

■ D I F F E R E N C E ■

On Representation and Sexuality



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|-----------------|------------------|
| Max Almy | Mary Kelly |
| Ray Barrie | Silvia Kolbowski |
| Judith Barry | Barbara Kruger |
| Raymond Bellour | Sherrie Levine |
| Dara Birnbaum | Yve Lomax |
| Victor Burgin | Stuart Marshall |
| Theresa Cha | Martha Rosler |
| Cecilia Condit | Philippe Venault |
| Jean-Luc Godard | Jeff Wall |
| Hans Haacke | Marie Yates |



Kate Linker, *Guest Curator*
Jane Weinstock, *Guest Curator/Film and Video*

THE NEW MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART, NEW YORK

Difference: On Representation and Sexuality

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PREFACE

PERIODICALLY, THE NEW MUSEUM of Contemporary Art mounts exhibitions that are designed to examine an important cultural issue through the lens of visual representation. *Difference* is such an exhibition, focusing on the ways in which representation, purporting to be neutral, is informed by differences in gender. The point of view of this exhibition is specific, since gender itself is not the subject of the show; it is instead an intellectual as well as visual exploration of how gender distorts "reality," as seen through the work of thirty-one artists, both male and female.

The exhibition consists of two- and three-dimensional works of art, a film program (presented simultaneously at the Public Theater), and the catalogue essays that constitute an analysis of this critical issue.

My thanks to Kate Linker, guest curator of the exhibition, for her initiative and insight in its organization, and to Jane Weinstock, who organized the film and video program. We are grateful to The British Council for providing financial assistance to the British artists, and we deeply appreciate the assistance of the Public Theater in showing the films that are an essential part of the exhibition. My special thanks to The New Museum's staff, interns, and volunteers for their invaluable help in realizing such a complex exhibition and to the lenders for their good-natured generosity in parting with works for the period of the exhibition and subsequent tour.

Above all, we are most grateful to the artists who, in addressing such vital and complex issues, have helped us to become aware of the subtle, yet powerful forces that shape our world. It is because of their intelligent and concerned analysis and exploration of these issues that we, the public, