, 34, 50.

²¹ In view of the international following (especially among the young) that the star, Arnold Schwarzenegger, had acquired since the release of the first film, Cameron decided that it was morally unfeasible to have Schwarzenegger play the "outright destructive machine" as he had done in 1984 - one couldn't show him "mowing down a police-station with machine-guns in 1991." Bahiana 20, 23.

hand, they show how our daily intimacies with technologies - the more humble walkmans, answering-machines, and telephones, along with video-games, virtual reality simulators, advanced computers and firearms - are embedded in a culture of violence, and how the scene for future apocalypse is already being set in the present. Yet on the other, they repeatedly make use of technologies to create spectacles of destruction and violence.

This is particularly the case with *Terminator 2*, where bombs and expensive state-of-the-art *computer-generated* graphics were used together with mechanical models and miniature sets to create *simulated* pyrotechnical scenes - one of the most spectacular among them being a nuclear shock wave, travelling through the city of Los Angeles, in Sarah's nightmare vision of the future.²² This allows us to see an uncanny doubling not only between the characterization of the Terminator and the narrative repetitions, but also between the characterization of the Terminator and the effects used to realize the film. The imagery of fire was central to the conception of the Terminator, and to the first film, although it used special effects more sparsely than *Terminator 2* - they were reserved only for the future war sequences and for a scene towards the end, which realized the image that inspired Cameron to make the film, "a skeletal metal robot emerging out of the fire."²³ Just when Sarah

²² That these spectacles are marked by an aesthetics of violence is borne out by a comment made by the pyrotechnics expert, Joe Viskocil, who worked on the film: the aerial Hunter Killers of the future war sequences exploding in mid-air were meant to release "aesthetically pleasing debris" as they exploded. The element of excess in the sequences can be inferred from other anecdotes surrounding the production of the film - for example, for the footage used in the opening title sequence of the film (but intended initially for the explosion of the Cyberdyne Systems building), a fireball was created in the desert; it was so huge that residents in the vicinity thought that a jetliner had crash-landed there, and subsequently rang the emergency services. Duncan 16, 41.

²³ James Cameron, interview with David Chute, "The 1984 Movie Revue 1," *Film Comment* 21.1 (Jan/ Feb 1985): 55-59, 57. The Terminator's skeletal appearance in this scene was intended to underscore the machine's relation to death: Cameron remarks, "When I wrote the film, I saw the Terminator as an embodiment of death, as a kind of high-tech Grim Reaper." The means used to

imagines her ordeal is over, that the Terminator has finally met his demise in a blazing oil tanker, the camera gives us a view "behind" the human characters: in the background of the frame, the machine is shown slowly rising from the flames. It introduces a "stain" in the spectator's gaze, marking his or her knowledge that something is not quite right in the picture, that all is not what it seems to Sarah and Reese. As such, it introduces the element of suspense, and its perverse forms of enjoyment, which are sustained in the following chase sequence: the Terminator's synthetic flesh may have been singed away, but the mechanical chassis underneath remains, and continues, once again, to pursue Sarah in its characteristically relentless fashion. The film builds the tension by crosscutting: between the Terminator lurching up the passageway, and the beleaguered couple staggering away from him, then between the machine bashing persistently on the door they have shut against him, and Sarah urging the wounded Reese to get up on his feet. Suspense, Pascal Bonitzer writes, is "an anamorphosis of cinematographic time," and time is crucially distended in the key moments of suspense in the *Terminator* films - in this and other instances, slowed down to prolong spectators' vicarious thrill in what they see.²⁴ Thus, suspense forms another way in which these films engage our perverse desires, turning them into extreme pleasures.

show this walking metal skeleton made it even more eerie. Stan Winston, the special effects designer (who was to become a veteran in the production of Cameron's films, continuing to work with the director on *Aliens*), deployed a stop-motion model, moved forward step by step and filmed frame by frame, to give the impression of a machine that runs by itself when the footage is replayed at 24 frames per second. The jerky movement to which this gives rise is further enhanced by the pronounced limp of the Terminator as he lurches forward towards the fleeing Sarah. The limp is there for reasons of continuity, for in the previous shots we have seen the Terminator being run over by the tanker, and emerging from it with a maimed leg, but still at this point endowed with his human seeming and played by the human actor. But the limping model is convincing beyond its continuity function: it expresses the idea of an uncertain agency, with the machine always dragging back one of its feet as it advances. Bahiana 24.

²⁴ Pascal Bonitzer, "Hitchcockian Suspense," in Slavoj Žižek, ed. *Everything*

The suspense is enhanced throughout by the continuous presence of the Terminator's gaze - the glowing red eyes that are always assessing his targets, the apertures widening and narrowing like that of a camera. The films allow spectators to have their cake and eat it too: to identify with the victim and the stalker at the same time. Significantly, all the would-be stalkers in *Terminator* are men: Reese, Ginger's boyfriend Matt (who surprises Sarah in the corridor), and the Terminator himself. The presence of the gaze on Sarah is established early in the film, even before the Terminator has located her, and even before she has realized that her fate could follow that of the other Sarah Connors listed in the phone-book. That she is being stalked and watched is suggested by shots from her point-of-view, looking around the carpark where she goes to pick up her bike, before what she expects will be a lonely Friday night out. These proleptic shots have added meaning for the audience, for we already know that two "men" (Reese and the Terminator) are after her (Reese looks up her address in the phone book as well, and at this point his intentions are as mysterious as the Terminator's). The film soon focuses on the main source of the predatory gaze on Sarah: in harshly-lit shots of the Terminator's face, turning this way and that, and, after some delay - a delay which also prolongs suspense - in point-of-view "Termovision" shots.

Now, both *Terminator* films make radical use of this device, although the first time that this POV shot appears, in *Terminator*, in the scene where Reese and Sarah escape from the Tech Noir club, and are running down a back-street, it is conventionally established, with a shot of the pursuing Terminator (what Edward Branigan calls "point/ glance"), preceding a shot showing the couple ("point/ object").²⁵ This second shot shows an infra-red

You Always Wanted to Know About Lacan but Were Afraid to ask Hitchcock (London: Verso, 1992) 20.

²⁵ Edward Branigan, "The Point-of-View-Shot," in Bill Nichols, ed. *Movies and Methods*, vol. 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985) 676.

display screen, with data continually printing out across it, and a targeting system. One might wonder why a machine that runs by itself would need a visual display screen (as Francis Barker²⁶ has pointed out, it betrays the extent to which this conception of machine vision is steeped in anthropomorphic assumptions), but the device has two important functions: firstly, to convey the Terminator's inhuman nature - the data read-outs appear and disappear faster than the human eye can follow - and secondly, to allow us to enter inside the primordial being. The shot offers us a sinister kind of identification, what Zizek calls "identification with the impossible gaze of the Object thing itself" - we find ourselves seeing through the eyes of a "murderous Thing."²⁷

In *Terminator 2*, the "impossible gaze of the Thing" is transferred to the point of view shots of the T1000, where there is no display screen - which allows them to convey much more convincingly the idea of a radical beyond, beyond subjectivity, "a place that no symbolization could accommodate."²⁸ The T1000's first appearance is in a hand-held POV tracking shot, approaching a policeman who is inspecting the "electrical disturbance" caused by the time-displacement. This is a "discovered" POV, where the point of the glance is not previously established. The T1000 suddenly enters the frame, seeming to emerge from behind the camera, from a space that seems to coincide with the viewer's "reality."²⁹ Because it collapses boundaries between inside and outside (between what is on the screen and the viewer's space), the shot has an unsettling effect. Although the film avoids the more anxiety-creating implications of the technology that enables the T1000 to make himself into

²⁶ Francis Barker made this point about the Terminator's display screen at a seminar in the Department of Literature, University of Essex, Spring 1999.

²⁷ Zizek, *Hitchcock* 249, 252.

²⁸ Zizek, *Hitchcock* 260. Cameron also presented this kind of POV shot more subtly in his 1989 film, *The Abyss*, although there it is not so much the question of a murderous gaze as of a figure of the absolutely other, the POV of an amorphous - although benign - liquid alien being.

²⁹ Zizek, *Hitchcock* 256.

simulacra of things and people he encounters by equipping him with a default gestalt (in policeman's clothes), it does leave open the question of where this default gestalt came from - perhaps from the viewer's space, a space outside the diegetic reality of the film, something that might bring to consciousness the viewer's identification with the id.

Such disruption, however, if it was intended, would not be typical of Cameron's film-making. Cameron's blockbuster film follows the precedent set by George Lucas and Steven Spielberg, the new "movie-brats" who are said to have regenerated Hollywood after the collapse of its studio system. These directors left the narrative patterns and editing styles of classical Hollywood film unquestioned, but at the same time, they innovated with respect to conceptions of sound and visual effects, using multi-channel technology and surround sound to make cinema into a much more physical, visceral experience for viewers, encouraging them "not just to listen to sounds but to 'feel' them."³⁰ In Cameron's films, editing tends to be invisible and narrative-driven, whereas sound makes a significant impression on the viewer's sensorium. In the opening of *Terminator 2*, for example, as Linda Hamilton narrates events to come over images of the war against the machines in the post-holocaust future, the camera focuses on a human skull. Hamilton's voice fades out; suddenly, in the stillness, a Terminator's foot enters the frame and crushes the skull. As Gianluca Sergi says, the sound is disruptive, obtrusive, in excess of "the 'real' sound an action like this would produce."³¹ At this point, sound becomes the main means through which the film tries to persuade us of the enormity of the struggle ahead - "the sound 'breaks through the screen' and takes centre stage." The film's sound architecture, like that of *Star Wars*, is intricate: different sounds

³⁰ Gianluca Sergi, "A Cry in the Dark: The Role of Post-Classical Film Sound," in Steve Neale and Murray Smith, eds. *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1998) 162.

³¹ Sergi 162.

are used to identify each of the characters and the vehicles they drive (thus, the sounds that accompany images of the child John on his moped match the smaller size of his bike and emphasize his vulnerability, while those which accompany the T800 suggest his calm strength, his heavy, machine physique, and tally with his more powerful vehicle).

Terminator 2 also shows the legacy of *Star Wars* by sticking to the rules of the action blockbuster movie - *Star Wars* provided its spectators with action every ten minutes and laid the foundations for a new generation of filmmaking. As Fred Pfeil says, "the overall regime of pleasure in the blockbuster film is . . . a paradigm of late capitalist consumer production: it must keep us constantly (though *not* continuously) engaged without demanding much attention."³² (This makes it even less likely that *Terminator 2* would strive to subvert spectator passivity via a modernist-type disruption, although it does give its own answer to modernist montage in the form of computer-generated visual effects). Pfeil analyzes the opening scene of *Terminator 2* to show how, in this blockbuster film, "a fair amount of mobility is granted to our various desires and fears with a lack of ambiguity at any given moment as to how we ought to think and feel."³³ This mobility is in part negotiated by motifs repeated across the two films, such as the naked arrival of the time travellers in their time bubbles - spectator pleasures in this instance are the pleasures of repetition with a difference, the key one being the bad guy to good guy transformation of Schwarzenegger's character. But even before his good guy status is established, his appearance provides the occasion for, Pfeil says,

a wide range and satisfying oscillation of identifications and exclusions, pleasures and disavowals. For starters there is the linkage and differentiation of Arnold in his *ab ovo* muscle-builder's pose and the parked semi behind him, suggesting as this composite image does both

³² Fred Pfeil, "Home Fires Burning: Family *Noir* in *Blue Velvet* and *Terminator 2*," in Joan Copjec, ed. *Shades of Noir* (London: Verso, 1993) 238.

³³ Pfeil 240.

Arnold himself as gleaming, burly machine, icon of burly masculine culture at its most spectacularly developed pitch, and Arnold as a display item quite out of this dingy quotidian world altogether.³⁴

With this spectacular display of the male body that invites incredulity at the same time as it invites identification as an ideal imago, *Terminator 2* launches its answer to the crisis in male narcissism - a repetition of that given by *Terminator*, but with a difference.

The difference shows up in the new emphasis on fatherhood. As Jeffords has argued, this parallels the shift from the 1980s to the 90s: in cinema, the hardbodied masculine heroes of the 1980s (*Terminator*, *Rambo*, *Die Hard*) who were all violent exteriority have given way, in the 90s, to masculine heroes whose internal, emotional dimensions are given more focus. In films like *Terminator 2* and *Boyz N the Hood* (John Singleton, 1991), fathering is the key device and mode of characterization through which this new focus on the internalized masculine dimension is displayed.³⁵ Both films show the father being a nurturing presence for the son. In this, they also correspond to the re-evaluation of paternity in American culture in the early 1990s, when the general sense that families fail in the absence of good fathers was voiced by vice-president Dan Quayle. *Terminator 2* makes explicit its allegiance to this way of thinking by showing the Terminator listening to John, playing with him, while Sarah's voice-over underlines what we are already meant to have perceived:

Watching John with the machine, it was suddenly so clear. The Terminator would never stop, it would never leave him. And it would never hurt him, never shout at him or get drunk and hit him, or say it was too busy to spend time with him. It would always be there. And it would die to protect him. Of all the would-be fathers who came and went over the years, this thing, this machine, was the only one who measured up.

³⁴ Pfeil 239.

³⁵ Jeffords 254.

What had been the Terminator's most terrifying characteristic in the first film - that he never stops - is turned into his most honourable one, that which makes him a good father for John. This new emphasis on fatherhood has several functions, but principally, fatherhood becomes the vehicle for expressing a male individualism gratifying to the male spectator. John teaches the Terminator moral sentiment and street vernacular (continuing what has been initiated in the future, his adult self in the future having already re-programmed the machine). He also has to teach his mother, as we shall see - he once again becomes mother and father to himself. As protector and father to John, the Terminator himself abrogates the mother's generative function: "by 'giving' John Connor his life, the Terminator takes, in effect, Sarah Connor's place as his mother . . . the Terminator can now be said to give birth to the future of the race."³⁶ Like the first film, *Terminator 2* abolishes the family as a cultural institution: "Mom, Dad, and me" are transfigured in the family romance, in father and son bonding between the Terminator and John. Meanwhile, John's foster-parents Todd and Janelle are slaughtered - without, one might add, eliciting much sympathy or concern from ourselves or from John. As Pfeil has argued, the film quickly leaves them and the "sunstruck residential neighbourhood" where they live, "and spends the rest of its running time either keeping its distance from or destroying any and all traditional domestic space."³⁷ The family unit is relocated "to the place where the noir hero used to be, out in the public and on the run" - a movement that looks back to earlier models of masculinity in the classical Hollywood era, while also providing an arena for masculine re-affirmation in the present.³⁸

As the Terminator moves from destroyer of life to being its guardian, taking Sarah's place as the mother, Sarah takes his place as the remorseless

³⁶ Jeffords 249.

³⁷ Pfeil 243.

³⁸ Pfeil 245.

assassin: in this exchange of qualities between the feminine and the machine, the maternal body takes up its place as the embodiment of death drive. Hardened by her trial in the first film, haunted by her nightmare visions of nuclear apocalypse, Sarah in *Terminator 2* has become almost as grimly purposeful and relentless as the machine that hounded her then. She is driven by revenge, both in a general and specific sense (to murder Dyson, the man most directly responsible for the nuclear war and its aftermath). To this end, she transforms her body into a weapon: the strong will that she has developed is matched by her new physique - hard-bodied like the 800 series Terminator. The film underscores Sarah's new role as the Terminator / death drive by filming her in the same way as the Terminators: with low-angle shots of her feet, walking defiantly towards the fence in her combat fatigues in the nuclear dream sequence, and in "discovered" POV shots such as those given to the T1000 - as when she suddenly leaps out to attack a nurse in the Pescadero State Hospital during her escape attempt. She now embodies the impossible gaze of the Thing. The alter egos in her dreams confirm that her transformation into a muscled-up warrior is a defensive measure: her other self appears soft, passive, vulnerable - curled up in a white negligée in the dream of Reese's return (in the special edition only), or as a slightly younger version of herself, dressed in a red and white chequered dress, playing with her son in a children's playground, among other mothers, oblivious to the nuclear strike that is about to wipe them all out.

In her role as vengeful mother, Sarah epitomizes the maternal gone awry - a machine that runs by itself unless it is controlled by men. The decision to consign her to a mental hospital gives as much scope for portraying the maternal-feminine out of control (as a site of instability) as it does for sidelining Sarah's role as saviour of the world and mother of the future. The scenes in the hospital offer contradictory pleasures and identifications - they invite anti-institutional sympathy for Sarah as victim, unduly separated from her son - as

well as delight when she scores against her oppressors - but they also afford sadistic enjoyment as the male attendants violently restrain the wild, bestial Sarah: stun and drug her into submission, and then, when they assume she is "sedated," lick her to complete her humiliation.

When Sarah is shown as a mother, her behaviour is found to be lacking in exactly those steadfast, nurturing qualities which the T800 is seen to possess. She treats John as a cub - her son is naked without her, she tells Silberman. She snarls and bares her teeth at Silberman's disbelief in her story of the apocalypse to come. She becomes enraged and lunges forward when the psychiatrist refuses to move her to a minimum security ward so she can see her son. As Jeffords says, Sarah's maternal emotions are shown to be "primitive, stemming more from her animal instincts than from any loving relationship between two people," especially in the scene where John throws himself into her embrace, only to find that his mother is merely feeling his body for wounds.³⁹ Sarah is shown to be mutable, unstable, her maternity "of the most brutish and unreflective kind."⁴⁰ At the same time, her heroic qualities are subtly undermined. In the first film, Reese tells her that her son learnt all he knew - how to fight, how to make weapons - from her (even in that film, there's a circularity that takes the credit away from Sarah: John teaches Reese, who teaches Sarah, who will teach John what she learnt from Reese). In *Terminator 2*, we find out that Sarah learns her various skills from her boyfriends (she shackled up with anyone she could learn from, so she could teach John). John himself begins to challenge her authority - "If I'm supposed to be this great military leader, maybe you should start listening to my leadership ideas for a change," he tells her in the special edition. Finally, after having failed to pull the trigger on Dyson, reduced to a quivering heap, Sarah's authority is eroded once

³⁹ Jeffords 252.

⁴⁰ Jeffords 252.

again when she rails hysterically against Dyson: "Men like you built the hydrogen bomb . . . Men like you thought it up. You think you're so creative. You don't know what it's like to really create something . . . to create a life. To feel it growing inside you. All you know how to create is death and destruction." John cuts short this feminist critique of masculine birth compensation, and dismisses it out of hand, making Sarah's outburst appear even more unwarranted and irrational ("Mom, Mom, we need to be more constructive here, O.K?"). The maternal is clearly presented as a furious force that knows no limits unless it is checked and domesticated by men, here John, who is helped in this by the Terminator - as Pfeil suggests, the Terminator, with his "stern let's-get-going glance" prevents the son from getting caught up in the mother's excesses.⁴¹

What this sidelining of Sarah allows is the triumphant emergence of the male individual as the hero of the film - and, as Pfeil points out, it is Schwarzenegger's star quality, not Hamilton's, that defines *Terminator 2*. It is his character, the T800, who finally gives birth to the future, heroically sacrificing himself to ensure that there are no further remnants of this future technology. The other heroic individual who emerges in these final scenes is Dyson, who also makes a sacrifice for the future good of humanity, agreeing to destroy all his work. Significantly, Dyson is presented to us as a father - with a male son (in fact it is this that prevents Sarah from firing). As a black father, his co-operation with the T800 and his eventual sacrifice allows the film to recast and reinforce its agenda - paternity as a vehicle for heroic individuality - across racial lines at the same time as it enables the heroic white male to emerge as the winner. Dyson's subordination forms a parallel to that of Sarah. The film makes a point of "generously" including ethnic minorities and women, but then sidelines them, and puts them back in their place, punished or scapegoated.

⁴¹ Pfeil 246.

This can be seen in the film's presentation of two ethnic minority families - Enrique's as well as Dyson's - the only stable families in the film. This, combined with the fact that Dyson's family is portrayed as affluent middle-class (that is, socially above the white protagonists), allows the film to suggest its liberal attitude. But the film works to ensure these images of familial bliss strike its spectators ambivalently. As Pfeil writes,

both our non-white *paterfamilias* are associated from the start with contemporary visions of social disorder and mass violence. For many if not most white viewers at least, Sarah's rapid allusion to Enrique's past as a *contra*, combined with his gun-toting first appearance and his family's desert location, will call up a *mélange* of unsorted and uneasy impressions from *Treasure of the Sierra Madre* to the mainstream media's spotty yet hysterical coverage of a decade of messy and unpleasant struggles "down there," plus attendant anxieties over "their" illegal entry and peripheral existences "up here."⁴²

Dyson's family, on the other hand, is directly linked to nuclear catastrophe and the war against the machines, and Dyson himself is assumed to be the one who is single-handedly responsible. This is typical scapegoating (Who started the war? - "They" did, the blacks who made it to the top of the social pile). The film also accords him status just as it withdraws it by suggesting that Dyson does not deserve credit for anything - not even for inventing the revolutionary processor. All his work, it transpires, is derivative.

If the family (white and non-white) is regarded with suspicion in the *Terminator* films, so are other institutions - psychiatric asylums, capitalist corporations and the police. They are shown to be obstructive and/ or unwittingly in league with the catastrophe to come. In *Terminator*, the police (and the psychiatrist Silberman) keep Sarah and Reese apart, believing Reese to be deluded in his story of a machine sent back through time to terminate Sarah. In *Terminator 2*, her psychiatric confinement keeps Sarah apart from her son;

⁴² Pfeil 250-1.

once again, one of the parties is deemed mad - this time, Sarah, for her so-called delusions of the end of the world. Both *Terminator* films provide shots of the motto on the Los Angeles police cars, "to serve and protect," and make sure that its irony is not lost. Their distrust of institutions has much to do with their right-wing American politics (the right to bear arms and fend for oneself), and this distrust is carried into the way they show how easily the Terminators infiltrate institutions. In both films the Terminators make use of a policeman's disguise, using the police radio communication system to track down their targets. Institutions provide the perfect opportunity for the machines to fade into context: to see, and not be seen - the T1000's presence at the Pescadero hospital goes unquestioned *because* he is wearing a policeman's uniform. The films' anti-institutional stance also prepares the ground for the emergence of the heroic male individual - as seen in *Terminator 2*, where the T800 goes to face the hordes of armed police on his own. Unwavering, taking their bullets one after the other, he epitomizes the film's celebration of the lone individual resisting anonymous, corporate and federal forces.

The films take their anti-institutional stance even further by suggesting that present institutions foreshadow the totalitarian future. Reese describes what life is like in his time: the humans have to hide by day, and move around by night, although they still have to be careful because the Hunter-Killers have infra-red vision. He conjures up a future where to be seen by the machines is to perish. In his future flashbacks, we are shown machines that kill with weapons of light (laser-beams), revealing their targets and destroying them at the same time. But it is not just in the future that we are being watched, nor solely by time-travelling Terminators. Surveillance cameras are everywhere: in the police-station, in the shopping mall, and especially in the state hospital where Sarah is confined in *Terminator 2*. The psychiatrist Silberman is the human character most closely associated with enforcing surveillance across the two films: his interview with Reese is videotaped and played back to Sarah and the

police officers in the first film, and his penchant for recording images and playback is given further scope in the second film, during his interview with Sarah: together they watch a video of an earlier interview, while the camera tracks back through a window to an adjacent room, where there is a camera, belonging to the diegetic reality, filming the current interview; other monitors around the room play back the interview in real time. The roots of repressive surveillance by the machine vision of the future are to be found here, in present-day CCTV and other forms of surveillance which monitor behaviour - and also in cinema itself. The Terminators' vision is presented as an evil double of cinema, even though it is quite clear that there is a certain concordance between the films themselves and their profuse representations of image-making apparatuses.

If the steel mill conclusion of *Terminator 2* seals the triumph of the individual over institutional-corporate complexes, it also provides reassurance that the T800, at least once he is given a "modicum of moral-sentimental sense," is not, after all, that different from us.⁴³ Now it is the T1000 who personifies aberrant mechanical being. His liquid metal substance allows him to melt into context with the greatest ease. In this he falls into in-difference, blurring the distinction between himself and his milieu. Nowhere is this better exemplified than in the scene where he samples and merges into the chequered floor in the Pescadero asylum, and then slowly rises from it, initially as a featureless head that still retains the chequering of the floor, then as a copy of the security-guard (*Figure 26*). When he walks through the metal security bars in the asylum (*Figure 27*), his body divides "like jello," assimilating itself to the object in its path, and then reconstitutes itself on the other side, inspiring horror

⁴³ Pfeil 247.



Figure 26 "Falling into in-difference": the T1000 in *Terminator 2*

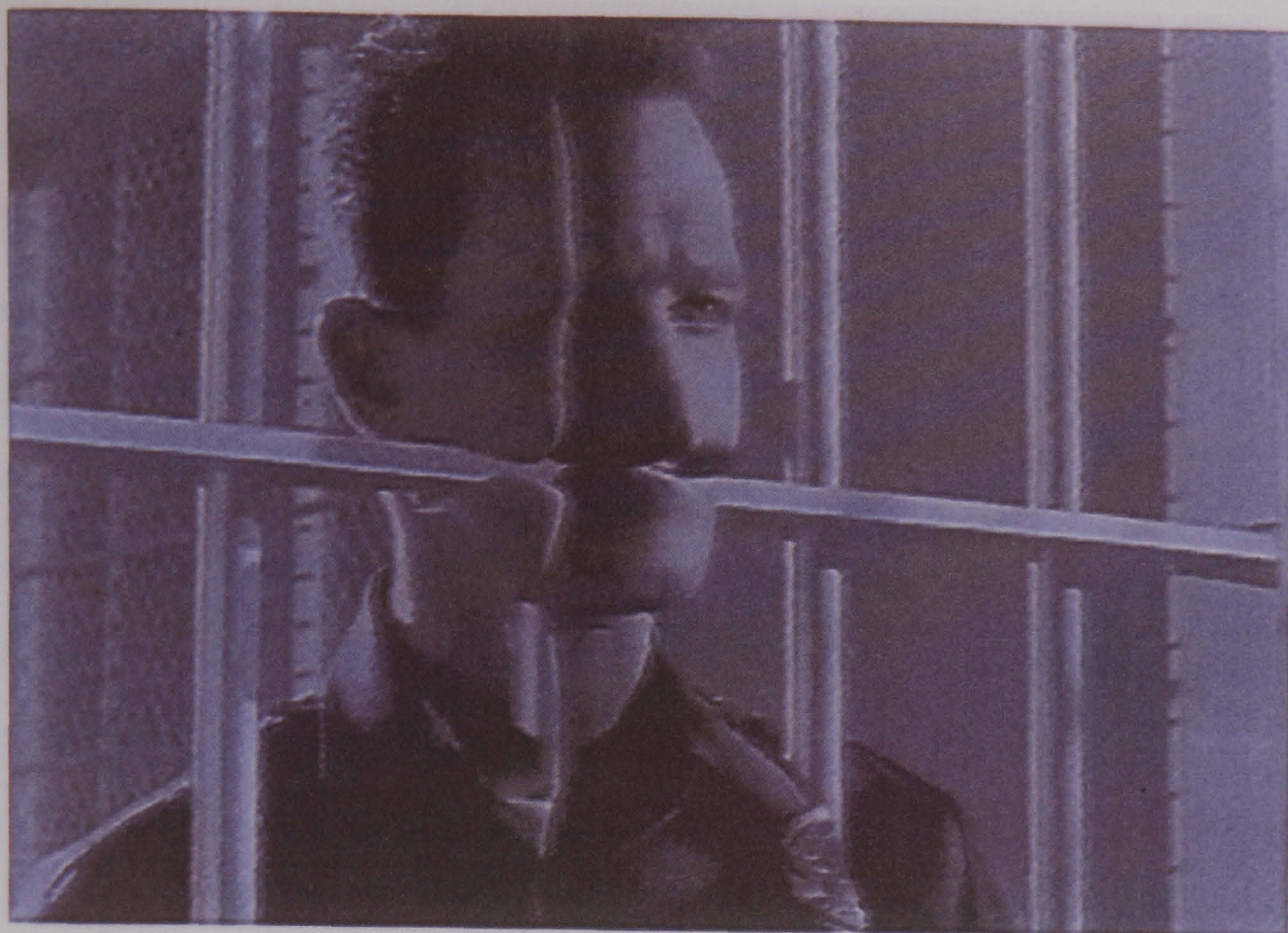


Figure 27 The T1000 Walking through Metal Bars

and awe in all spectators (even the recalcitrant Silberman finds his tried and tested beliefs begin to crumble).⁴⁴ Towards the end of the film, the T1000's morphing and melting capacities begin to work against him; he becomes so at one with his milieu, that he is threatened with his utter disappearance into it. In the steel-works at the film's finale, we see him malfunctioning and glitching. Most of these shots were cut from the release print, but exist in the special edition. They show the T1000's hand becoming stippled with the yellow and black stripes of the tape covering a railing after he touches it, and his shoes and lower legs becoming invaded by the patterning of the floor. The final showdown between the two machines offers the opportunity for further display of the T1000's mutability - when the T800 punches his face, the fist simply passes through the liquid metal, and, out of the hole, we see the T1000 forming gripping hands, with another head materializing elsewhere, to continue to fight his opponent. Melting into the vat, in his final demise, the T1000's morphing capacities again go out of control - but again provide the excuse for more computer-generated special effects. In the vat, he recapitulates several of his incarnations - Janelle, the hospital guard, the biker policeman, all screaming in agony.

While we take vicarious pleasure in seeing this imagistic dissolution, we also take pleasure when this spectacularly protean enemy is finally upstaged by the T800. This pleasure has to do, as Pfeil says, with "the stabilizing satisfactions provided by the return of the classically distinct, embodied (if no less synthetically produced) masculinity."⁴⁵ The T1000 is a body without organs - he has no fixed centre of control, no hierarchical organization, indeed no internal anatomical parts at all. He represents formless evil, the ever-changing visage of the enemy within - at one time communist, another time,

⁴⁴ James Cameron and William Wisher, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day - The Book of the Film* (New York: Applause Books, 1991) 105.

⁴⁵ Pfeil 253.

Native American or Hispanic, and, at another, the dangerous maternal. The T800, on the other hand, has a core personality - this is what enables him to regenerate at the last minute and make his heroic comeback, succeeding where Sarah had failed, earning even more our approval of "Arnold as Good Dependable Dad."⁴⁶ In this way, the film can reassert old definitions of the stable, empowered masculine self, while scapegoating those who have challenged white male privilege.

Some of the film's most elaborate special effects were lavished on realizing the T1000, special effects that mirror the Terminator's capacities for mimesis and regeneration.⁴⁷ The most famous of these is "morphing," a two-dimensional image processing technique (the name itself suggests affinities with the T1000's character). This was used to align the computer graphics with the live-action photography. In the sequence where the T1000 emerges from the burning truck, for example, we see a liquid metal man with a chrome appearance gradually become more differentiated in his features until he finally takes on his default gestalt once more. "Morphing" provides a cross-dissolve between the two images. A 3-D version of this technique, using software called "Model Interp," helped create the transitions between the chrome man phases.⁴⁸ That the technologies - themselves state of the art - uncannily double the Terminator - himself a state-of-the-art machine - is further suggested in the

⁴⁶ Pfeil 253.

⁴⁷ Bullet wounds impacting on his body are seen as "chrome flowers" over which his clothes quickly re-seal and reconstitute his body as a continuous surface. These were achieved by scoring the actor's clothing, and inserting into it a spring-loaded mechanism that would release the cloth to reveal the chromed flower, while the healing of these wounds was created through computer-generated effects, using image processing to show ripples and distortions in the cloth around the bullet hit. In its almost instant recovery from wounds, the T1000's body realizes the dream of standing outside time; our bodies, and the body of the 800 series Terminator, in contrast, retain their scars, and this indicates our subjection to time. Duncan 19.

⁴⁸ Duncan 25.

scene where the T1000 takes the shape of John's foster-mother, Janelle.⁴⁹ As she pulls out the arm she has used to impale John's foster-father, she bends it at the elbow in front of her, and examines it, turning her head slightly this way and that, as if marvelling for a moment at herself, at the state-of-the-art technological wonder she is, before transforming back, through the chrome metal man stages, into the T1000's default disguise. What can it mean to show a machine that recognizes itself? (The liquid metal also has reflective properties that make it seem that the T1000 is recognizing his image, as if in a mirror.)⁵⁰ So many of these effects seem to exceed their narrative function - they even seem to exceed the characterization of the Terminator (unlike the first Terminator, the T1000 shows pain). They appear self-referential, as if the film is gesturing to itself, at what it can do.⁵¹ As such they form a metacommentary on the cinematic apparatus itself, showing that the film's aberrant mechanical being/ morphing is part of cinema itself, that the repetitions and automatisms reflected in the films' content are reflected in the technology used to create them.

The themes are particularly suited to the medium that realizes them, and this is perhaps why anxieties about the machine are coming to the fore here, in film, rather than in other media. As a machine that runs by itself, the Terminator figures that other machine, the cinematic apparatus, capable of

⁴⁹ Ironically, this is a scene that makes use of more "primitive" devices to realize its effects: blade-arms made of plastic and fibreglass strapped onto the actress, while she holds her real arm behind her back. Duncan 25.

⁵⁰ We get a sense of this early in the film, when he pauses in front of a shop mannequin that uncannily resembles his chrome man form and gives it queer look of recognition.

⁵¹ Although it had used been before - in *Willow* (1988) and *The Abyss* (1989) - *Terminator 2* marked "the big breakthrough" for "morphing" imaging: as Michael Allen observes, "the scale and popular foregrounding of the computerized digital effects forced the film industry to see that such effects . . . were capable of generating substantial box-office returns." Michael Allen, "From *Bwana Devil* to *Batman Forever*: Technology in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema," in Neale and Smith 125.

taking and projecting pictures "automatically" - "all by itself."⁵² Caillois describes mimesis as "photography on the level of the object," and thus invites comparisons between mimesis and cinematography, photography on the level of the image.⁵³ Cinema is itself a likeness machine; it thrives on likeness - the movement of images projected in quick succession gives an impression of the life-like. Moreover, the term image is, as the film-maker Maya Deren remarks, "originally based on 'imitation,'" and "means in its first sense the visual likeness of a real object or person."⁵⁴ David Thomson points out that "the thought of cloning in a movie only reminds us that photography and cinematography were cloning devices long before the word or the process, let alone its danger, were active in science."⁵⁵ Cinema, he says, "has always played odd games with life and death; it is a medium filled with ghostliness The photograph defies death, after all, and it introduces us into the realm of the lifelike ditto device that lasts after death."⁵⁶ In this way, the mimetic properties of the Terminators, as well as the theme of cloning itself, which I shall be looking at in more detail in the next section, in relation to *Alien: Resurrection* (Jean-Pierre Jeunet, 1997), could be taken as a synecdoche for cinema. The time-machine, too, is a figure for cinema, which already realizes the dream of the reversibility of time.

II. Toys for the Boys

Although there are convergences between the themes of the *Terminator* films and the *Alien* films - themes to do with reproduction and primordial being - the ways which the *Alien* films respond to them are different. Like the *Terminator*

⁵² Maya Deren, "Cinematography: the Creative Use of Reality," in Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen, eds. *Film Theory and Criticism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) 216.

⁵³ Caillois 23.

⁵⁴ Deren 218.

⁵⁵ David Thomson, *The Alien Quartet* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1998) 173.

⁵⁶ Thomson 172-3.

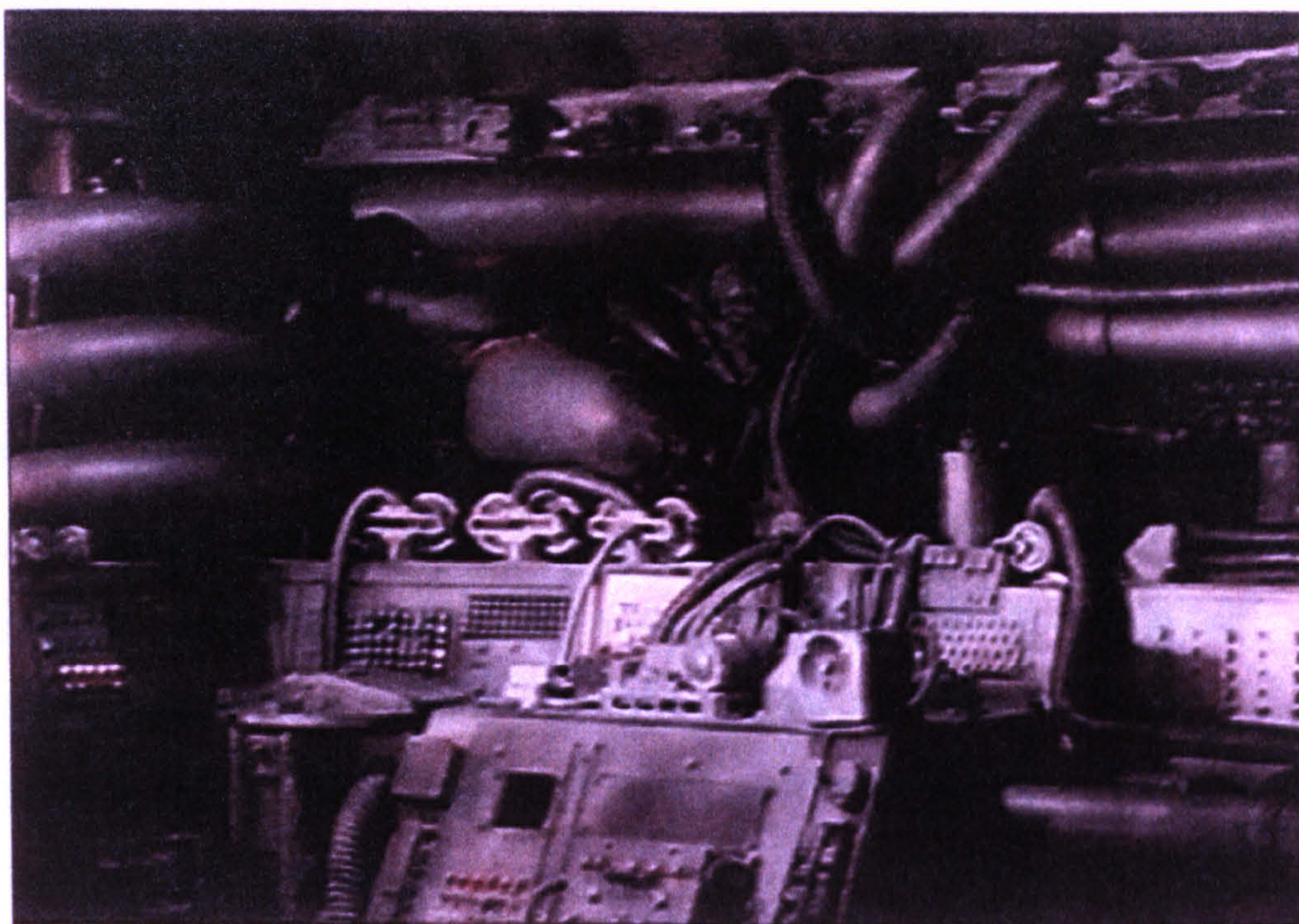


Figure 28 Fading into Context: Ridley Scott's *Alien*

films, the plots of the *Alien* films involve us with a seemingly unstoppable monster that, in *Alien*, is without remorse, without conscience, or any "delusions of morality," dispatching its victims one after the other, until all members of the crew save Ripley are dead. (Indeed *Alien* may have directly inspired *Terminator*.) The creature has advanced defence mechanisms - acid for blood - that make it near unbeatable ("you don't dare kill it," says one member of the crew, Parker) and the capacity to adapt to adverse environmental circumstances. Like the T1000, it is a mutable enemy, able to imitate human and machine parts, to merge into its surroundings (*Figure 28*). Its lethal potential and its ability to calculate the best chances for its survival - it stows itself away on the small escape ship when the *Nostromo* is scheduled to be detonated - gives it the status of an intelligent killing machine. This is the value that it holds for the Company, which plans to sell it to the "weapons division." Crucial to the terror and fascination it inspires is the way it undoes categories of sexual difference - in its form (it is both male *and* female), in its habitat (the alien derelict where it is first found is made up of a mixture of penile shafts and uterine tubes and caverns), and in its manner of birthing (male bodies are just as good hosts for its monstrous gestation as female ones). In their images of gender confusion, the *Alien* films could be said to reflect the cultural breakdown of traditional gender roles as well as feminist claims about the social constructedness of gender - cut loose from their anchors in sexed bodies, masculine and feminine signifiers drift, exchange places, and merge into each other. There is attraction as well as revulsion in their commingling. The revulsion is expressed most in certain images of men taking the woman's position to give birth. The process, as Creed suggests, is presented "from a male perspective, as the ultimate scenario of powerlessness, the ultimate violation of the body" - an image of horror, as when the alien bursts through

Kane's chest, spurting blood everywhere.⁵⁷ This perception of the maternal as a form of dispossession leads, as it does in the *Terminator* films, to male attempts to control and possess reproduction - in scientific projects to harvest the alien and tame, train and subordinate it to a state war-machine. The *Alien* films, too, are primal scene fantasies: a fantasmatic return to the mother's body, to view, interrogate and appropriate its processes. But whereas *Terminator's* primal scene fantasy tries to cover over the pain of sexual difference, in the *Alien* films the overcoming of difference is supposedly given as a fact, yet breaks down at crucial points.

This takes place through the heroine, Ripley: through the similarities which are established, across the series, between her and the alien. In *Alien*, Ripley is an uncertain hero - it isn't until halfway through the film that she takes centre stage. Up to that point, (male) audience identification has no real focus (unless it be, perhaps, on Dallas, the captain of the ship) and Ripley is a shadowy figure, who doesn't invite sympathy because she appears cold, emotionless, obstructive and dogmatic (she refuses to allow her companions back on the ship, keeping by the book in her strict adherence to quarantine regulations). When she finally does emerge as an important character, she unfixes stable gender categories: as Elizabeth Hills argues, she is "*both male/hero and female/victim*," taking on the alien single-handedly in the fashion of an action hero, whilst also being threatened by it in the manner of a traditional horror film heroine in the final scene in the escape shuttle.⁵⁸ As Hills writes, suspense in this film is generated by uncertainty about "what particular bodies are capable of" - and this forms another respect in which Ripley's character is drawn in a similar way to the alien.⁵⁹ The characters (and

⁵⁷ Creed, "Gynesis" 217

⁵⁸ Elizabeth Hills, "From 'Figurative Males' to Action Heroines: Further Thoughts on Active Women in Cinema," *Screen* 40.1 (Spring 1999): 38-50, 45.

⁵⁹ Hills 41.

spectators) puzzle over what the alien does with its prey, what form it will take next - its mutability is as much a mystery as its life-cycle - and when it will spring next. Ripley, too, has the capacity to surprise us, and, like the alien, to adapt to adverse circumstances. The film begins to suggest something that its sequels will make more explicit - that woman is "the other alien" in *Alien*.⁶⁰

As Penley has remarked, in science-fiction, "the question of sexual difference . . . is displaced onto the more remarkable difference between the human and the other."⁶¹ It shouldn't surprise us, then, that as Ripley is characterized in a manner that recalls the alien, the alien itself is increasingly given feminine traits: masculine fears of female sexuality and maternity gone awry are displaced onto the alien. Creed argues that what underlies the film's presentation of the alien is the image of "the archaic mother," who is totally dedicated to "the generative, procreative principle," who is "outside morality and the law," and who "threatens to give birth to equally horrific offspring, as well as threatening to incorporate everything in [her] path."⁶² Indeed, she says, the alien's "deadly mission" is portrayed "as the same as that of the archaic mother - to reincorporate and destroy all life."⁶³ For "archaic mother" we can easily read "death drive." In mythology she appears as the mother who eats her own young - in *Alien*, the other sacrificial mother is the ship's computer (called "Mother"), which the Company has programmed to ensure the survival of the alien life-form: all other priorities are "rescinded," the crew "expendable." This critique of capitalism's pursuit of profit (from the dollar value the alien is thought to hold as a weapon) is soon lost, however, as capitalism's excesses are displaced onto the figure of the alien, who is shown to embody maternity in excess.

⁶⁰ Hills 41.

⁶¹ Penley 132.

⁶² Barbara Creed, "*Alien* and the Monstrous-Feminine," in Kuhn 135-6.

⁶³ Creed, "*Alien*" 139.

This is especially the case in *Aliens* (James Cameron, 1986), where the focus is on the queen alien. In her effort to rescue the child, Newt, Ripley comes across the queen's breeding-ground, without realizing at first where she is. At the moment of her realization, the film cuts from a close-up of her face as she holds Newt to her to a shot of the alien eggs on the ground, taken from behind the mother-child pair. Then, as Ripley turns around, we are shown a mysterious funnel-like entity, depositing more eggs on the ground. As Ripley looks up, the camera travels up, across the funnel, which is revealed to be attached to the body of the queen (who later detaches herself from it to pursue the couple). The alien's characterization has shifted from its drive to kill one after another to relentless and monstrous breeding. The camera shots, by emphasizing the element of surprise and wonder, clarify that we are witnessing is another primal scene. The queen becomes a dark twin of Ripley's own maternal desire, which is developed in this film in her relationship with the orphan, Newt (whose name aligns her with the monster's offspring, and who first appears in the film as a black shape leaping across a corridor in a way that one might expect from the alien). Ripley and the queen are both shown ferociously protecting their young - another side of the archaic mother, that paradoxical figure who also sacrifices her own offspring.

Further evidence that the mother, in Creed's interpretation, is aligned with the death drive is provided in the fact that the alien's dreadful birthing is always linked with death, in the fact that confrontation with death through the alien is structurally identical to death through confrontation with the mother. "The desire to return to the original oneness of things, to the mother / womb, is primarily," Creed writes, "a desire for non-differentiation," while the "desire for and attraction of death suggests also a desire to return to the state of original oneness with the mother."⁶⁴ This is played out in the *Alien* films in a very

⁶⁴ Creed, "*Alien*" 136.

obvious way - the alien is born by killing its host, the human or animal body in which it has been gestating.⁶⁵ But it is also suggested in scenes where the screen cuts out. *Alien* is generally thought to make the alien more mysterious than its sequels by showing it elliptically - in economically edited shots. In much of the film, the alien's appearance is limited to only a few frames at a time. The alien is also shown to elude the imaging devices employed within the diegetic reality of the film, as when Ash follows the progress of the explorers sent out to investigate the SOS signal through images relayed back to the ship: once the explorers approach the alien derelict (from which the signal is being sent), the images become marred by interference, stopping altogether, and voice communication is disrupted by stochastic *noise*. Similarly, the device used by Lambert to keep track of Dallas when he goes to torch the alien in the ship's air shaft breaks down just at the crucial moment. When the signal reappears, Lambert is able to tell Dallas that the alien is moving straight towards his position; he begins to move, but in the wrong direction. Lambert's warning comes too late: Dallas turns around to find himself about to be embraced by the alien (it actually extends its arms in the manner of an embrace), before the picture suddenly cuts out. The interference this time doesn't directly correspond to any video screen in the film's diegetic reality (Lambert's tracking-device only has a grid that shows signals by points of light). It is cut into the very film we are watching. The screen that cuts out is a way of signifying, cinematically, the attraction and dread "of self-disintegration,

⁶⁵ *Alien 3* makes this connection between birthing and death very explicit in the scene where shots of the funeral service for Newt and Hicks are juxtaposed with shots of a dog belonging to one the prisoners, giving birth to the alien. Dillon (a prisoner) takes the sermon over from the prison warden, Andrews, and his words form a commentary both to the funeral and the bizarre birth, as his voice is carried over into shots of the alien: "within each death, no matter how small, there's always a new life . . . a new beginning . . ." As he utters these final words, we see the baby alien emerge, killing the dog.

of losing one's self or ego."⁶⁶ Here, the archaic mother is present, Creed says, "as the blackness of extinction the obliteration of the self."

The films further display their ambivalence to the feminine, and with it, its erosion of categories of sexual difference, in images of the phallic mother - most memorably, in the image of the baby alien that gnaws its way out of Kane's chest, penile in shape, with teeth that recall the figure of *vagina dentata*. The latter encapsulates masculine fears of castrating femininity, while the attribution of the phallus to the maternal figure indicates, Creed suggests, "a phallogocentric ideology terrified at the thought that women might desire to have the phallus" - that is, it is given to the maternal figure *by* a phallogocentric ideology and is there "to signify the monstrosity of women's desire to have the phallus."⁶⁷ But it is not only in the figure of the alien that the image of the phallic woman appears in the films - it is there, too, in the presentation of the action heroine - Ripley, and, in *Aliens*, the Latino marine Vasquez, played by Jenette Goldstein, who prefigures the muscled-up performance that Linda Hamilton would give in *Terminator 2*.⁶⁸ Like the hard-bodied Sarah Connor, Vasquez is something of an icon among lesbian spectators (she is thought to have upstaged Ripley). Yet her display of muscular power and prowess is undercut in the film. "Have you ever been mistaken for a man?" one of her fellow male marines asks her as she works out just after they have awoken from their cryogenic sleep; "No," she answers him, "Have you?" Underlying the question and Vasquez's riposte, positively affirming her difference, is the vague thought that such women have made sexual difference lose its meaning - something that the alien also implies; its prosthetic use of both male and female bodies presupposes a symmetry between men and women. The film retreats in

⁶⁶ Creed, "*Alien*" 136.

⁶⁷ Creed, "*Alien*" 139.

⁶⁸ Jenette Goldstein appears in *Terminator 2* as well, but this time softened up, taking the back-seat as John's foster-mother, Janelle.

horror from the implications of this, attempting to reassert differences (between human and alien), and tries to re-establish reproduction - when it is out of control - as a female domain.⁶⁹

In a subsequent scene shortly after this, we are shown another display of feminine strength, and once again it is framed by a male gaze. Ripley asks Captain Apone if there is anything she can do to help in the preparations for landing. He asks her what she can do, and she claims she can drive one of the loaders. Apone and Hicks, who is standing beside, smile and watch as Ripley straps herself into the cyborg lifter, and begins testing it out, flexing its mechanical limbs and grips: here, the phallic woman appears in the form of the woman whose body forms "assemblages" with machines / weapons - that this is an invested image is implied again in the later back-lit shot of Ripley in the power-loader before her final battle with the alien (*Figure 29*).⁷⁰ Here, the men clearly signal admiration in their gaze, and afterwards, when Ripley asks Hicks to show her how to use grenades, telling him that she can look after herself, he says, appreciatively, "I noticed." These displays of feminine power, as Colin Melinda Johnson argues, might be read ironically, or against the way they are embedded in the narrative (in which case, they cannot simply be reduced to spectacles for male possession).⁷¹ But the fact remains that they *are* set in narratives, ones where men's admiration is ambivalently placed.

This ambivalence towards women emerges in the characterization of the queen alien: "get away from her, you bitch," Ripley shouts at her when the alien reaches out for Newt (significantly the tough woman in another Cameron film, *The Abyss*, is constantly referred to as "the bitch"). *Alien 3* (David Fincher, 1992) continues this ambivalence - it is never clear whether the words of the

⁶⁹ Vasquez's Latin provenance also raises the spectre of "illegal aliens".

⁷⁰ Hills 45.

⁷¹ Colin Melinda Johnson, "Of Dykes and Deltoids: Irony and Fetishism(s) in Lesbian Spectatorship of Macho-Women Films," *Spectator* 16.1 (Fall/ Winter 1995): 45-57, 46.

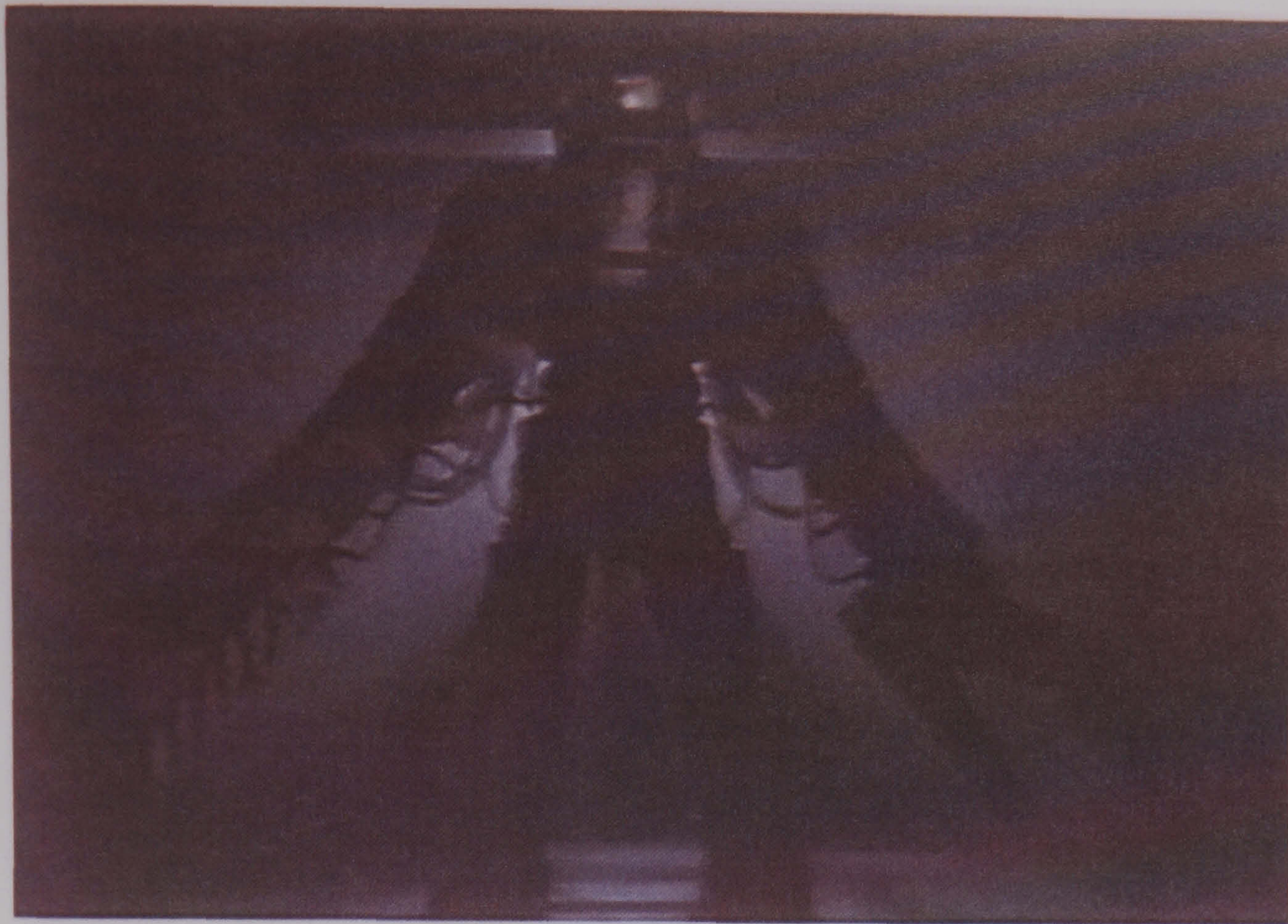


Figure 29 Ripley in the Power-Loader (James Cameron, *Aliens*)

trailer, "the bitch is back" refers to the Ripley or the alien, and the problems that arise from the alien's presence are equated with the problems arising from Ripley's appearance in an all-male colony of prisoners on a little-visited planet called Fiorina Fury 161. They are all murderers and rapists, who haven't seen a woman for years, and who have all taken the vow of celibacy and become monks ("Well, I guess I must make you nervous," Ripley tells them.) This overwhelmingly points to the fact that the figure of the alien and the feminine / maternal have become increasingly intertwined as the series progresses, paving the way for the developments of *Alien: Resurrection*, where the distance between female biology and the representation of the alien narrows even more, where, as Hills says, "the hybridization of Ripley's and the alien's DNA works to cancel the distinction between them altogether."⁷²

At the same time, the alien proves to be increasingly beatable; that is, it loses resonance as a machine that never stops in the plain sense as this topos is transferred to the realm of reproduction. Despite this, or maybe even because of this, to distract attention from this displacement, the dialogue in the films keeps insisting on the creature's unstoppable nature, in contradiction to what we see: aliens being blasted apart right, left, and centre in *Aliens* and *Alien: Resurrection*. In *Aliens*, Ripley tries to reassure Newt that she is in safe company ("These people are soldiers. They're here to protect you"); Newt replies, "it won't make any difference." This contrasts with *Terminator*, where Lieutenant Traxler tells Sarah that she is sure to be safe from her pursuer in the police-station ("you got thirty cops in this building"). His words are powerfully overturned (by the Terminator's actions), whereas in *Aliens*, Ripley's words are not. But as the alien's sheer unstoppableness diminishes in the sequels to *Alien*, its mimetic drive (the drive to be like) comes increasingly to the foreground, just as human beings' physical and biological similarities with the alien do.

⁷² Hills 46.

Aliens establishes this early on, in a shot of the back of Ripley's hand, hanging limply, with the veins protruding - the image briefly recalls the shape of the parasitic alien face-huggers seen in *Alien*, before the camera tracks to the cigarette that Ripley is distractedly allowing to burn out in her fingers.⁷³

Cameron portrays Ripley in the same kind of way that he portrays Sarah in *Terminator 2*: these women are haunted and agitated by the ordeals they have faced (Sarah is frequently shown chain-smoking in *Terminator 2*). Bitter and hardened, they have become like the foe they encountered. They are forced to return to face to their worst nightmare - forced, again and again, to return to the same place, the same scenario each time, but with a difference. *Alien: Resurrection* shows a very particular intuition of this, and the uncanny repetition it implies - within the film, the same set was often used, again and again, for different scenes, and to represent different locations; only the settings of its in-built lighting system were changed each time: "We'd then wet the set down, make it oily or gritty, and add smoke; it would become a completely different place, but with an almost sub-conscious suggestion of a place we've been in before."⁷⁴ This lighting decision taken by the cinematographer, Darius Khondji, in fact illustrates the structure of all the sequels: the continual return journey.

In each film, Ripley is the one who is instrumental in defeating the alien. Now, one might wonder: doesn't this emphasis on an ever-triumphant, ever-resilient female hero mark something radical and new in popular cinema, making the films into transformative texts, as some have suggested?⁷⁵ The answer is: no. *Terminator's* critical impulse, as we saw, is neutralized by its cult of (white male) individualism; and something similar happens in the *Alien* films,

⁷³ The face-huggers smother their victims to insert their deadly seed in them.

⁷⁴ Christopher Probst, interview with Jean-Pierre Jeunet and Darius Khondji, "Malevolent Mutations," *American Cinematographer* 78.11 (November 1997): 30-37, 34.

⁷⁵ Hills 42.

with their suggestion that problems can be solved by the individual acts of a white middle-class woman. Here, the white middle-class woman provides a conduit for reasserting white male privilege (a conduit through which white males may identify with heroic individualism), but also with the hint that women must clear up "the mess" that they themselves have made.⁷⁶ In *Alien*, for example, the possibility of collective action is dismissed out of hand. Towards the end of the film, Ripley forms a team with Parker (a black working-class man) and Lambert (another middle-class woman): the threesome defeat the android Ash, who has been programmed to safeguard the alien (with Parker and Lambert saving Ripley from his vicious attack) and collaboratively work to defy the Company and escape on board the shuttle. But the threesome is quickly broken up - Lambert and Parker are slaughtered by the alien while they are preparing to escape. As Newton says, "Ripley is not permitted to achieve imaginary resolution until she has been separated from an oppositional and potentially forceful collective."⁷⁷ Although Lambert has always shown herself to be hysterical (and therefore of no heroic use), Parker proved himself to be a valuable force in this team - and of all the crew, he is the one who is most vociferous in criticizing the Company, complaining about his low pay and the scandalous way in which the Company has used its workers to procure the alien life-form. His grievances point up the dehumanization of labour in late capitalism, revealing that the problems with which the crew are dealing are social and economic in origin - something that the film works to occlude. Therefore, by removing Parker and Lambert, and by allowing Ripley to emerge as sole survivor and hero, who can manage these problems *on her own*, the film also loses the force of its critique of capitalism.

⁷⁶ Newton 85.

⁷⁷ Newton 86.

Ripley is shown to be unsympathetic to Parker's demands for higher pay - "you'll get whatever's coming to you," she says, as the two working-class men, Parker and Brett, the other engineer, grumble behind her back. As Newton says, those who contest Ripley's authority also provide the occasion for hostility against her "to be ventilated and vicariously participated in, while protecting white, middle-class viewers from having to identify with that ventilation."⁷⁸ As Ripley asserts her superiority over the two manual male labourers, white middle-class men can remind themselves that they "are still superior to *someone*." On the other hand, Ash, who is, Newton writes, "ostensibly a white, middle-class male himself, scores a series of victories over Ripley in which white male viewers can vicariously participate." Ash's assault on Ripley's leadership climaxes in the scene where he beats her up and rams a magazine into her mouth. That this is a form of rape is suggested by the background of these shots, where we see the first overtly sexualized image of a woman in the film, on the page of a magazine, while the oral sadism of this scene can be linked to the face hugger scenes (where the alien suffocates its victim). At this point, Newton says, Ash is a "covert emblem of men dehumanized by their work and men dehumanized by their rage at women," but since he is revealed at this point to be an android, he is also "a figure safely dissociated from the middle-class male viewer."⁷⁹ Thus, the sadistic attack on Ripley can at once be enjoyed and managed.

Having said that the films override the possibility of collective action in making Ripley the embodiment of the individualist hero, there is also a sense in which this is not strictly true in the sequels. But here again, the measures taken serve to affirm male privilege. In *Aliens*, just as in the *Terminator* films, there is a man on hand to help the woman, and to provide a "father figure" for Newt -

⁷⁸ Newton 85.

⁷⁹ Newton 85.

at times Corporal Hicks (Michael Biehn, who, as Reese, played a similar role in *Terminator*), at other times the android Bishop (Lance Henriksen). For all the credit Cameron has been given for portraying macho or strong women, they never appear in his films without being supplied with a man to help and protect them. But in the following sequels, men are given strong, supportive roles, too: in *Alien 3*, Ripley is helped by Dillon (Charles S. Dutton), and in *Alien: Resurrection*, Johner (Ron Perlman) survives to the end to provide a foil for Ripley.

The other way in which male privilege is reasserted is in the attempts to control the feminine by appropriating its maternal powers. As I have suggested, the *Alien* films show a fascination with the maternal body: this fascination is shown to be guided by a scopic drive, and a cognitive urge, looking on at the scene of birth as if "there was *something* to see," to take apart and understand.⁸⁰ When Kane descends into the depths beneath the alien derelict in *Alien*, he finds that the eggs stored there are protected by a hymen-like band of blue light, which he pierces not only by putting his hand through, but also by looking (we are shown the eggs from his point of view). The magnificence of the maternal body is also revealed in camera shots that exceed the characters' point of view, such as the shots of the derelict ship in *Alien*, where the camera pulls back to show the magnitude of the cavern in which the characters have found themselves, and the backward travelling shot across the alien queen's head in *Alien: Resurrection*. This alien queen, although newly born, has already grown huge and awesome. The films suggest that birth and growth are the ultimate mystery, a mystery that has to be interrogated, solved, and mastered for ourselves.

This reaches its climax in the scientists' attempt to clone the alien in *Alien: Resurrection* - from Ripley's blood samples on ice taken from Fiorina

⁸⁰ Braidotti 49.

Fury 161, the setting of *Alien 3*.⁸¹ The cloning experiments take place under the aegis of the United Systems Military, on a vessel belonging to that organization called the Auriga, stationed outside regulated space. Although the cloned Ripley is seen only as a "meat by-product," the scientists decide to keep her alive - to them, she is a curiosity, "the latest thing," for unexpected "benefits" have accrued from the genetic transfer between human and alien. It transpires that the scientists haven't "pulled" the alien "all the way" out from the cloned Ripley: she can still feel it behind her eyes, she can hear it moving. She has its strength, and its acid blood - she herself has now become lethal, near impossible to kill - and she is able to communicate telepathically with her alien "daughter" (she has an innate sense of where it is). When she first comes to consciousness, she finds herself in a white, semi-transparent cloth sac, and rips her way out of it with her nails - Ripley's coming-into-the-world is metaphorically related to that which is characteristic of the alien.

Meanwhile, the alien creatures to which the queen gives birth are shown to have developed new powers - the ability to move through water and spit acidic venom. Moreover, after her first reproductive cycle, which follows the pattern seen in the previous films, and for which human hosts, supplied by pirates of a small ship called the Betty, are used, the queen alien develops a human reproductive cycle - this is Ripley's "gift" to her, as one of the scientists, Gedimen, who has been cocooned in the queen's lair, calls it. The creature to which she now gives birth bursts out of her in the same way that Ripley burst out of the artificial sac in a scene placed as close to the beginning of the film as this scene is from the end. This baby alien is the most humanoid-looking one yet - Ripley's "grandchild," who subsequently kills its real mother, and lavishes

⁸¹ Ripley was pregnant with a queen alien in *Alien 3*. The cloning attempt presupposes that a genetic transfer between the alien and its host has already taken place in Ripley's blood cells: her DNA code has already been re-written to encompass the alien's DNA.

its attentions and longings for motherly affection on Ripley instead. This completes a bizarre mother-child pairing to add to the other (family) romances that the film has set up, including that between Ripley and Call (both "constructs," one a clone, the other an android). These pairings are the setting for deliciously perverse desires - same-sex, incestuous, and cross-species desires. The sexuality and sensuality that the alien embodied from the first film are unleashed here, and the characters of *Alien: Resurrection* positively relish it. Elgyn falters for words as he tells his girlfriend Hillard, co-pilot of the Betty, who has fastened herself into her seat for landing, what "the sight of a woman all strapped in a chair like that" does to him. The S&M factor is turned up by the costumes - tight, ribbed brown attire, with dominatrix boots to match, and nails painted dark purple-brown for Ripley. The colours and the shapes are meant to associate her with the alien; her hair has a wetted texture to suggest her affinity with the alien, and her skin is lit in a similar way to the aliens - it looks shiny and reflective.⁸² When she moves she mimics their predatory swaying, and she propels herself through the water as the aliens do (Sigourney Weaver took care to model herself on the movements of the aliens). Weaver makes the Ripley of this film vampire-like - she is a character who knows she has come back from the dead (she has scrambled memories of her earlier existence); she is preternaturally fresh and resilient.

Now at one with the alien, Ripley sinks and nearly disappears into the brown mass of the body of the queen, in a scene that is figured as a return to pre-oedipal jouissance. The fantasy of the return to the mother's body, made so horrific elsewhere (in this film as well as in the other films of the series) can for once be indulged in without anxiety. But this doesn't mean that the film has lost the series' characteristic ambivalence towards reproduction - or to the alien, for that matter (the grandchild is flushed out into space just as the creatures in the

⁸² Probst 40.

other films are; even though the loss this time is painful to Ripley, and is figured as separation anxiety between mother and child, she is the one who orchestrates it). Nor do the film's celebration of perversity and Ripley's incredible ability to adapt and survive - her transformative power, or what Hills calls Ripley's "body-in-becoming" - detract from the fact that all these are under male control.⁸³ "You can't teach it [the alien] tricks," Ripley tells the scientist who heads the cloning project. "Why not," he replies. "We're teaching you." Ripley has come back from the dead, but it is the male scientists who have engineered her, who have enabled this, not her own powers of self-regeneration and transformation. It is the male scientists who have given birth to the possibilities - the perverse desires and birthings - which the film explores. Gedimen looks on, and provides a running commentary during the birth of the alien "grandchild" and its subsequent slaughter of its own mother: the matricides, too, are presented from a male point of view.

Ripley realizes how much she is a product of science when she and the rest of the party who have survived the aliens make their way across the Auriga to escape in the Betty. Ripley stops at a door, labelled 1-7; she knows that she has an 8 stamped on her arm, now the meaning of this dawns on her. She wanders in, and walks among the specimen jars of the aborted attempts to clone her. In *Terminator*, we saw how the drive to make the other into me, the son's apocalyptic desire to be who he is, abrogates the rights of the mother. Here, that same desire has subsumed the maternal (made the other into itself) to create a specimen *like* Ripley, repeating experiments to re-produce her, for curiosity and profit. Baudrillard writes that "the mirror stage is abolished in cloning, or rather it is parodied therein in a monstrous fashion" and indeed it is as a parody of the mirror stage that Ripley recognizes distorted versions of herself and the alien here - fetuses with overgrown heads and more fully-

⁸³ Hills 46.

grown specimens, human flesh-tones mixed in with alien tails, teeth and fingers.⁸⁴ Her own grimace is reflected in their expressions. Teeth and eyes appear out of place - laterally displaced on one specimen's face, in one case, emerging from an arm in another. The mirror is an anamorphic one, and as well as being the scene for an uncanny encounter with Ripley's genetic doubles, it is the scene where the director's aesthetic encounters itself (the look of *Alien: Resurrection* and *City of Lost Children*, Jeunet's 1995 film, are defined by their use of anamorphic lenses). Next to the specimen-jars, and linked to a life-support machine is the number 7 clone that most closely resembles Ripley. Viewers might recognize her from the opening credit sequence, where among the anamorphically distorted images of an alien-human hybrid one can see one perfect brown eye. It is here, in this storage room that the desire that brought her into being, and the meaning of the film's opening images, finally becomes readable. Number 7 implores Ripley to kill her, which Ripley does, torching the six specimen jars as well in her rage at what science has done. In so doing, she embodies an anarchival impulse, destroying the traces of what allowed her to be.

In this scene, however, the film retreats in its representation of the excesses of capitalism and scientific curiosity - we are shown that Ripley number 8 has been cloned after only seven failed attempts, and given the discrepancy between the appearance of these clones and Ripley herself, one might wonder whether the film has cheated with the margin of error it has given us. In our own time, it took 277 trials to clone Dolly the sheep (this again is only an official figure), but even in the technologically-advanced future of the film, should there not, surely, have been many *more* aborted experiments, and what of the 200 years that have lapsed between the events of this film and the

⁸⁴ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulations*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 97.

last - were there not efforts to retrieve Ripley and her precious offspring during that time? The serial abortions in the story actually replay the abortions that took place in the repeated attempts to reactivate the series - with *Alien 3*, there were many discarded scripts, and with *Alien: Resurrection*, many directors - including David Cronenberg - who were offered the project and turned it down.⁸⁵ The business of making serials is not exempt from repetition-compulsions. With each repetition it becomes harder to follow the success of *Alien* and *Aliens* (box-office statistics reveal that *Alien 3* and *Alien: Resurrection* were far less popularly received), a crisis that is in part to do with the old forms coming to be perceived as clichés. *Alien: Resurrection* protects itself (and its spectators) from this by recycling the old forms with a tongue-in-cheek knowingness; it is with a certain irony (and facetiousness) that the characters face the extra-terrestrial menace. Moreover, the film gestures to its own conceit - repetition through reproduction (cloning) - with cynicism and apathy: when Johner refers to Ripley's escapades with the aliens in her previous life, saying to her, "I heard you, like, ran into these things before . . . What did you *do*?" she replies, in deadpan fashion, "I died."⁸⁶

The separation in time, in the fiction of *Alien: Resurrection*, between the event of Ripley's death and her regeneration (200 years) underlines the dislocation of time that technologies of reproduction imply. This applies to all forms of mechanical reproduction (including photography and cinematography) as well as to computer simulations - repetition can be independent of the moorings in space and time of the object being reproduced; it doesn't matter if the original no longer exists, indeed, as Baudrillard, points out, recalling Walter Benjamin, "things are conceived from the beginning as a function of their

⁸⁵ Thomson 135.

⁸⁶ David Thomson also comments on the cynicism and apathy shown in *Alien: Resurrection*, and in this scene in particular. Thomson 147.

unlimited reproduction."⁸⁷ Cloning, where any living cell can be used to produce an organism genetically identical to that from which it came, is only another instance of this, although it extends to the level of individuals: cells frozen as Ripley's are, or preserved in any other viable way, can be used for reproduction across time. What distinguishes cloning from technologies of mechanical reproduction, however, is the fact that it relies on a code (that is, on cybernetics). Each cell of the body holds the genetic information necessary to construct the whole, each cell is a potential prosthesis of the body: as Baudrillard writes, "If the prosthesis is commonly an artifact that supplements a failing organ, or the instrumental extension of the body, then the DNA molecule . . . is the prosthesis par excellence, the one that will allow for the indefinite extension of this body by the body itself - this body being nothing but the indefinite series of its prostheses."⁸⁸ Cloning is reproduction without sex, and thus one could say that it looks back to an earlier stage of organic existence, "prior to sexuation."⁸⁹ As Baudrillard says, "isn't it this form of scissiparity, this reproduction and proliferation through pure contiguity that *is* for us, in the depths of our imaginary, death and death drive - what denies sexuality and wants to annihilate it, sexuality being the carrier of life, that is to say of a critical and mortal form of reproduction?" As such, cloning constitutes a fantasy of regression which, in addition, is cast in exactly the same terms as the desire to make the other into me / into an extension of me.

⁸⁷ Baudrillard 99.

⁸⁸ Baudrillard 98.

⁸⁹ Baudrillard 96. In Freud, too, sexuality is seen to be less primordial than death, even though he postulated that sexuality was an early feature of organic life - something that contradicts the findings of biology that sexuality is a late, rather than early, acquisition. He did this because he wanted to ascribe to the sexual drives the compulsion to repeat that he thought was characteristic of the drive in general - that is, because he wanted to keep to his argument about regression.

The familiar point made by Foucault that the body has become an object of knowledge in modernity is especially relevant to biotechnology, which makes the body visible as an object of control and manipulation in an unprecedented way.⁹⁰ As Rosi Braidotti says, the new reproductive technologies transform the body "into a factory of detachable pieces," where any given organ can be emancipated from "the bodily unity" - for her a problematic phenomenon that she calls "organs without bodies."⁹¹ *Alien: Resurrection* figures this contemporary panopticon on the body in shots where the cloned Ripley is looked at, studied, in a test-tube, or in her cylindrical cell (through its transparent roof we can see patrolling wardens). Surveillance on the outside is matched by that on the body's inner terrain - the film forefronts the important everyday function of DNA in this society in the DNA passwords used to open doors on the ship - you are required to breathe on a panel, and the door opens only when the vapour has been analyzed and matched with existing codes on the database of the ship's computer, "Father."⁹²

By calling the ship's computer's "Father," and by foregrounding the male scientists and military personnel in charge of the cloning project, the film suggests that technology has appropriated the functions of the female body *for* men. For Braidotti, the fantasy of levelling sexual difference, as exemplified by our new biopower, but seen also in the products of popular culture, paves the way for a dangerous "homologation of women into a masculine model." She writes, "in a cultural order that, for centuries, has been governed by the male homosocial bond, the elimination of sexual difference can only be a one-way

⁹⁰ Braidotti 59, 60.

⁹¹ Braidotti 61. With cloning, one can literally create organs without bodies; by turning off certain genes, it is possible to grow specialized tissue, such as bone marrow tissue, or even body parts.

⁹² One can easily hack into the system, however, as Call breaks into Ripley's cell using a bunch of sprays, which she tries one after another until the computer finally recognizes her as "General Perez."

street toward the appropriation, elimination, or homologation of the feminine in/of women; it is a toy for the boys."⁹³ This homologation allows one woman's uterus to be seen as the same as any other - and even a male abdomen to be seen as an equivalent of a uterus. As such, it occludes the specificities of sexed bodies, together with the positive differences of one sex from another. In present-day cloning, where a donor of an egg cell is still needed for the nuclear transfer technique, the role of the female is already severely diminished: one egg cell is as good as any other. Even in the case of Dolly, the cells that provided the genetic data were seen merely as convenient raw materials that no longer mattered once the experiment met success, allowing the scientist to take the credit for reproduction all by himself: the sheep that provided the udder cells for her cloning has long since been slaughtered and sold for meat (Ian Wilmut was still able to prove that Dolly's genes came from that sheep, and that they had no resemblance to the genes of the sheep that "provided the egg" nor to those of the ewe that "served as Dolly's surrogate mother" - he kept a sample of frozen udder cells for this purpose.)⁹⁴

At the end of the twentieth century, science reached the point where it was finally able to realize the dream of parthenogenesis articulated at its beginning, Marinetti's dream of creating without the aid of woman. The *Alien* and *Terminator* films sum up many of the motifs discussed in previous chapters: the need to find narcissistic solutions for the male body thought to be at "risk" from modernity; the scapegoating of women; the fantasy of overcoming sexual difference; the mimetic identification with the other; the investment in war as an aesthetic experience, as a fit subject for cinema; and the attraction of the inhuman beneath the refined, civilized surface forms of culture, an identification with the id, or death drive. The fears of feminization and the

⁹³ Braidotti 54.

⁹⁴ Gina Kolata, *Clone: the Road to Dolly and the Path Ahead* (London: Penguin, 1997) 26.

revival of "Momism" in the *Alien* and *Terminator* films recall the anxieties surrounding the shellshocked men who returned from the First World War; as in *Metropolis*, so in these contemporary films, fears of technology have been projected onto the female-maternal body, showing that the fantasy of the machine is also a fantasy about female sexuality. Furthermore, the *Terminator* films give their answer to modernist montage in the form of sounds that convey the agitating power of the image as well as in a metacommentary on cinema, which foregrounds the doubling between the themes and the technologies used to represent them. In their presentation of spectacles of violence, and their images of suspense and murder, the *Terminator* and *Alien* films can also be linked to *Crash*, and the guilty-sadistic witnessing of the road accident: in all of these our perverse desires are turned into extreme pleasures through vicarious identification with what we see. Cinema gives form and representation to affects that we are unable to experience fully in reality and this has made it the primary forum for the cultural enjoyment of the death drive.

Witnessing Death (Ballard's and Cronenberg's *Crash*)

We followed Vaughan back to the accident site. Hundreds of faces pressed at the windows of the cars moving down the flyover. Spectators stood three deep on the sidewalks and central reservation A considerable number of children were present, many lifted on their parents' shoulders to give them a better view.

- J.G. Ballard, *Crash* (1973)¹

Now we do not even need to meet to procreate. Sex has become a human invention, an art form, a form of technology, no longer having a biological basis.

- David Cronenberg²

What draws the public to gather at the scene of wounded and dismembered bodies? The phenomenon of motorists slowing down at the scene of accidents to peer at the derelict vehicles and the damaged bodies is so pervasive in our culture that Richard Boothby calls it a "modern banality."³ Yet he asks, what is it that we hope to see there, hoping to see "in the heart of fearing it," as we take our fill of the spectacle? These accidents engage a complex array of emotions: even as we are irresistibly drawn, we feel we are looking where we shouldn't look - we approach the spectacle with all the guilt of voyeurs, with survivor guilt, too. As David Cronenberg explains, "part of it is: 'Thank God that's not me.' And part of it is ' . . . if that was me what would it feel like?'"⁴ Our guilt is bound up with an uneasy kind of sadistic visual pleasure, pleasure that we want to reject and have at the same time. Some of this is conscious (on the one hand we feel horrified that we could harbour such amoral desires; on

¹ J.G. Ballard, *Crash* (London: Vintage, 1995)154-5.

² David Cronenberg, interview with Harlan Johnson, "David Cronenberg at Cannes '96," par. 7, online, zappa.users.netlink, Internet, 19 May 1996.

³ Richard Boothby, *Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud* (London: Routledge, 1991) 40.

⁴ David Cronenberg, interview with Jim Emerson, "David Cronenberg on the Collision of Sex, Violence and Politics in *Crash*," par. 11, online, zappa.users.netlink, Internet, 1996.

the other, we relish them), but the conflict takes place on the level of the superego and the id, too. Cronenberg's comment moreover suggests that the sadistic enjoyment of those doing the looking cannot be separated from a kind of imaginary transitivity, a narcissistic confusion of the self with the image of the other, where, as Boothby says, "the fantasized dismemberment of another individual provides the unconscious equivalent of self-mutilation."⁵ The accidents evoke a contradictory set of identifications, both sadistic and masochistic, showing the work of both superego and id. The spectacle of someone else's pain or death, and the dismembered bodies of others, reflects back on oneself, on one's own wounding or death. What may be at stake in our captivation by the site of the accident is a narcissistic identification with the image of the space of death, the site of the wound, a group identification in which the death drive is at work.

This brings us into the similar, but not identical, terrain explored by Mark Seltzer. In contemporary culture, cinema, print and electronic media have given a wide outlet to our guilty investment in accidents and disasters - their dissemination of images keep alive our fascination with dismembered bodies and mangled vehicles, and have effectively created a community bound by the spectacle of death and the wound. An "erotic violence," Seltzer says, is to be found at this intersection between public space and private fantasy. This is the realm of "the pathological public sphere," and "wound culture" is a particular manifestation of it.⁶

But what happens when someone makes a film that specifically addresses this kind of looking or identification, where that identification is

⁵ Boothby 41.

⁶ Mark Seltzer, "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere," *October* 80 (Spring 1997): 3-26, 3. Seltzer's term "wound culture" encompasses not only the attraction of crowds to the scene of accidents, but also the exposure of suffering on television chat shows. It is a culture that makes "trauma" common coinage in America.

explicitly shown to be sexual - and where it is suggested that this is the direction sex will take now that it is no longer tied to reproduction? That is, what happens when someone makes a film about a fantasy that is, in the first instance, about technologies of seeing, bearing in mind that film is a medium that invites the gaze and identification and that has, moreover, traditionally presented "the victimized body" - the woman's - as "the body of cinema" and held it up for the sadistic gaze of male spectators?⁷ As we shall see, Cronenberg's 1996 film, *Crash*, points up the coincidence between the look in cinema and the subject that it portrays - cinema is already implicated in the fantasy. And what is noticeable about reactions to the film is that they are, in part, intimately implicated in its own fantasy scenario, something that Cronenberg anticipated when he said that people want to see the film "in the same way" that they want to see an accident.⁸ The film exerts a certain pull - it has a certain allure. The very thought of a film which deals with characters who find erotic excitement in car-crashes evokes in the mind the idea of enjoying perverse, forbidden desires, desires not sanctioned by culture, and cinema is precisely what offers the opportunity of experiencing those desires vicariously. When *Crash* premiered at Cannes in May 1996, some of the audience walked out even before the film had finished, and one of them, Alexander Walker, film critic for London's *Evening Standard*, went on to spearhead a campaign against the film's theatre release in Britain. Such moral outrage is itself an example of the ambiguous feelings that the fantasies in *Crash* explore - exactly that kind of uneasy fascination that draws us to gather at the road accident. Many viewers went to see the film *in order to* enjoy perverse desires and simultaneously disavow them - although some (all male, it seems) waited until the homosexual

⁷ Vicky Lebeau, *Lost Angels: Psychoanalysis and Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1995)139.

⁸ David Cronenberg, interview with Jim Shelley, "Always Crashing in the Same Car," *The Guardian Weekend* 2 Nov. 1996: 12-19, 16.

encounter between James Ballard and Vaughan to stage their protest walk-out. Even though there is nothing particularly perverse or unusual in this scene, neither in relation to what has come before nor to what has previously been depicted in cinema, this was a common reaction in theatres across the U.S., Britain and Canada.⁹ Boredom and confusion was another typical audience reaction. These viewers charged the film with being repetitious (while they also alleged that nothing was happening), and for thwarting identification (nothing of the characters' motivation was shown, they said), although some of them confessed that they couldn't tear themselves away. J.G. Ballard, on the other hand, was "absolutely shaken" when he first watched the film (which is based on his book): "it is one thing to read these things on the printed page, or imagine them. It is quite another to see it on the screen."¹⁰ If the film goes further than the book, if it's more powerful than the book, as Ballard suggests, what is it about the filmic medium in general, and Cronenberg's approach in particular, that makes it work in this way?

Feminist critics, however, judged the film from another perspective - for some of them, the film was not radical or perverse enough. Joan Copjec claims that the film's "coupling of flesh and chrome is merely the *mise-en-scène* for the coupling of the man and the woman."¹¹ In a similar vein, Barbara Creed denounces the film for its phallogentric sexual politics. She writes that "the possibility of union between human and machine is displaced, in the main, on to the woman's body" - the woman is represented as "the prosthetic other" (it is always she who "bears the 'wound' that is fucked.")¹² That is, a fear of the

⁹ What *was* particularly unbearable about the scene was that it suddenly pulled the ground away from some male spectators' narcissistic identification with the protagonist, who, up to this point, has been having sex with almost every female character in the film. See Cronenberg, interview with Emerson.

¹⁰ Cronenberg, interview with Shelley 16.

¹¹ Joan Copjec, quoted in Parveen Adams, "Cars and Scars," *New Formations* 36 (Autumn 1998): 60-72, 61.

¹² Creed, "Anal Wounds, Metallic Kisses," *Screen* 39.2 (Summer 1998): 175-

female body can be seen to underlie *Crash*, showing that its exploration of wound culture takes male desire as its norm. These responses nevertheless leave the question of guilt and sadism untouched. Parveen Adams, on the other hand, maintains that while there are scenes in the film that could be read as "conventional" heterosexuality - "the characters in the film talk to each other about orgasm" - phallic jouissance is not really what is at stake in *Crash*.¹³ Neither, for that matter, is perverse jouissance, and in her view this means that neither sadism nor masochism can account for what is happening there, and this complicates the structures of identification I outlined earlier in relation to the road accident. Adams suggests that the awful enjoyment of the wound is uppermost in *Crash*, while the "fundamental marks of identity" - gender, object choice, sexual aim - fall away.¹⁴ Her remark that gender diminishes in importance as the film goes on echoes the claim Cronenberg himself made in response to audience reactions to the encounter between the two men - a response that could be taken as a defence and therefore not really dealing with the issue at all: "at that point in the movie, these characters are almost beyond gender. It's not even a homosexual act anymore; it's just a multi-sexual, omni-sexual, something beyond sexuality."¹⁵ I will be arguing, on the other hand, that just as sadism and masochism are still within its parameters (in the form of our guilty-sadistic enjoyment of the car-crash as spectacle), so the film pulls back from the fantasy of going beyond gender. It is more about the heterosexual relation than Adams allows.

In what follows, I shall be trying to make sense of this variety of responses, whilst also offering a reading of the film and the book that takes its lead from their melancholy mood, which is perhaps what is beneath many

79, 178.

¹³ Adams 61.

¹⁴ Adams 67, 70.

¹⁵ Cronenberg, interview with Emerson, par. 26.

viewers' perplexed reactions to the film. "What is crucial to the film," as Michael Grant intuits, "is the imaginative effort involved in apprehending it."¹⁶ To see what *Crash* is really about, one has to surrender to the fantasy, as Ballard did when he chose to write the novel in the first person, giving the protagonist his own name. What I will be suggesting is that its fantasies and traumas (physical and psychological) engage us, and the characters, in a kind of identification that closely resembles one of mourning. Their repetitions and re-enactions bespeak a narcissistic engagement with the deaths of others, including those celebrities whose images are always being impressed on our retinas.

The unconscious, Freud says, knows no negation, and refuses to recognize the fact of a loved one's disappearance: "by taking flight into the ego, love escapes extinction."¹⁷ He claims that, unlike melancholia, there is nothing "unconscious" about mourning, and that, after a time, it passes off, leaving no lasting damage to the subject - this is something with which commentators, such as Abraham and Torok, have taken issue, by drawing attention to situations of pathological mourning.¹⁸ Contrary to what Freud suggests, coming to terms with a loss may be something that will always be *in process*, never quite "completed" or consolidated.¹⁹ However, he does say that in mourning, as in melancholia, one carries the dead person around inside oneself; the living identify with the dead. The other becomes an extension of oneself, which points up not only the narcissistic but also the prosthetic structure of

¹⁶ Michael Grant, "Crimes of the Future," *Screen* 39.2 (Summer 1998): 180-85, 180.

¹⁷ Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), in *On Metapsychology: the Penguin Freud Library, vol. 11*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 262, 267.

¹⁸ See Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, "Mourning *or* Melancholia: Introjection *versus* Incorporation," in S. Lebovici and D. Widlocker, *Psychoanalysis in France* (New York: International University Press, 1980).

¹⁹ Freud, "Mourning" 253.

identification in mourning and melancholia. What perhaps characterizes melancholia in particular is a hoarding of affect, a refusal to give up one's identification with the lost object, and it is here that one hears the call of the self-destructive impulse that in Freud's later texts is named the death drive. *Crash* itself feeds on a fantasy of the death drive, on "an uncomfortable truth" that we carry around with us, but which we do not like to countenance. Our awareness of own guilty, sadistic identification with the crash as a spectacle is hoarded in the same unassimilated way that a traumatic affect persists in the unconscious - like a "foreign body" in the psyche.²⁰

My contention is that *Crash* is about melancholia, mixed in with these unconscious dimensions of guilt. What we see there is the attempt to keep an incommunicable affect alive - the characters trying to rediscover feeling in a technological realm that is so often described in Ballard's novel as "affectless"; in order to ward away the fear of aphanisis - the disappearance of desire - they try to relive, over and over again, the intensity of experience that the car-crash offers them. They try to relive what wasn't experienced fully in the past by repeating it in the present. As such, this also stands opposed to Baudrillard's interpretation of the novel, where the explanatory power of psychoanalysis and its purview (affect, libido, death drive, perversion) are dismissed out of hand. Rather than an empty proliferation of signs, surface and simulation, "a work of death that is never a work of mourning," something very moving is happening in *Crash* - in fact precisely what Baudrillard, in his attempt to integrate it into his universe, has erased.²¹

²⁰ Peter Suschitzky, interview with Allen Daviau, Fred Elmes, ed. David Williams, "Auto Erotic," *American Cinematographer* 78.4 (April 1997): 36-42, 42; J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Karnac, 1988) 466.

²¹ Jean Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*, trans. Sheila Faria Glaser (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994) 116.

But first of all, what was it about the film that bored viewers? Their allegations about its repetitious nature, its failure to provide motivation for its characters, seem to suggest that they were baffled as much by what the film omits as by what it presents: they saw no story, no progression, no guiding framework to help them make sense of what they were seeing. Yet, as Cronenberg points out, "technically, there's nothing in the movie that people haven't seen before, if you go strictly scene by scene. But it's the other stuff, it's the way it's done and the combinations and the context that give it that strangeness."²² He explains:

The structure of the film is very strange. I think that confuses people because it leads them to expect certain things they've seen before. You begin a film in this way, with those kind of people, and then suddenly it's not behaving like *Fatal Attraction* at all: there's a handsome, beautiful couple, upper-middle class, having affairs - maybe it's going to be like that . . . And then it isn't like that.²³

There is an element of subtraction in all of Cronenberg's films - they take away where one expects them to deliver. In *Crash*, where sex figures so highly on the agenda, and in what is taken to be the film's central conceit - the connection between sex and the car-crash - the characters appear detached from emotion in their sex acts. More precisely, they lack the clichéd exuberance of passion that the representation of sex in films has taught us to expect. They rarely face each other - rear-entry sex predominates - and the women, especially Catherine, seem enclosed in their own private narcissistic worlds; nearly all the sex scenes involving women begin with the woman offering her breast, but more as an autoerotic gesture than anything suggesting connectivity between herself and her lovers: they are pre-oedipal enclosures. Some of these couplings additionally involve a third character, looking on, as James does in the rear-view mirror while Vaughan has sex first with the airport hooker, and then - in a

²² Cronenberg, interview with Emerson, par. 33.

²³ Cronenberg, interview with Emerson, par. 45.

subsequent scene - with Catherine, on the back-seat of the Lincoln, in each case manipulating the body of the woman in the manner of rescuemen lifting bodies out of crushed vehicles. All this contributes to the feeling of tension when we watch these scenes - they underscore the fact that we, the viewers of the film, are voyeurs, and even when the third party is absent, the movements and presence of the camera never cease to reinforce the guilty character of our look. This puts the film's presentation of sex acts on a par with the look fixed on the traffic accident. The audience is distanced only to be implicated more in the scenario being enacted. But some of these scenes evoke guilt more than they do the sadistic impulse that lies behind our guilty voyeurism of car-crashes. Others, where violence is part of the sex act, evoke both. Even though some scenes only offer one half of the identification, holding back the wished-for feelings of sexual-sadistic aggression, all succeed in making us feel uncomfortable, because none of them makes it easy for viewers to watch.

The film's *mise-en-scène* is kept down to a minimum - there are recognizable freeways, apartments and studios providing a normal look and background for the film - and this makes the tension introduced by the camera placements and the cutting even more unsettling. This also accounts for why viewers found themselves confused, bored, outraged or alienated, and fell back on criticizing the film in terms of its content. Cronenberg remarks:

I tried to find the cinematic equivalent [of what Ballard did in his book]. It had to be more subtle than just finding camera angles, but even the placement of the camera in certain scenes is something of what is disturbing to people, but they can't fully articulate it that way, so they have to fall back on the normal vocabulary - which is not really describing their response to the film at all.²⁴

Cronenberg's framing is often off-kilter, angling the camera in such a way that we are denied identification with the characters when we expect it - as Iain

²⁴ Cronenberg, interview with Ian Calcutt, "Strange Highways," *Starburst* 31 (April 1997): 50-55, 51-2.

Sinclair says, of a sequence early in the film, following James' discharge from the hospital to which he was admitted after his crash: "after Cronenberg's first high angle establishing shot of the car we expect . . . to move inside, to get Spader's reaction to his release from the hospital . . . But instead we cut sharply to a god's-eye-perspective on the road."²⁵ In fact, high-from-the-outside angles are common in the film's car photography - and these angles, in themselves, are part of what prevents our access to the emotions of the characters within the cars. The film declines from giving significance to the images in the way we have learnt to anticipate.

The colours of the film generally add to the distancing of the audience - they are cold metallic greys and blues (modelled on the colours of bruises) that pervade most of the other colours.²⁶ All this suggests that affect and identification are denied where we are accustomed to find them - and this is perturbing for the viewer in a film which is actually about affect and identification.

Vaughan, who guides the other characters to an understanding of the car-crash, explains that it is "a liberation of sexual energy that mediates the sexuality of those who have died with an intensity impossible in any other form." It creates an immense *affect* - a sudden release of energy on impact, as Cronenberg elaborates: "the body is jolted into a new energy by being hit: there's an adrenaline shot that goes through your body to protect you and keep you alive, but there's also a moment of clarity, fear and excitement."²⁷ *Crash* focuses on this idealization of the frontier of death - a frontier that the spectacle

²⁵ Iain Sinclair, *Crash* (London: Bfi, 1999) 67-8.

²⁶ These "bruise" colours were initially decided for the costumes, but as the production got under way, they began to affect everything else: "part of the lighting and set decorating was done with the clothes colours in mind," Cronenberg says. David Cronenberg, interview with Stephen Pizzello, "Driver's Side," *American Cinematographer* 78.4 (April 1997): 43-47, 46.

²⁷ David Cronenberg, interview with Geoff Andrew, "Film Special," *Time Out* 6-13 Nov. 1996: 18-20, 19.

of the car-crash enables us to experience vicariously, and which is also pervasive in "wound culture" at large. Its fantasy is largely a fantasy of what happens at the moment of death, or near-death: of what has happened to others, and what will happen to oneself. The dead are thought to possess a wholeness barred to the living, a wholeness that comes, paradoxically, from a tremendous release and dispersion of energy; and when life goes over to death, something is believed to remain - in the impact between the body and the car, "the intimate time and space of a single human being" is "fossilized forever."²⁸ In the celebrity car-crash, this energy quotient is intensified; a potent cocktail of beauty, glamour and violent death makes it, in our fantasies, the car-crash *par excellence*. Watching the injured and dying body of a television actress being carried from the scene of her collision, Ballard's narrator says, "her mutilation and death became a coronation of her image at the hands of a colliding technology . . . Each of the spectators at the accident site would carry away an image of the violent transformation of this woman, of the complex of wounds that fused together her own sexuality and the hard technology of the automobile."²⁹ By using the word *coronation* the passage suggests that celebrities have become the new royalty, and it is their car-crash injuries which have conferred this upon them: the word plays upon the anatomical and royal connotations of *corona* and *coronal*.³⁰ In their attempt to recover the instant of the crash through reconstruction, Vaughan and his team rely on a shared cultural memory of celebrity car crashes, using this to stimulate the affects they stir in us in the present. *Crash* thereby reveals the extent to which popular culture already celebrates car crashes - with its pantheon of royals, pop stars

²⁸ Ballard 12.

²⁹ Ballard 189.

³⁰ *Corona* is an anatomical term for "a crown or crownlike structure," but is also related to the Spanish, *La Corona*, "the crown," while *coronal* means both "of the crown of the head" (in the anatomical sense) and "a circlet for the head."

and film stars who, having already merged with technology in the form of media images during their lifetimes, are immortalized forever by their technological deaths.

On the border between life and death, one teeters on the brink of a transgression, which, in Freud's later work, as Lacan points out, is named the death drive - the "beyond" of the pleasure principle, the law beyond the law.³¹ It is at this limit that we might locate the *jouissance* which is at work in *Crash*.³² It is this edge that the novel and the film continually encircle: the pleasure principle (which leads from signifier to signifier) gravitates around this field which is beyond it and which harbours "that which in life might prefer death." They probe the zone-between-two-deaths - between the first death, which, for these characters, has already happened, and the second death, on which they have set their sights. The latter is "a death lived by anticipation, a death that crosses over into the sphere of life, a life that moves in the realm of death."³³ Stripped of the biological moorings that it has in Freud, the death drive here comes to denote the rituals of mourning that occur in the symbolic order, such as the burying and commemoration of the dead.³⁴ For the death

³¹ Jacques Lacan, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Dennis Porter (London: Routledge, 1992) 21.

³² Ballard 16. *Jouissance* here means "excessive, ultimate enjoyment": Slavoj Žižek, "Why is Immortality one of the Names of the Death Drive?" Death Drive: Contemporary Art and Psychoanalysis Conference, Tate Gallery, London 26 June 1998.

³³ Lacan, *Ethics* 104, 320, 248.

³⁴ Joan Copjec, *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995) 46. Freud's death drive is biological, working within the organism towards its death by internal causes. See Sigmund Freud, "Beyond the Pleasure Principle" (1920), in *On Metapsychology*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 311. For Lacan, on the other hand, death functions as a signifier. Since the drive exerts a "constant force" this puts it under the aegis of the symbolic, and takes it away from the biological, which, for Lacan, is characterized by a rhythm. Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1994) 165.

drive, in Lacan, has meaning only in the sense that it brings us into a relation with our own deaths, a relation which offers consolation - the splendour and beauty that comes from crossing a frontier.³⁵ It is the function of the beautiful, he says, "to reveal to us the site of man's relationship to his own death, and to reveal it to us only in a blinding flash."³⁶ That spectacle (here, the car-crash) leads us into a vicarious imaginary trip which is the fantasy of our own deaths.

This is the journey that Catherine begins to take in *Crash* (the film version), when she, Vaughan and James stop at the scene of a multiple pile-up. She steps out of the car, and wanders around the crash site, and becomes hypnotically drawn to a woman with severe facial injuries. Catherine sits beside this woman, and furtively studies her wounds when that woman turns her face away, trying to absorb, through proxy, what has happened to this unknown woman who has been magically touched at the site of death. The death and mutilation the characters witness make the crash the site of an intense identification: the spectacle of the crash awakens the thing that had been lying there all along (the unassimilated thought that one could die) and witnessing a crash or experiencing one and coming out alive enables them to court the field beyond the pleasure principle and keep it at bay at the same time.

But this does not fully answer the question raised in the beginning, which concerns the relation between the witnessing that occurs vis-à-vis the spectacle of a car-crash and cinema *as affect* - in other words, what is the nature of the affect involved in witnessing this film *about* car-crashes? This is what I shall try to address in the next sections.

³⁵ Lacan, *Ethics* 248, 295.

³⁶ Lacan, *Ethics* 295.

Image, Affect, and the Rendezvous with the Real

I stretched out on my car like a corpse on its bier, but revived at once under the steering wheel, a guillotine blade that threatened my stomach.
- F.T. Marinetti.³⁷

Cronenberg noted that viewers "fall back on the normal vocabulary" to describe what they didn't like about his film, accusing it of a supposed lack of diegesis, progression and so on. Perhaps part of what he means is that, at least where *Crash* is concerned, their assumptions about film seem to revert to what Deleuze terms the action image format. The action-image is a type of movement-image - it denotes a way of conceiving a story which dominated cinema before the Second World War, and which relies on sensory-motor links between motivation and action.³⁸ Although many films still keep to this format, Deleuze holds that after the Second World War, the action-image came to be less and less viable to film-makers, especially those who were sensitive to the "soul" of cinema. In the new cinema, largely pioneered by the Italian neo-realists (although there were signs of it before), the action-image endured a crisis, and what Deleuze saw as cinema's true potential now began to unfurl in pure optical and sound situations. These, for the first time, offered a direct (non-chronological) representation of time, where the image shows distortions of time as it might be felt, say, by a character. So, just as the movement-image, and, above all, the action-image, defined classical cinema, the time-image came to stand for the way we make sense of the world and how we represent it in the period of reconstruction following the Second World War and afterwards. This new time-image makes us grasp something "unbearable"; that part of the event

³⁷ F.T. Marinetti, "The Founding and Manifesto of Futurism" (1909), in F.T. Marinetti, *Lets Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings*, ed. R.W. Flint, trans. R.W. Flint and Arthur Coppotelli (Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Classics, 1991) 48.

³⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1992) 160.

which cannot always "be reduced to what happens."³⁹ While Cronenberg's film is not completely divorced from the sensory-motor schema, many of his images, we will see, tend towards breaking it.

After their crashes, a new sensitivity is born in the characters. "The crash was the only real experience I had been through in years," Ballard's narrator tells us.⁴⁰ It is like an awakening after "an immense stasis," a stimulant that makes the characters vividly aware of the cars milling on the freeways, "of all these drivers," and their "assignations, escapes, boredoms."⁴¹ The crash opens their nerve-ends to the melancholy that suffuses the technological landscape: the underpasses and roadways appear as harbingers of a new fate. This melancholy is bound up with a "deep intimacy with machines."⁴² As Seltzer says, "these exteriors are nothing but interiors - psychotopographies - a psychology not housed in persons but distributed across landscapes and public spaces." Such landscapes are not just "metaphors" of interiors - "they are what private interiors look like - spectacles of public violence, wound landscapes."⁴³ In the film, this asphalt landscape around the airport becomes what Deleuze calls "any-space-whatever": an anonymous public space, inhabited yet partly deserted, that sets the scene for extreme speed, but at the same time is filled with a sense of interminable waiting. In Deleuze's terminology, it is a type of "affection-image" (an image that expresses affect): a stirring, painful sense pervades it, the dreadful imminence of yet another collision.⁴⁴ In this indeterminate milieu, "motivations" for behaviour have simply disappeared. Here, characters see rather than act - James, the invalid with binoculars,

³⁹ Deleuze *Cinema 1* 206; Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone, 1994)18-19.

⁴⁰ Ballard 39.

⁴¹ Ballard 58.

⁴² Seltzer 14.

⁴³ Seltzer 14.

⁴⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 110.

watching the traffic circulate below, and Helen, in the passenger seat, looking at all those cars.⁴⁵ This is the cinema of the time-image, a cinema where "the seer [*voyant*] has replaced the agent [*actant*]."46

In the film and the book, the car-crash offers the characters a connection; they know they have undergone the same thing, but they don't have to talk about it. Nothing gets communicated in the "normal" way. Helen and James share a bizarre intimacy when their cars collide. Helen's husband is killed, instantly. He is catapulted through the windshield and ends up head down in the passenger footwell of James' car, his fist dangling just a few inches from James' face. For a few moments Helen and James just stare at each other. The collision is an encounter - a chance meeting, or, as Vaughan puts it when he stages a reconstruction of James Dean's car-crash, a "date with death." It is not, as Baudrillard contends, a simulation where nothing is at stake except the pure exchange of signs, but an encounter with the real, which Lacan calls *tuché* - a term for cause in Aristotle's *Physics* - where everything is at stake.

In the story in Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) that Lacan revisits to explain this concept, the type of cause that *tuché* denotes is the meaning or cosmic cause of the loved one's death. Miasmas may be the cause of fever, but to a father, this will not explain why his son died.⁴⁷ This, "the most anguishing mystery," as Lacan puts it, is the real that is missed in the encounter (for the encounter with the real is always a missed encounter), a hole in the symbolic order, which the signifier tries to patch up.⁴⁸ In the story (the one that Freud relates), a father, having sat many nights at the bedside of his

⁴⁵ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 121

⁴⁶ Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 272. Indeed that actors no longer gesticulate before the camera, but are stationary, subject to our gaze, while gazing themselves, draws attention to the fact that cinema has lost its innocence (something that was actually implicit in film since the demise of the silent cinema).

⁴⁷ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts* 22, 34, 58, 59; Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (London: Penguin, 1991) 652.

⁴⁸ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts* 34.

dying son, leaves the body, when the end comes, in the care of an old servant, and goes to rest in an adjacent room, keeping the door between the rooms slightly ajar. He is awoken by a dream in which the dead son stands near his bed, takes his sleeve, and reproaches him, *Father, can't you see I'm burning?* Rushing into the next room, the father finds the old servant asleep and the body of his child partly burnt away by the flames from overturned candles. In Lacan's interpretation, what wakes the father is another reality *within* the dream (not the noise or light from the flames). The dream is the answer of the real (from "the world of the beyond") to something that was unresolved in the relationship between father and son - "the most intimate aspects" of it make up the missed reality that caused the son's death. The father's fear of not being there for his son is realized for him once more. When there is such remorse for what one ought to have done for those who are now dead, "only a rite," as Lacan says, "an endlessly repeated act, can commemorate this," this inexplicable encounter - an encounter that was not really felt as a lived experience or fully understood when it occurred, "for no one can say what the death of a child is."⁴⁹

In *Crash*, the characters are involved in an endless repetition, in ritual. They return to the scene of the accident in different ways, sometimes inadvertently, sometimes purposefully, each time to relive the affect and discover the mystery that haunts it, to find an answer to the underlying meaning of their crash. The pleasure principle governs that return, and Lacan calls this return *automaton*, yet the real is behind it.⁵⁰ This beyond of the pleasure principle is the death drive, and *this* is what haunts the affect - an affect that is felt constantly, like a "background noise" in the psyche.⁵¹ Yet it is an affect

⁴⁹ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts* 68, 59.

⁵⁰ Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts* 53.

⁵¹ My thanks to Simon Critchley for this analogy. Freud volunteers the idea that affect presents the drive directly. Sigmund Freud, "The Unconscious" (1915), in *On Metapsychology* 179. This suggests, as Jean Luc-Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe have pointed out, that the affect is "the unconscious

that the characters also strive to reawaken, but since an affect cannot be remembered as a past event (try remembering an emotion from the past, and you will find it is impossible), the only way to approach it again is to experience it "in the immediacy of a suggestive or mimetic repetition in the present that is unrepresentable to the subject."⁵² Each time, repetition will be with a difference. In the novel, James tries to summon again the moments before Remington's death, "frantic milliseconds of pain and violence in which he had been catapulted from a pleasant domestic interlude into a concertina of metallized death." This, he is aware, is a genuine attempt to extract the meaning of this man's death. He thinks that "by comparison," his wife Catherine's display of grief is "a mere stylization of a gesture."⁵³ Later, at the pound, he clambers inside his derelict car: "Sitting here in this deformed cabin . . . I tried to visualize myself at the moment of collision, the failure of the technical relationship between my body, the assumptions of skin, and the engineering structure which supported it."⁵⁴ He is trying to recapture that faded space-time of the crash, the reason (the cosmic reason) why he hit the car's interior the way he did, and why *he* survived, not Helen's husband. The need to heighten his uneasy feelings of guilt for Remington's death, to keep these memories alive, is what informs James' relationship with Helen: the novel continually relates how, "in each sexual act together" they "recapitulated her husband's death, re-seeding the image of his body in her vagina."⁵⁵ Although this reliving of affect *seems* life-affirming (what better than the persistence of

as consciousness." Jean Luc-Nancy and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "The Unconscious is Deconstructed Like an Affect," *Stanford Literature Review* 6.2 (Fall 1989): 191-209, 198.

⁵² Ruth Leys, "Traumatic Cures: Shell Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Summer 1994): 623-662, 642. This means that one can't represent oneself as an other, undergoing an emotion in the past. One has to re-live or repeat it as a present experience.

⁵³ Ballard 36-7.

⁵⁴ Ballard 68.

⁵⁵ Ballard 83.

an intense affect to reassure you that you, at least, are alive?), life cannot be opposed to death in this way - death is what supports it, the rituals of mourning underpin it.⁵⁶

In its portrayal of car-crashes, Cronenberg's film keeps the moment of impact ever beyond our grasp - that missed reality which James is trying to recover. During the crash itself, rapid cutting shows his car going out of control. Shots from different angles convey its course, accompanied by the sound of screeching tyres and shattered glass. This is the constructed aesthetic of speed with which audiences will be familiar, from their past film viewing, although, as Botting and Wilson observe in a recent debate in *Screen* magazine, in *Crash* there are no "big bangs" or "romantic chases or erotic duels on the open highway" - and for them this is striking in a film that "draws on an equivalence between sex and car crashes." The car crashes, they aver, are reduced to a series of unspectacular "bumps," even as they recognize this owes to the auteur's deliberate decision - a technical and stylistic refusal to reproduce the ways in which the car-crash is made sexy elsewhere. The crash sequences are done, as David E. Williams suggested, in an interview with the film's cinematographer, Peter Suschitzky, "in a way that would actually drain away any suspense or excitement in the usual cinematic sense."⁵⁷ This distancing of the audience where the main conceit of *Crash* is concerned is calculated to

⁵⁶ In other words, the death drive is "the constitutional principle of the libido." Briony Fer, "Death Sentence: Light and Installation," *Death Drive: Contemporary Art and Psychoanalysis Conference*, Tate Gallery, London 26 June 1998.

⁵⁷ Peter Suschitzky, interview with Allen Daviau and Fred Elmes 41. Cronenberg explains that he and Suschitzky "had to shoot action scenes without making an action movie. I had to keep telling the stunt guys, 'No, tone it down, I don't want the triple flip and the explosion.' . . . Two of the most photographed things in movie history are sex and cars. For reasons of both personal ego and cinematic tone, I wanted to shoot those things in a way no one had ever seen, but not in a spectacular way." Cronenberg, interview with Pizzello 45.

make us feel uncomfortable, as I noted before in relation to the sex scenes.⁵⁸ All of a sudden, after the cars collide, there is a complete standstill: the sound is cut; the pace of editing slows; shots become more fixed and longer in duration, imitating the characters' subjective experience of time slowing down after impact. The film sustains this impression of torpor throughout: the characters speak and behave as if they were in a somnambulant trance. It is with these "sensory-motor disturbances" in the image that Cronenberg signals his departure from the action-image.⁵⁹ Further, in the absence of conventional devices (such as voice-over) that, in another kind of film, might help to orient the viewer, the slowly gliding camera creates "mental images" which make connections between the sex acts merging with machines and the aeroplanes lifting off over the highways; they presage the further transformations in wait for humanity, calling to mind Marinetti's proclamation, "we look for the creation of a nonhuman type . . . and without a smile we declare that wings are asleep in the flesh of man."⁶⁰ An opening crane shot gradually discovers Catherine placing her breast on the metal of a wing; a close-up then makes the connection between her erect nipple and the metal rivets. In another scene, the aeroplanes form an out-of-frame into which the shot moves.⁶¹ As James and Helen drive into the airport car-park, the camera extracts the movement of the parking car, and then continues its movement over the barrier, to show the aeroplanes preparing for take-off, linking the lovers with the wings asleep inside "man."

Although the film denies the viewer identification through images in the "usual" way, both the film and the novel present the characters identifying with images, and in this way they provide the key to the relationship between

⁵⁸ Fred Botting and Scott Wilson, "Automatic Lover," *Screen* 39.2 (Summer 1998): 186-192, 189.

⁵⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 213.

⁶⁰ Marinetti, *Moonshine* 99.

⁶¹ Deleuze, *Cinema 1* 200.

witnessing the spectacle of a car-crash and cinema *as* affect. In one of the scenes in the film, the community of crash survivors gather to see slow-motion video replays of test collisions. Here, the slowed-down time of the film is put *en abyme*. The characters watch the bodies of dummies being whiplashed and spun from side to side; the speed of the film enables them to retrace the crucial moments more closely. Filled with emotion for a particular point in the collision, Helen fiddles with the remote control until she finds the section of videotape where that moment is shown "in detail." With its multiple impacts, the car-crash savoured in sensuous slow-motion makes ideal cinema for the characters watching the videos (as viewers of *Crash*, we are implicated, too). Surrendering themselves to the images, they identify with the victims and the wounds inflicted on them. The sensations are reproduced in relation to their own bodies: Helen, Gabrielle, and James masturbate each other to enhance the affect as they watch. In the novel, in the scene at the Road Research Laboratory, spectators watch the dummies' cheekbones and forearms being sliced off. James looks across at the wife of a Ministry official: "Her eyes watched the film with a rapt gaze, as if she were seeing herself and her daughters dismembered in the crash."⁶² The spectacle is *calming*. By releasing enormous quantities of affect, the crash both heightens and lowers emotional tension in its witnesses. Here, narcissistic identification with the images provides a way of managing unconscious guilt and the unconscious dimensions of mourning, although these are present, too, mingled with the spectators' reactions.

Capturing the moment of impact is partly the purpose of filming of the test collision: one cine-camera is "mounted alongside the track, lens aimed at the point of impact," while the other is "pointing downwards from an overhead

⁶² Ballard 128.

gantry."⁶³ Since the real arrives in an instant, it arrives without affect - only afterwards, through repetition, through film, can the affect be relived, and imagined as a representation. Cinema gives significance to the random event, allowing it to be reproduced and re-experienced in the present. In other words, it enables the aimless and accidental nature of the real to be represented. Having witnessed the live action, Helen and James watch the test collision again, in slow motion, where the images reveal the hidden choreography that had escaped them on first viewing. The slow-motion lends the dummies a certain grace. They have already been assigned roles and names ("Charlie and Greta, imagine them out for a drive with the kids, Sean and Brigitte"), but now the viewers can watch their story unfurl with an even greater affective intensity.⁶⁴ As the motorcycle strikes the family's car, the narration becomes intensive in its account of the delicate succession of collisions, mapping each fragment of movement and its cause: the mother's "detached head . . . passed between the torsos of the children in the rear seat. Brigitte, the smaller of the two children, lifted her face to the roof of the car and raised her hands in a polite gesture of alarm as her mother's head struck the rear window and cannonaded around the car."⁶⁵ Ballard's description runs to several pages. Excerpting or paraphrasing will not do it justice - it must be read in its entirety to see how it implicates the reader, who is made to relish these minute movements and trajectories just as the spectators do. Yet it does not have the advantages of cinema in representing the random nature of the real. Even in the novel, it seems that the eroticism specific to the car-crash, so full of movement, is cineroticism, that is, the eroticism of cinema, the movement of movements. No wonder Vaughan clamps a cine-camera to his dashboard, and loads the passenger seat with photographic equipment, to film test collisions. The novel

⁶³ Ballard 122.

⁶⁴ Ballard 122.

⁶⁵ Ballard 128.

implies that the movie camera, by extracting these movements, is what brings forth "the true significance of the automobile crash, the meaning of whiplash injuries and roll-over, the ecstasies of head-on collisions," much more than literature does. When the narrator declares that it was through Vaughan that he came to know the significance of the crash, he intimates that it was by means of the movement-image: "Sitting in the darkness . . . we watched the silent impacts flicker on the wall above our heads."⁶⁶ This may account for why the film of *Crash* is more disturbing than the book: film has a stark hyperreality, the chance quality of an encounter, to which literature can only gesture.

Cinema, then, can recapitulate the same "sense of motion and collision" that the characters witness and experience in their crashes, and which they themselves recapitulate in their sex acts.⁶⁷ Cronenberg's film shows an awareness of this even as it keeps it understated. In the preparation for the reconstruction of James Dean's crash, the camera pulls back with the reversing vehicles; these shots are intercut with lateral tracking shots, and shots showing the cars from the front, moving away from the camera. So, although the film denies the viewer the vicarious experience of movement and collision through images showing the moment of impact, it does nevertheless use camera movement to impart a heady sensation in the preparation for it (this is typical of its tactic of frustrating the viewer - it gives us the play that comes before, but not the thing-in-itself, at least not in the way we expect). But perhaps the erotic character of the movement-image is not indulged in here, where it would directly confront that to which it refers, the car-crash, because it is everywhere else - in the gliding camera movements, in the sheen and texture of the shots showing metallic surfaces, but most of all in the rhythms of the car-wash scene. Deeply affected by the multiple car-crash which they have just witnessed, and

⁶⁶ Ballard 10.

⁶⁷ Ballard 161.

by the multiple possibilities it has unleashed in their minds, Catherine and Vaughan "imitate the bloody eucharist" they have seen in their sex acts in the backseat of the Lincoln.⁶⁸ As they do so, the roof and windows of the car slide up to encase the bodies inside, becoming frames within the frame. Once the windows close half-way up, all these frames dovetail around Catherine's breast. With the noise of the moving machinery and the metronomic beat of the giant electronic brushes, this scene becomes an exemplary illustration of Jean-Louis Comolli's remark that "the eroticism of machines is captured to perfection by the cinerotic machine."⁶⁹

But still photography, too, has a role in capturing the defining moments of the crash, and, not surprisingly, it is another of Vaughan's passions. As Botting and Wilson discern, "the photograph functions as a scar in time, freezing the moment when the mortal being becomes Other," and in doing so, it transfers the body fused with the car onto yet another "technological surface."⁷⁰

As James convalesces from his accident, he discovers the collision between his body and the interior compartment of his car has been preserved in the form of a direct imprint: "within the car-crash death was directed by the vectors of speed, violence and aggression." Now, these had been "caught, like a photographic plate or still from a newsreel, in the dark bruises of my body and the physical outline of the steering wheel."⁷¹ The instant of the crash has been memorialized in his flesh. Like Barthes' photograph, these imprints have "an evidential force," and the testimony they bear is on time: of the photograph, one can say, as Barthes does of the photograph of his mother as a child (the only photograph that will do justice to her memory), "There she is! She's really

⁶⁸ Ballard 157.

⁶⁹ Jean-Louis Comolli, "Mechanical Bodies, Ever More Heavenly," trans. Annette Michelson, *October* 83 (Winter 1998): 19-24, 20.

⁷⁰ Botting and Wilson 190.

⁷¹ Ballard 45.

there."⁷² This "*This*," once more, is Lacan's "*Tuché*, the Occasion, the Encounter, the Real, in its indefatigable expression."⁷³ Since photographs carry this power of affect, people secretly want to see the photographs of wreckage and carnage from car-crashes, although they also feel that there is something "sick" about wanting to see them. It is the photographs and video footage of the accident that stirs them, and they *seek* to be stirred by them. Gazing will put them into a position from which they can imagine and *feel* just how bad, how horrific it was. This pornography of violence in culture at large is what makes us already complicit in *Crash*'s scenarios. Both film and novel make a particularly pointed reference to it when Vaughan first appears. Dressed in a medic's white-coat, he inspects James' wounds, but as he does so he shiftily flicks through a dossier of photographs of violent injuries, which, in the film, the viewer merely glimpses, and is left to imagine the horrors they show. Vaughan behaves as if he were a pedlar of pornography, using these pictures as his standard fare. "We'll deal with these later," he says to James, tucking them away, with an "almost flirtatious flourish."⁷⁴

Death was in them already: they will become what they always have been. In *Crash*, Vaughan introduces the time of the future anterior into the photographs of celebrities, pictured in the prime of their life, and of their cars, in their pristine state. He circles in areas where Jayne Mansfield's crash wounds will be, and areas where her famous body parts will fuse with the parts of her famous car.⁷⁵ For these celebrities, it is as if the trajectory of their loves and deaths have been mapped out for them already. When Vaughan has a tattoo of a steering wheel made on his chest, he confers the same temporality on himself:

⁷² Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (London: Vintage, 1993) 99.

⁷³ Barthes 4.

⁷⁴ David Cronenberg, *Crash* (London: Faber, 1996) 13.

⁷⁵ Cronenberg, *Crash* 41.

"it's a prophetic tattoo," he says - an anticipation of his own death by impalement on "the sharp barb" of the steering column.⁷⁶

In this scene (exclusive to the film), the tattooist makes the caustic remark, "is this personal prophecy or global prophecy?" but Vaughan simply replies, "there's no difference." In other words, "the future anterior of which death is the stake" is endemic to wound culture as a whole, and indeed to the technology of the car and the realm of the highways in particular. It makes no sense, the film and the novel tell us, to distinguish between the personal and the global - and this is one way in which they try to make it difficult for us to retreat from the scenario they present and pretend that it has no wider significance (as Vaughan tells James elsewhere, "it's the future, Ballard, and you're part of it"). If there is a risk of this technology becoming banal, or being regarded as purely functional, *Crash* makes it explicit that the car is a killing zone. In this, it takes up the gauntlet from Ralph Nader's book *Unsafe at any Speed* (published in 1965), which famously pointed out the killers within the car, and recommended safety regulations.⁷⁷ Manufacturers now compete on the basis of their car safety merits, but for Ballard all this is propaganda that merely puts a gloss over the fact that, despite all our attempts to domesticate it, the car has never lost its unique destroying and mutilating capacity. *Crash* relentlessly picks up Nader's reference points - the windshield wiper as guillotine, "the pointed sills of the chromium ashtrays," and all those other "beckoning injury sites on the interior of the car" - and never ceases to present the car and its interior as a set of lethal instruments which can do untold damage to the body.⁷⁸ In a similar way, Peter Weir's 1974 Australian film, *The Cars That Ate Paris*, perhaps the first film directly inspired by Ballard's novel,

⁷⁶ Ballard 224.

⁷⁷ Nicholas Faith, *Crash: the Limits of Car Safety* (London: Boxtree, 1997)

43.

⁷⁸ Ballard 203.

shows the town's youth terrorizing the community in cars adorned with spikes. Death saturates this technology through and through. All these people on the road, the novel reminds us, are going to die, as this image of a double-decker airline coach, "a cliff of faces" looming above the threesome in the Lincoln, shows: "the passengers resembled rows of the dead looking down at us from the galleries of a columbarium."⁷⁹

Eroticism, Death, and the New Flesh

In *Crash*, film and novel, the main characters are all vividly aware that they are going to die; the car-crash (witnessed or experienced) is what brings home to them that possibility. Anticipating the possibility of their own deaths draws the quality of their existence up to a great height, up to a great affective intensity. Cronenberg states, "in *Crash* I'm saying that if some harsh reality envelops you, rather than be crushed, destroyed or diminished by it, embrace it fully. Develop it and take it even further than it wanted to go itself. See if that's not a creative endeavour. If that's not positive."⁸⁰ The fantasy at work in *Crash* seems to be one of taking control, even of taming the technology, and harnessing it to human invention. This, according to Cronenberg, in the words forming one of the epigraphs to this chapter, is what sex has become in the era of biotechnology, where it has been torn from its biological base in reproduction. Celebrating "the marriage of their bodies with this benign technology," the characters become like "semi-metallic human beings of the distant future making love in a chromium bower."⁸¹ But the film and novel's exploration of a form of sex divorced from reproduction is only a thinly disguised version of parthenogenesis: incorporating the technology of the automobile, the

⁷⁹ Ballard 151.

⁸⁰ Cronenberg, interview with Chris Rodley, reprinted in Cronenberg, *Crash* xix.

⁸¹ Ballard 162.

characters give birth to themselves in a different form, able this time to be present at the conception, and guide it to the desired end. This would seem to make it a primal scene fantasy, although *Crash* also suggests that these communions of the body and technology are, at heart, re-unions with the loved and the lost. Having endlessly scoured highways with Vaughan for traffic accidents, James finds that his "horror and disgust at the sight of these appalling injuries had given way to a lucid acceptance that the translation of these injuries in terms of our fantasies was the only means of re-invigorating these wounded and dying victims."⁸² Celebrating "the re-birth of the traffic-slain dead," the characters' sex acts become testaments to the deaths and injuries they have seen, and to "the imaginary wounds and postures of the millions yet to die."⁸³ These uneasy identifications with various types of loss are what create the rituals - performances, stylized encounters - which are "performed for the self and performed for the other" (to the extent that they are also played out in front of others). Through identification and ritual, the characters "put their own stamp on things."⁸⁴ Through mechanical repetition, the loss of the loved object is managed and forestalled; the other becomes an extension of oneself - melancholia as a form of prosthesis.

Planning the deaths of others is, for James, a way of dealing with the certainty of their loss sometime in the indefinite future, a way of seeking an attitude other than fear to face the possibility of their deaths. His relationship with Gabrielle, who has been badly crippled by her car accident, takes him deeper into this psychopathology, and enables him "at last" to imagine the deaths and injuries he has always feared: of his wife, his mother, and of children, as they might appear in the fantasies of "elderly pederasts."⁸⁵

⁸² Ballard 190.

⁸³ Ballard 203.

⁸⁴ Roger Silverstone, "Space," *Screen* 39.1 (Spring 1998): 81-84, 84.

⁸⁵ Ballard 180.

Significantly, it is Vaughan who introduces her to him and encourages their relationship - "Vaughan had articulated my needs for some positive response to my crash," the narrator says; "the deformed body of the crippled young woman, like the deformed bodies of the crashed automobiles, revealed the possibilities of an entirely new sexuality."⁸⁶ He continues:

the unfamiliar planes of her hips and legs steered me into unique cul-de-sacs, strange declensions of skin and musculature. Each of her deformities became a potent metaphor of a new violence. Her body, with its angular contours, its unexpected junctions of mucous membrane and hairline, detrusor muscle and erectile tissue, was a ripening anthology of perverse possibilities."⁸⁷

The woman's body is a terrain to be viewed, explored, taken apart, and inventoried. Made into a conceit, a litany of symbols, her body is a rhetorical instrument - a reworking of the medieval blazon, that other catalogue of the woman's body in parts, in terms of prosthesis. Ballard's description, with its characteristic use of clinical vocabulary, works here to efface the issue of gender, but these euphemisms only make Creed's point, raised earlier in relation to the film, more pertinent here, in relation to the novel - Gabrielle's body forms the conduit enabling the two men to merge their bodies with technology (and also with each other). The woman is the prosthetic other *for* them. This point is further borne out by the parallels between the description of Gabrielle's body and that of her invalid vehicle: during James and Gabrielle's sex acts there, their bodies collide with "the strange geometry of the car's interior," where "unexpected controls" protrude at various angles.⁸⁸ A homoerotic fantasy can be seen to underlie the novel's fantasies - James' desire is to fuse and become at one with Vaughan, a fantasy that Creed's argument about the film seems to

⁸⁶ Ballard 102.

⁸⁷ Ballard 175-6.

⁸⁸ Ballard 177.

imply (and that novel never actually denies). But this is one aspect of the novel with which Cronenberg's film refuses to engage fully.

I have mentioned the euphemistic character of Ballard's choice of words - it is most noticeable in the novel when he describes injuries, real and anticipated, and when he describes the new eroticism that is born with the characters' experiences of car-crashes. As the accounts of Gabrielle's body and car suggest, this is an eroticism of unfamiliar junctions, where the angular control surfaces of the car interact with the rounded sections of the body, where the pleasures are those produced by "connective" and "disjunctive" syntheses.⁸⁹ These, rather than the "familiar anatomical triggers - a curve of exposed breast, the soft cushion of a buttock, the hair-lined arch of a damp perineum" are what can excite or arouse affect.⁹⁰ But this new eroticism also takes its inspiration from the lacework of blood and the embroidery of glass that covers the injured and the dead and their derelict cars.⁹¹ Blood forms a "netting like a widow's veil" around the face and hair of a dead chauffeur thrown out of the car.⁹² This filigree latticework reproduces the intersections

⁸⁹ Ballard 80; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone, 1994)12. Following Elizabeth Grosz following Deleuze and Guattari, Marq Smith suggests that the erotics with which *Crash* is concerned constitute a move away from the Freudian "hydraulic" model of sexuality to a productive model. Here, the points of contact and disjunction between the surfaces of bodies and machines are what engender desire. They multiply the production of desire by creating ever more machines and surfaces with which to form more connections, resulting in a proliferation of intensities, multiple sites for erotic investment, as opposed to the singular intensity of Oedipal and genital desire. Marq Smith, "Wound Envy: Touching Cronenberg's *Crash*," *Screen* 40.2 (Summer 1999): 193-202, 199. This account of desire, however, cannot deal with loss, and although it may be partly operative here, and in some other moments (such as the car-wash scene, and the film's concluding sequence), it is a Freudian/ Lacanian energetics that inscribes the film and the novel's exploration of desire elsewhere.

⁹⁰ Ballard 117.

⁹¹ Ballard 128.

⁹² Ballard 153.

of the highways and the junctions between body and car, revealing what haunts them, what criss-crosses them - a mourning for the dead. By aestheticizing and distancing it in this way, the narration draws the signifier around the real.⁹³ The "most subtle points" of the crash can only be gestured to, yet it is implied that the spectators at the scene of accidents have an innate intuition of them - the descriptions apparently rely on a *sensus communis* - it is as if "they all realized the full significance of the displacement of the limousine's radiator grille, the distortion of the taxi body's frame, the patterns of frosting on its shattered windshield."⁹⁴

The wound, wherever it appears, whether on the body of a crash victim or on the car, is a "crossing-point" between the individual and the collective - it allows us to indulge in the fantasy of sharing the pain.⁹⁵ This is also the case in the relationship between the viewer and the screen, particularly so in what may be the most painful and difficult image in Cronenberg's film, where Gabrielle is penetrated through the gash in her thigh, a prototype "for new genital organs . . . yet to be created in a hundred experimental car-crashes."⁹⁶ This wound, full of "palpitating life," as Adams says, recalls the gash in Max Renn's stomach in *Videodrome* (1982), where it appears, as it does here, as a vaginal slit (but since it belongs to a man's body in *Videodrome*, the post-gendered connotations that the wound is supposed to bear are more convincing there than in *Crash*).⁹⁷ It also revives the familiar Cronenberg motif of blurring the distinction between (electronic) hardware and (bio-) software - something that the director was to explore again in the film he made after *Crash*, *eXistenZ* (1999), where the exchange between technology and biology produces living, pulsating game servers (grown from genetically modified amphibian eggs)

⁹³ Ballard 108.

⁹⁴ Ballard 155.

⁹⁵ Seltzer 22.

⁹⁶ Ballard 177.

⁹⁷ Adams 66.

which are plugged directly into the players' nervous systems via an umbilical cord-like extension from the game pod and a bioport installed at the base of the human spine. In each of Cronenberg's films, the technology in question (the car, television or gaming device) figures as a prosthesis of the nervous system - even in *Scanners* (1980), which addresses technology indirectly. There, telepathy is a synecdoche for technology (it occurs only through the painful connection between two or more nervous systems, or even between a human spinal cord and a computer neural network). These recurring motifs are not simply incidents of plot - they are in fact metaphors of Cronenberg's conception of *cinema* as a prosthesis of the nervous system, metaphors, that is, of his particular way of relating image to affect.

This is a conception of cinema that draws out the implications of the violence of movement-images, which, according to Deleuze, impart a series of shocks or vibrations to the cortex, "touching the nervous and cerebral system directly."⁹⁸ It also explains why the cinematic image in general, and these kinds of images in Cronenberg's films in particular, make a decisive claim on us - although it touches us from afar, the image also confronts us directly, "without mediation." Steven Shaviro explains, "we respond viscerally to visual forms, before having the leisure to read or interpret them as symbols."⁹⁹ In cinema, vision is a pre-reflective, intensive experience. Images "are inscribed on our nerves, and flash across our synapses. The real . . . is no longer what is referred to, but what suffers and is transformed."¹⁰⁰ Film, in other words, brings us up against the wound in representation, which the real represents.

As Creed observes, the role that Gabrielle plays for the men is disturbing, as is the film's sanctioning of mutilation, since it tends almost

⁹⁸ Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 156.

⁹⁹ Steven Shaviro, *The Cinematic Body* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994) 26.

¹⁰⁰ Shaviro 139.

exclusively to be in relation to women - it nearly always seems to be the women who are mutilated and penetrated; technology as other is displaced onto the woman as other (although the presentation of Vaughan's body, discussed below, goes some way to complicate this).¹⁰¹ But the spirit of Creed's interpretation leaves one thinking that she has missed something. *Crash seeks* to disturb, to show that the pathology has already taken root in us. Wounds and deformities, as the novel's narrator tells us, hold "the secret formulas" of all that haunts and fascinates us.¹⁰² The non-isomorphic relations between inside and outside in crushed and deformed bodies hint at a threatening and excessive interior, an affective interior charged with jouissance.¹⁰³ These bodies and vehicles which have been witness to a near-death and have been horribly disfigured there inspire both terror and pleasure, and this is something that, to some extent, happens to bodies irrespective of gender.

Nothing can oppose this silent presence of death. Helen, whose situation is "real" bereavement, finds there is nowhere else to stack her emotional investment, and she yields to "the possibilities" that James and her car-crash have revealed to her.¹⁰⁴ As she accepts a lift from him once again, expressing her wish to look at the traffic, it emerges that "she was now inspecting with a clear and unsentimental eye the technology which had brought about the death of her husband."¹⁰⁵ All of her sexual encounters take place in the car, for only there amidst this technology can she relive the affect tied to his unique mode of dying. Her acute awareness of the car's dormant violence is a way of mourning her husband's death, exploring and confronting it

¹⁰¹ Creed, "Anal Wounds" 178.

¹⁰² Ballard 17.

¹⁰³ I owe this to Mark Cousins' concept of the ugly, which he maintains has to do with a conception of space - it is not, he says, an aesthetic category. Mark Cousins, "The Ugly," *AA Files: Annals of the Architectural Association School of Architecture* 28 (Autumn 1994): 61-64, 63.

¹⁰⁴ Ballard 77.

¹⁰⁵ Ballard 77-78.

through her sexuality. Yet, as she discovers, technology cannot be resolved, overcome or mourned in this way. For all the characters' attempts to use sexuality to make technology "benign," as the novel puts it, the car remains a death-trap. Helen herself realizes this in the scene where she suddenly stiffens and pulls away from James, and stares "at the cabin of the car, as if about to tear her exposed breasts on this trap of glass and metal knives."¹⁰⁶

Vaughan is the one who galvanizes the other characters into expressing their mourning and guilt as sexuality; he appears to be controlling them, "giving each of us what we most wanted and most feared."¹⁰⁷ James relishes being mistaken for him by the police because of "the uncertain images of crime and violence" with which the latter associate him.¹⁰⁸ A mystery surrounds him; something anamorphic blurs our perception of him, concealing the way he unlocks the kernel of our fears and desires.¹⁰⁹ In his person, he *embodies* the effects of this technology and its collision with the body. He walks unevenly, his face and body are scarred, carrying "the memory of that impact, some terrifying collision in the North when his legs had been broken by the rear wheels of a truck."¹¹⁰ His body shows time, and this is what makes him into a portent of new kinds of human becoming. The scars chiselled on his chest are "a cuneiform of the flesh formed by shattering instrument dials, fractured levers and parking-light switches," and the whiteness of his skin imparts "an unhealthy and metallic sheen, like the worn vinyl of the car interior."¹¹¹ Vaughan personifies the futural temporality characteristic of *Crash*: his scars ("what has been") presage "what will have been for what is still in the process of

¹⁰⁶ Ballard 120.

¹⁰⁷ Ballard 96.

¹⁰⁸ Ballard 188.

¹⁰⁹ The example Lacan gives of anamorphosis is the elliptical death's head in Holbein's *The Ambassadors*. Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts* 86.

¹¹⁰ Ballard 147, 64.

¹¹¹ Ballard 90.

becoming."¹¹² A signifier from the future determines him - and his scars announce the violent death that awaits him.

The police have only a blurred perception of Vaughan; they cannot read his desire, whereas Catherine can, or thinks she can, with her sidelong looks of curiosity and yearning at the scars on his chest as he pulls off his shirt. But the film leaves us wondering whether Vaughan offers her what she had really hoped for - the sex scene between them is the only one that is overtly sadistic; the man beats up the woman, and Catherine doesn't appear to enjoy it at all (thus proving Creed's claim that *Crash* fails to engage with the specifics of female desire). In the subsequent scene, James gazes at his wife's bruised mouth and the weals on her cheek - caused by Vaughan's rough-handling - and sees them as "disfigurements" that "marked the elements of her real beauty."¹¹³ In the film, he lovingly retraces the bruises on her body, placing his hands on the imprints left by Vaughan, to the accompaniment of a melancholy score. The strings interlace the tenderness of the visual image with a hint of menace - adding to the visual component of the image something implicit, but not shown. It announces our complicity in this pathology, where a woman's helplessness and pain are what makes her erotic.

The affect that many viewers found lacking in Cronenberg's film may be found here, in Deborah Unger's performance, where, again, it doesn't conform to the sensory-motor link that some audiences count on, as when the camera dwells on Catherine's almost-motionless face as she realizes Vaughan has just died in his final crash. The editing alternates between Vaughan's car, tilting into an airline coach, alight with flames, and Catherine seated in another car. Her face is used as "pure building material of the affect": she closes her eyes gently, and, now and then, touches her chin.¹¹⁴ Since it shows a character reacting,

¹¹² Grant 184.

¹¹³ Ballard 165.

¹¹⁴ Deleuze, *Cinema I* 103.

this affection-image still partakes of the sensory-motor schema, but as duration enters into it, the image starts to become valid for itself, and this implies a shattering of the sensory-motor link.

Barthes insisted on the special privilege of the photograph in coping with a loss (since it preserves a piece of reality in a past state). But we can see that the moving image, too, has a pathos, a melancholy. In cinema, affect itself is a movement of a special kind - of passion, a movement which moves us. In *La Jetée* (Chris Marker, 1962), for example, which is entirely composed of still pictures, save one small movement - when a sleeping girl opens her eyes - it is that movement itself which is charged with affect: it is *this* moment makes us think *she was really there*. When the person has died, the moving image has a special power to haunt. As Jenny Kitzinger says, "new technologies confront us with new manifestations of the departed." We are faced with the disjunction between the "intellectual knowledge" that this person has died, and the images showing that person moving, "so full of life," making us think, "What, is she still alive, then?" This is because, Kitzinger writes, we have learned to see film and video recordings as "closer simulations to the real thing" than other kinds of images.¹¹⁵

That the identification with images of death (both by the characters within *Crash* and by the reader/ spectator) works in this way seems to be Cronenberg's opinion, too: "When people talk about movies that could console you, I think this movie could do that. When you're feeling despairing or suicidal, or you feel like you're dying . . . a film like *Crash*, *Dead Ringers*, or *Naked Lunch* will console you because they're dealing with this stuff."¹¹⁶ The films console, because in them people are suffering just like you; their bodies, like yours, are being transformed by pain and affect - we can take pleasure in

¹¹⁵ Jenny Kitzinger, "Image," *Screen* 39: 1 (Spring 1998): 73-79, 76, 77.

¹¹⁶ Cronenberg, interview with Shelley 19.

this pain even if we cannot always take pleasure in our own pain. In identifying with this pain, the viewer can be consoled, Cronenberg implies - not only from the affects of dying, but also, perhaps, from the death drive itself.

I have said that I think *Crash* is a moving film. It has nothing of Godard's brutal apocalyptic vision in *Weekend* (1967), to which it has often been compared. This is partly due to what both Copjec and Creed have understood as the conservative nature of the film, although not in the way that they suggest. For what shines through, in the end, are the consolations of human love. Yet as Grant suggests, the message of the film is not that love will save the world, but that we can "save love for the world until it is responsive again."¹¹⁷ This is particularly evident in two scenes at the end of the film which significantly depart from the novel, although they do reveal elements implied within Ballard's conception. In one of them, Gabrielle and Helen hold each other in the wreck of Vaughan's car, after his death. The consolatory nature of their encounter is emphasized much more in the film than in the novel, where James merely notes with approval Helen's ever more diverse tastes.¹¹⁸

The other scene is the film's finale - Cronenberg's own addition. Driving Vaughan's battered Lincoln, James has been trying to push Catherine off the road. The fact that he is in Vaughan's car might suggest that he has taken over

¹¹⁷ Grant quotes Stanley Cavell in *Must We Mean What We Say* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 229. Grant 183.

¹¹⁸ Creed, on the other hand, writes that this sexual encounter between Helen and Gabrielle "comes across as completely tokenistic". She writes, "nothing that has previously happened prepares us for this expression of lesbian desire; it occurs gratuitously, and its enactment by the two women is coy and awkward." Awkward it certainly is, but that is part of the point. Gabrielle's calipers and shackles are meant to create a new and confused sense of the body and the space in which it moves. Helen and Gabrielle are anything but coy, although what Creed perceives as coyness in this scene may be put down to flawed performance - and there is much of this in the film. Yet the women's concern for each other *has* been established, in the earlier scene in which they watch test collision videos together (a scene which seems to have escaped Creed's attention). Creed, "Anal Wounds," 178-79.

Vaughan's role, now that Vaughan is no longer there. Indeed at times in the film it seems that the men are using Catherine as a go-between for their own homosocial/ homosexual bonding, just as is implied in the novel. Finally, however, it transpires that *Vaughan* was the go-between, enabling James and Catherine to come closer together. As James staggers towards Catherine, who has been thrown out of her car, he seems to be torn between two desires: he longs for her to have realized the spectacle that he wanted to stage - the perfect death, the death that would release the codes awaiting in her - while he still wonders, *is she all right, is she hurt, is she still alive?* He inspects the new conjunctions formed between Catherine's limp body and the crashed car to a reprise of the film's elegiac music, which records the mournful undertow of this scene: at this point, we don't know whether Catherine is actually dying. This final scene is in fact the only one reminiscent of *Weekend*, and of only one shot in that film, where the camera lingers on the face of a woman who is speaking her last words, and whose head is wrapped in a blood-soaked scarf. The final shots in *Crash* are similarly fixed, and this is another indication of Cronenberg's enlistment in a cinema where the sensory-motor schema and action-image are collapsing: here, duration in the image implies a beyond of movement - a time-image which "never stops growing in dimensions."¹¹⁹ These new temporal dimensions of the image encompass a feeling for the body's mortality, and its susceptibility to becoming crushed and disfigured.

When Catherine and James kiss at the end of this sequence, they kiss with utter conviction. "All of my movies are basically love stories," Cronenberg says. "The people may be in love but you might not know until the end of the movie. I feel that about *Crash* - you don't realise it's a love story until the last shot."¹²⁰ What we see here is the emergence of something of a very different

¹¹⁹ Deleuze, *Cinema 2* 42.

¹²⁰ David Cronenberg, interview with Bob Flynn, "Crash and Burn," *Spectator: the Arena Review*, Nov. 1996: 36-37, 36. Ballard recognized that

order from what we've seen before - an unforeseen leap into another, more complex mode of becoming. Just as the car-crash opened up possibilities for a consolation from the affectless realm that the characters were living in, a consolation from the wearing away of desire, so this new-found passion opens up possibilities for something else, as yet unknown - and that is the consolation that emerges here. And it is precisely this potential for a sudden, unpredictable turn from entropy to rebirth that the time-image promises - the ending of the film also shows an opening out in the image itself. The camera pulls back, revealing the tableau formed by the dovetailing of technologies and bodies, the conjunctions between them: two bodies having sex on the grass verge next to the overturned car, shrouded by billows of steam from the engine. But the kind of consolation that Cronenberg implies here is not consolation as overcoming, as synthesis and reconciliation. It is not a successful integration of what was traumatic into the symbolic order. Rather, it has to do with a deliberate prolonging of the pain, with keeping alive the affect as a reminder of what emotional intensity one can achieve. It's a consolation in which we are invited to tarry in the realm of melancholia - it *is* the consolation of melancholia. But in *Crash*, this is never allowed to become nihilistic: as Cronenberg ceaselessly reminds us, its characters "seek life, even if they're seeking it through death or danger."¹²¹

Cronenberg had made *Crash* into a love story, and said that this treatment brought out what was implicit in the book. Discussion between David Cronenberg and J.G. Ballard, "Set for Collision," *Index on Censorship* 26.3 (May / June 1997): 90-98, 98.

¹²¹ Cronenberg, interview with Pizzello 47.

Works Cited

- Abraham, Karl. *Clinical Papers and Essays on Psychoanalysis*. London: Karnac, 1979.
- Abraham, Nicolas and Maria Torok. "Introjection-Incorporation. Mourning or Melancholia." *Psychoanalysis in France*. Ed. S. Lebovici and D. Widlocker. New York: International University Press, 1980. 3-16.
- Adams, Parveen. "Cars and Scars." *New Formations* 36 (Autumn 1998): 60-72.
- Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Trans. John Cumming. London: Verso, 1992.
- Adorno, Theodor, *The Culture Industry: Selected Essays on Mass Culture*. Ed. J.M. Bernstein. London: Routledge, 1993.
- Allen, Michael. "From *Bwana Devil* to *Batman Forever*: Technology in Contemporary Hollywood Cinema." *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*. Ed. Steve Neale and Murray Smith. London: Routledge, 1998. 109-29.
- Apollonio, Umbro, ed. *Futurist Manifestos*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1973.
- Bahiana, Ana Marie. "James Cameron and *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*." *Cinema Papers* 84 (1991): 20-25.
- Ballard, J.G. *Crash*. London: Vintage, 1995.
- Barthes, Roland. *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*. Trans. Richard Howard. London: Vintage, 1993.
- Baudrillard, Jean. *Simulacra and Simulations*. Trans. Sheila Faria Glaser. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994.
- Baudry, Jean-Louis. "Ideological Effects of the Basic Cinematographic Apparatus." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 345-55.
- Belton, John. "Technology and Aesthetics of Film Sound." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 376-84.
- Benjamin, Walter, *Illuminations*. Trans. Harry Zone. London: Fontana Press, 1992.

- Bergson, Henri. *Matter and Memory*. Trans. N.M. Paul and W.S. Palmer. New York: Zone Books, 1991.
- Bergson, Henri. *Creative Evolution*. Trans. Arthur Mitchell. Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 1998.
- Bergson, Henri. *Laughter: an Essay on the Meaning of the Comic*. Trans. Cloudsley Brereton and Fred Rothwell. København: Green Integer Books, 1999.
- Bick, Esther, "The Experience of the Skin in Early Object Relations." 1968. *The Collected Papers of Esther Bick and Martha Harris*. Perthshire: Clunie Press/Roland Harris Trust, 1987. 114-18.
- Biro, Matthew. "The New Man as Cyborg: Figures of Technology in Weimar Visual Culture." *New German Critique* 62 (Spring / Summer 1994): 71-110.
- Blum, Cinzia Sartini. *The Other Modernism: F.T. Marinetti's Futurist Fiction of Power*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996.
- Bogacz, Ted. "War Neurosis and Cultural Change in England 1914-22: the Work of the War Office Committee of Inquiry into 'Shell-Shock.'" *Journal of Contemporary History* 24 (1989): 227-56.
- Bois, Yve-Alain, and Rosalind Krauss, "A User's Guide to Entropy." *October* 78 (Fall): 39-88.
- Bonitzer, Pascal. "Hitchcockian Suspense." *Everything You Always Wanted to Know to Know About Lacan but Were Afraid to ask Hitchcock*. Ed. Slavoj Zizek. London: Verso, 1992. 15-30.
- Boothby, Richard. *Death and Desire: Psychoanalytic Theory in Lacan's Return to Freud*. London: Routledge, 1991.
- Boscagli, Maurizia. *Eye On the Flesh: Fashions of Masculinity in the Early Twentieth Century*. Colorado: Westview Press, 1996.
- Botting, Fred, and Scott Wilson. "Automatic Lover." *Screen* 39.2 (Summer 1998): 186-92.
- Bourke, Joanna. *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*. London: Reaktion Books, 1996.

- Braidotti, Rosi, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994.
- Branigan, Edward. "The Point-of-View Shot." *Movies and Methods*. Vol. 2. Ed. Bill Nichols. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985. 672-91.
- Burstein, Jessica. "Waspish Segments: Lewis, Prosthesis, Fascism." *Modernism / Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 139-64.
- Caillois, Roger. "Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia." Trans. John Shepley. *October* 31 (Winter 1984): 17-32.
- Cameron, James, dir. *The Terminator*. Perf. Michael Biehn, Linda Hamilton, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Paul Winfield and Lance Henriksen. Cinema 84/ Pacific Western Productions / Orion Pictures Corporation, 1984.
- Cameron, James. Interview with David Chute. "The 1984 Movie Revue." *Film Comment* 21.1 (Jan / Feb 1985): 55-59.
- Cameron, James, dir. *Aliens*. Perf. Sigourney Weaver, Carrie Henn, Michael Biehn, Lance Henriksen, Jenette Goldstein and Paul Reiser. Twentieth Century Fox, 1986.
- Cameron, James, dir. *The Abyss*. Perf. Ed Harris, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, and Michael Biehn. Twentieth Century Fox, 1989.
- Cameron, James, dir. *Terminator 2: Judgement Day*. Perf. Linda Hamilton, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Edward Furlong and Jenette Goldstein. Carolco Pictures, 1991.
- Cameron, James, and William Wisher, *Terminator 2: Judgement Day - the Book of the Film*. New York: Applause Books, 1991.
- Carpenter, John, dir. *The Thing*. Perf. Kurt Russell. Universal Studio Pictures, 1982.
- Chaplin, Charlie, dir. *Modern Times*. Perf. Chaplin and Paulette Goddard. United Artists, 1936.
- Chaplin, Charlie, dir. *The Great Dictator*. Perf. Chaplin and Paulette Goddard. United Artists, 1940.
- Chaplin, Charlie. *My Autobiography*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966.

- Clausewitz, Carl von. *On War*. London: Penguin, 1982.
- Comolli, Jean-Louis. "Mechanical Bodies, Ever More Heavenly." Trans. Annette Michelson. *October* 83 (Winter 1998): 19-24.
- Copjec, Joan. *Read My Desire: Lacan Against the Historicists*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995.
- Cork, Richard. *A Bitter Truth: Avant-Garde Art and the Great War*. New York: Yale University Press, 1994.
- Cousins, Mark. "The Ugly." *AA Files: Annals of the Architectural Association School of Architecture* 28 (Autumn 1994): 61-64.
- Creed, Barbara. "Alien and the Monstrous-Feminine." *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*. Ed. Annette Kuhn. London: Verso, 1990. 128-41.
- Creed, Barbara. "Gynesis, Postmodernism and the Science Fiction Horror Film." *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*. Ed. Annette Kuhn. London: Verso, 1990. 214-27.
- Creed, Barbara. "Anal Wounds, Metallic Kisses." *Screen* 39.2 (Summer 1998): 175-79.
- Cronenberg, David, dir. *Scanners*. Perf. Jennifer O'Neill and Steven Lack. Filmplan International, 1980.
- Cronenberg, David, dir. *Videodrome*. Perf. James Woods and Deborah Harry. Filmplan International, 1982.
- Cronenberg, David, dir. *The Fly*. Perf. Jeff Goldblum and Geena Davis. Brookfilms / Twentieth Century Fox, 1986.
- Cronenberg, David, dir. *Crash*. Perf. James Spader, Holly Hunter, Elias Koteas, Deborah Unger, Rosanna Arquette. Alliance Communications Corporations / Columbia Tristar, 1996.
- Cronenberg, David. *Crash*. London: Faber, 1996.
- Cronenberg, David. Interview with Harlan Johnson. "David Cronenberg at Cannes '96." online. zappa. users. netlink. Internet. 19 May 1996.

- Cronenberg, David. Interview with Jim Emerson. "David Cronenberg on the Collision of Sex, Violence and Politics in *Crash*." online. zappa. users. netlink. Internet. 1996.
- Cronenberg, David. Interview with Jim Shelley. "Always Crashing in the Same Car." *The Guardian Weekend*. 2 Nov. 1996: 12-19.
- Cronenberg, David. Interview with Geoff Andrew. "Film Special." *Time Out* 6-13 Nov. 1996: 18-20.
- Cronenberg, David. Interview with Bob Flynn. "Crash and Burn." *Spectator: the Arena Review* Nov. 1996: 36-37.
- Cronenberg, David. Interview with Ian Calcutt. "Strange Highways." *Starburst* 31 (April 1997): 50-55.
- Cronenberg, David. Interview with Stephen Pizzello. "Driver's Side." *American Cinematographer* 78.4 (April 1997): 43-47.
- Cronenberg, David. Discussion with J.G. Ballard. "Set for Collision." *Index on Censorship* 26.3 (May/ June 1997): 90-98.
- Cronenberg, David, dir. *eXistenZ*. Perf. Jennifer Jason Leigh and Jude Law. Alliance Atlantis / Serendipity Point Films, 1999.
- David-Ménard, Monique. *Hysteria From Freud to Lacan: Body and Language in Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Catherine Porter. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989.
- Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. London: Athlone Press, 1984.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 1: the Movement Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. London: Athlone, 1992.
- Deleuze, Gilles. *Cinema 2: the Time Image*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta. London: Athlone, 1989.
- Deren, Maya. "Cinematography: the Creative Use of Reality." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 216-27.

- Derrida, Jacques. "To Speculate - On Freud." *The Post-Card: From Socrates to Freud and Beyond*. Trans. Alan Bass. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987. 257-386.
- Derrida, Jacques. "Freud and the Scene of Writing." *Writing and Difference*. Trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge, 1990. 196-231.
- Derrida, Jacques. *Archive Fever*. Trans. Eric Prenowitz. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996.
- Doane, Mary-Ann. "Technology's Body: Cinematic Vision in Modernity." *Differences* 5.2 (1993): 1-23.
- Doane, Mary-Ann. "Temporality, Storage, Legibility: Freud, Marey, and the Cinema." *Critical Inquiry* 22 (Winter 1996): 313-43.
- Doherty, Brigid. "Pedantic Automatons: Montage, Prosthetics and the Ideology of Work in Berlin Dada." Unpublished paper.
- Donald, James. *Sentimental Education: Schooling, Popular Culture and the Regulation of Liberty*. London: Verso, 1992.
- Donner, Richard, dir. *The Omen*. Perf. Gregory Peck and Harvey Stephens. Twentieth Century Fox, 1976.
- Duncan, Jody. "A Once and Future War." *Cinefex* 47 (August 1991): 4-59.
- Eder, M.D. *War Shock: the Psychoneuroses in War Psychology and Treatment*. London: William Heinemann, 1917.
- Edwards, Paul. *Wyndham Lewis: Art and War*. London: Lund Humphries Publishers, 1992.
- Eisenstein, Sergei. *Selected Works, Volume I: Writings, 1922-34*. Trans. Richard Taylor. London: Bfi, 1988.
- Ellmann, Maud. *The Poetics of Impersonality: T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound*. Brighton: Harvester, 1987.
- Elsaesser, Thomas. "Social Mobility and the Fantastic: German Silent Cinema." *Fantasy and the Cinema*. Ed. James Donald. London: Bfi, 1989.
- "Episode 5." *1914-18*. BBC. 9 Dec. 1996.

- Epstein, Jacob. *Let There Be Sculpture: An Autobiography*. London: Michael Joseph, 1940.
- Faith, Nicholas. *Crash: the Limits of Car Safety*. London: Boxtree, 1997.
- Fer, Briony. "Death Sentence: Light and Installation." *Death Drive: Contemporary Art and Psychoanalysis Conference*. Tate Gallery, London. 26 June 1998.
- Fincher, David, dir. *Alien 3*. Perf. Sigourney Weaver and Charles S. Dutton. Twentieth Century Fox, 1992.
- Fischer, Lucy. "Mama's Boy: Filial Hysteria in *White Heat*." *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. Ed. Steven Cohen and Ina Rae Hark. London: Routledge, 1993. 70-84.
- Foster, Hal, "Armor Fou." *October* 56 (Spring 1991): 65-97.
- Foster, Hal. "Prosthetic Gods." *Modernism / Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 5-38.
- Freud, Sigmund. "A Project for a Scientific Psychology." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 1. London: Hogarth Press, 1966.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams: The Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 4. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Freud, Sigmund. *The Complete Letters of Sigmund Freud to Wilhelm Fliess 1887-1904*. Trans. and ed. Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Berknap Press, 1985.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Introduction to *Psychoanalysis and the War Neuroses*." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 17. London: Hogarth Press, 1955.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Memorandum on the Electrical Treatment of War Neurotics." *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 17. London: Hogarth Press, 1955.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Mourning and Melancholia." *On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis. The Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 11. London: Penguin, 1991.

- Freud, Sigmund. "The Unconscious." *On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis. The Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 11. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The 'Uncanny.'" *Art and Literature. The Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 14. London: Penguin, 1990.
- Freud, Sigmund. "Beyond the Pleasure Principle." *On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis. The Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 11. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Ego and the Id." *On Metapsychology: the Theory of Psychoanalysis. The Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 11. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Freud, Sigmund. "The Economic Problem of Masochism." *On Metapsychology: the Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 11. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Freud, Sigmund. "A Note upon the 'Mystic Writing Pad.'" *On Metapsychology: the Penguin Freud Library*. Trans. James Strachey. Vol. 11. London: Penguin, 1991.
- Friedkin, William, dir. *The Exorcist*. Perf. Ellen Burstyn, Linda Blair, Max von Sydow and Jason Miller. Warner Brothers, 1973.
- Funktionell-motorisch Reiz und Lähmungs-Zustände bei Kriegs eilnehmen und deren Heilung durch Suggestion in Hypnose*. Allgemeines Krankenhaus, Hamburg Eppendorf. Videocassette. Wellcome Institute.
- Gentile, Emilio. "The Conquest of Modernity: from Modernist Nationalism to Fascism." *Modernism / Modernity* 1.4 (1994): 55-87.
- Gill, Pat. "Technostalgia: Making the Future Past Perfect." *Camera Obscura* 40-41(May 1997): 163-79.
- Grant, Michael. "Crimes of the Future." *Screen* 39.2 (Summer 1998): 180-85.

- Gunning, Tom. "An Aesthetic of Astonishment: Early Film and the (In)credulous Spectator." *Film Theory and Criticism: Introductory Readings*. Ed. Leo Braudy and Marshall Cohen. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 818-32.
- Hake, Sabine. *The Cinema's Third Machine: Writing on Film in Germany 1907-1933*. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1993.
- Hamacher, Werner. "Working through Working Through." Trans. Matthew T. Hartman. *Modernism / Modernity* 3.1 (January 1996): 23-56.
- Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*. Trans. William Lovitt. New York: Harper and Row, 1977.
- Hills, Elizabeth. "From 'Figurative Males' to Action Heroines: Further Thoughts on Active Women in Cinema." *Screen* 40.1 (Spring 1999): 38-50.
- Hitchcock, Alfred, dir. *Sabotage*. Perf. Oscar Homolka, Sylvia Sydney and John Loder. Gaumont British Picture Corporation, 1936.
- Hooper, Tobe, dir. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*. Perf. Marilyn Burns, Gunnar Hansen and Allen Danziger. Vortex, 1974.
- Hughes, Robert. *The Shock of the New: Art and the Century of Change*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1993.
- Hulme, T.E. "Modern Art and its Philosophy." *Speculations. Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*. Ed. Herbert Read. London: Keagan Paul, 1936. 88-109.
- Hulton, K.G. Pontus. *The Machine as Seen at the End of the Mechanical Age*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1968.
- Hurst, A.F. "Nerves and the Men (The Mental Factor in the Disabled Soldier)." *Reveille* 2 (November 1918): 260-68.
- Huyssen, Andreas. "Fortifying the Heart - Totally: Ernst Jünger's Armored Texts." *New German Critique* 59 (Spring / Summer 1993): 3-23.
- Huyssen, Andreas. *After the Great Divide: Modernism, Mass Culture and Postmodernism*. Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1988.

- Hynes, Samuel. *A War Imagined: the First World War and English Culture*. London: Bodley Head, 1990.
- Ingleby, Richard, et al. *C.R.W. Nevinson: the Twentieth Century*. London: Merrrell Holberton Publishers, 1999.
- Jameson, Fredric. *Fables of Aggression: Wyndham Lewis, The Modernist Fascist*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.
- Jeffords, Susan. "Can Masculinity be Terminated?" *Screening the Male: Exploring Masculinities in Hollywood Cinema*. Ed. Steven Cohen and Ina Rae Hark. London: Routledge, 1993. 245-62.
- Jeunet, Jean-Pierre, and Marc Caro, dir. *City of Lost Children*. Perf. Ron Perlman, Dominique Pinon, and Judith Vittet. Lumière / France 3 Cinema, 1995.
- Jeunet, Jean-Pierre, dir. *Alien: Resurrection*. Perf. Sigourney Weaver, Winona Ryder, Dominique Pinon, and Ron Perlman. Twentieth Century Fox, 1997.
- Johnson, Colin Melinda. "Of Dykes and Deltoids: Irony and Fetishism(s) in Lesbian Spectatorship of Macho-Women Films." *Spectator* 16.1 (Fall/ Winter 1995): 45-57.
- Jones, Ernest. *Papers on Psychoanalysis*. London: Balliere, Tindall and Cox, 1950.
- Jünger, Ernst. *Storm of Steel. From the Diary of a Storm-Troop Officer on the Western Front*. Trans. Basil Creighton. London: Constable, 1994.
- Jünger, Ernst. "Der Kampf als Inneres Erlebnis." *Werke. Band 5. Essays I*. Stuttgart: Ernst Klett Verlag, 1967.
- Jünger, Ernst. "Photography and the 'Second Consciousness'" (An Excerpt from "On Pain"). Trans. Joel Agee. *Photography in the Modern Era: European Documents and Critical Writings, 1913-1940*. Ed. Christopher Phillips. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art / Aperture, 1989. 207-10.
- Jünger, Ernst. "War and Photography." *New German Critique* 59 (Spring / Summer 1993): 24-26.
- Jünger, Ernst. "On Danger." *New German Critique* 59 (Spring / Summer 1993): 27-32.

- Jünger, Ernst. *Der Arbeiter*. Stuttgart: Klett-Clotta, 1982.
- Kaes, Anton, "The Cold Gaze: Notes on Mobilization and Modernity." *New German Critique* 59 (Spring/ Summer 1993): 105-117.
- Kaes, Anton, "Leaving Home: Film, Migration, and the Urban Experience." *New German Critique* 74 (Spring/ Summer 1998): 179-92.
- Kaes, Anton, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds. *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994.
- Kirby, Lynne. *Parallel Tracks: the Railroad and the Silent Cinema*. Durham: Duke University Press, 1997.
- Kirby, Michael and Victoria NesKirby. *Futurist Performance, including Manifestos, Playscripts and Illustrations*. New York: PAJ Publications, 1986.
- Kitzinger, Jenny. "Image." *Screen* 39: 1 (Spring 1998): 73-79.
- Kolata, Gina. *Clone: the Road to Dolly and the Path Ahead*. London: Penguin, 1997.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *The Mass Ornament: Weimar Essays*. Trans. Thomas Y. Levin. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological Study of the German Film*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Dennis Porter. London: Routledge, 1992.
- Lacan, Jacques. *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan. London: Penguin, 1994.
- Lang, Fritz, dir. *Metropolis*. Perf. Gustav Fröhlich and Brigitte Helm. UFA, 1926.
- Lang, Fritz. *Metropolis*. London: Faber and Faber, 1989.
- Laplanche, J. and J-B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Karnac, 1988.
- Lebeau, Vicky. *Lost Angels: Psychoanalysis and Cinema*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Leed, Eric. *No Man's Land: Combat and Identity in World War I*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

- Lerner, Paul. "Irrational Minds / Rationalized Bodies: Psychiatry and Industry in World War One." Unpublished Paper.
- Lewis, Wyndham. "A Breton Innkeeper." *The Tramp: An Open-Air Magazine* 1 (March-September 1910): 411-14.
- Lewis, Wyndham, ed. *Blast 1*. June 1914. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1997.
- Lewis, Wyndham, ed. *Blast 2*. July 1915. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1993.
- Lewis, Wyndham. *Blasting and Bombadiering*. London: Imperial War Museum, 1992.
- Lewis, Wyndham. *Time and Western Man*. London: Chatto and Windus, 1927.
- Lewis, Wyndham. "The Vorticists." *Creatures of Habit and Creatures of Change: Essays on Art, Literature and Society 1914-1956*. Ed. Paul Edwards. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1989. 378-83.
- Lewis, Wyndham. "The Meaning of the Wild Body." *The Complete Wild Body*. Ed. Bernard Lafourcade. Santa Rosa: Black Sparrow Press, 1982. 157-60.
- Leys, Ruth. "Traumatic Cures: Shell-Shock, Janet, and the Question of Memory." *Critical Inquiry* 20 (Summer 1994): 623-62.
- Little, Ernest Muirhead. *Artificial Limbs and Amputation Stumps. A Practical Handbook*. London, 1922.
- Luc-Nancy, Jean, and Philippe Lacoue-Labarthes. "The Unconscious is Deconstructed Like an Affect." *Stanford Literary Review* 6.2 (Fall 1992): 191-209.
- Lumière Brothers, dir. *Arrival of a Train*. Lumière, 1895.
- Marinetti, F. T. *Mafarka the Futurist: an African Novel*. Trans. Carol Diethe and Steve Cox. London: Middlesex University Press, 1998.
- Marinetti, F. T. *Let's Murder the Moonshine: Selected Writings*. Trans. R.W. Flint and Arthur Coppotelli. Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1991.
- Marinetti, F. T. *The Untameables*. Trans. Jeremy Parzen. Los Angeles: Sun and Moon Press, 1994.
- Marinetti, F. T. *Futurist Cookbook*. Trans. Suzanne Brill. London: Trefoil Publications, 1989.
- "Minds the Dead Have Ravished." *Shellshock*. Channel 4. 8 Nov. 1998.

- Mott, F.W. "Mental Hygiene in Shell-Shock, during and after the War." *The Journal of Mental Science* 58 (1918): 467-88.
- Murnau, F.W. dir. *The Last Laugh*. UFA, 1924.
- Nevinson, C.R.W. *Paint and Prejudice*. London: Methuen, 1937.
- Newton, Judith. "Feminism and Anxiety in *Alien*." *Alien Zone: Cultural Theory and Contemporary Science Fiction Cinema*. Ed. Annette Kuhn. London: Verso, 1990. 82-87.
- Nicholls, Peter. *Modernisms: a Literary Guide*. London: Macmillan, 1995).
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Trans. Carol Diethe. Ed. Keith Ansell Pearson. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *Beyond Good and Evil: Prelude to a Philosophy of the Future*. Trans. R.J. Hollingdale. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990.
- Nietzsche, Friedrich. *The Will to Power*. Trans. Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale. Ed. Walter Kaufman. New York: Vintage, 1968.
- Panchasi, Roxanne. "Reconstructions: Prosthetics and the Rehabilitation of the Male Body in World War I France." *Differences* 2.3. (Fall 1995): 109-40.
- Penley, Constance. *The Future of an Illusion: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis*. London: Routledge, 1989.
- Peppis, Paul. "'Surrounded by A Multitude of other Blasts': Vorticism and the Great War." *Modernism/Modernity* 4.2 (1997): 39-66.
- Pfeil, Fred. "Home Fires Burning: Family *Noir* in *Blue Velvet* and *Terminator 2*." *Shades of Noir*. Ed. Joan Copjec. London: Verso, 1993. 227-59.
- Phillips, Gordon. *Best Foot Forward*. Cambridge: Granta Editions, 1990.
- Pick, Daniel. *War Machine: the Rationalization of Slaughter in the Modern Age*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.
- Polanski, Roman, dir. *Rosemary's Baby*. Perf. Mia Farrow and John Cassavetes. William Castle Enterprises / Paramount Pictures Corporation, 1968.
- Porter, Edwin, dir. photography. *Uncle Josh at the Moving Picture Show*. Edison, 1902

- Probst, Christopher. "Malevolent Mutations." *American Cinematographer* 78.11 (November 1997): 30-37.
- Rabinach, Anson. "The Aesthetics of Production in the Third Reich." *Journal of Contemporary History* 11 (1976): 43-74.
- Rabinach, Anson. *The Human Motor: Energy, Fatigue, and the Origins of Modernity*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992.
- Riefenstahl, Leni, dir. *Triumph of the Will*. Nazionalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei, 1935.
- Rivers, W.H.R. "Freud's Psychology of the Unconscious." *The Lancet* 1 (1917): 912-14.
- Rivers, W.H.R. *Instinct and the Unconscious*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920.
- Roth, Michael. "Hysterical Remembering." *Modernism / Modernity* 3.2 (1996): 1-30.
- Salt, Barry. *Film Style and Technology: History and Analysis*. London: Starword, 1992.
- Schivelbusch, Wolfgang. *The Railway Journey: the Industrialization of Time and Space in the Nineteenth Century*. Leamington Spa: Berg, 1986.
- Schnapp, Jeffrey T. "Propeller Talk." *Modernism / Modernity* 1.3. (1994): 153-78.
- Schnapp, Jeffrey T. "Crash (Speed as Engine of Individuation)." *Modernism / Modernity* 6.1 (January 1999): 1-49.
- Scott, Ridley, dir. *Alien*. Perf. Sigourney Weaver, Tom Skerritt, John Hurt, Ian Holm, Yaphet Kotto, Harry Dean Staunton and Veronica Cartwright. Twentieth Century Fox, 1979.
- Seltzer, Mark. "Wound Culture: Trauma in the Pathological Public Sphere." *October* 80 (Spring 1997): 3-26.
- Sergi, Gianluca. "A Cry in the Dark: The Role of Post-Classical Film Sound." *Contemporary Hollywood Cinema*. Ed. Steve Neale and Murray Smith. London: Routledge, 1998. 156-65.

- Shaviro, Steven. *The Cinematic Body*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.
- "Shellblindness: the Problem of Wounds to Consciousness." *The Times*. 8 April 1915: 6.
- Showalter, Elaine. *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture, 1830-1980*. London: Virago Press, 1995.
- Silverstone, Roger. "Space." *Screen* 39.1 (Spring 1998): 81-84.
- Simmel, Georg. "The Metropolis and Mental Life." *On Individuality and Social Forms*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971. 324-39.
- Sinclair, Iain. *Crash*. London: Bfi, 1999.
- Smith, Marq. "Wound Envy: Touching Cronenberg's *Crash*." *Screen* (Summer 1999): 193-202.
- Sorel, Georges. *Reflections On Violence*. Trans. T.E. Hulme. London: Collier Books, 1969.
- Spackman, Barbara. "Mafarka and Son: Marinetti's Homophobic Economics." *Modernism/Modernity* 1.3 (1994): 89-107.
- Stefanile, Felix, trans. *The Blue Moustache: Some Futurist Poets*. Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1981.
- Stromberg, Roland N. *Redemption by War: the Intellectuals and 1914*. Lawrence: Regents Press of Kansas, 1982.
- Stone, Martin. "Shellshock and the Psychologists." *The Anatomy of Madness: Essays in the History of Psychiatry*. Ed. W.F. Bynum, R. Porter and M. Shepherd. Vol. 2. London: Tavistock Publications, 1985. 242-71.
- Suschitzky, Peter. Interview with Allen Daviau, Fred Elmes. "Auto Erotic." Ed. David Williams. *American Cinematographer* 78.4 (April 1997): 36-42.
- Tausk, Victor. "On the Origin of the 'Influencing Machine' in Schizophrenia." *Psychoanalytic Quarterly* 2 (1933): 519-556.
- Tisdall, Caroline, and Angelo Bozzolla, *Futurism*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1993.

- Theweleit, Klaus. *Male Fantasies II - Male Bodies: Psychoanalyzing the White Terror*. Trans. Chris Turner and Erica Carter, in collaboration with Steven Conway. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989.
- Thomas, H.H. *Help For Wounded Heroes: the Story of Ancient and Modern Artificial Limbs*. London, 1920.
- Thomson, David. *The Alien Quartet*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1998.
- Velani, Livia. *Balla and Futurist Italy*. London: The Estorick Collection, 1998.
- Vertov, Dziga. "Film Directors: A Revolution." *Screen Reader* 1 (1977): 280-90.
- Vertov, Dziga, dir. *Man With a Movie Camera*. VUFKU, 1928.
- Vidler, Anthony. *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays on the Modern Unhomely*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992.
- Virilio, Paul. *War and Cinema: the Logistics of Perception*. trans. Patrick Camiller. London: Verso, 1989.
- War Neuroses*. Netley 1917 and Seale Hayne Military Hospital 1918. Videocassette. Wellcome Institute.
- Weir, Peter, dir. *The Cars That Ate Paris*. Perf. Terry Camilleri and John Meillon. Salt Pan Films, 1974.
- Werneberg, Brigitte. "Ernst Junger and the Transformed World." Trans. Christopher Phillips. *October* 62 (Fall 1992): 42-64.
- Williams, Linda. *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and "the Frenzy of the Visible."* London: Pandora Press, 1990.
- Winokur, Mark. "Modern Times and the Comedy of Transformation." *Literature / Film Quarterly* 15.4 (1987): 219-26.
- Wolin, Richard. *The Heidegger Controversy: a Critical Reader*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1993.
- Wollen, Peter. "Cinema / Americanism / The Robot." *New Formations* 8 (Summer 1989): 7-34.
- Zizek, Slavoj. "The Undergrowth of Enjoyment: How Popular Culture Can Serve as an Introduction to Lacan." *New Formations* 9 (Winter 1989): 7-29.

Zizek, Slavoj. ed. *Everything You Always Wanted to Know to Know About Lacan but Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock*. London: Verso, 1992.

Zizek, Slavoj. *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Lacan through Popular Culture*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995.

Zizek, Slavoj. *The Plague of Fantasies*. London: Verso, 1997.

Zizek, Slavoj. "Why is Immortality one of the Names of the Death Drive?" Death Drive: Contemporary Art and Psychoanalysis Conference. Tate Gallery, London. 26 June 1998.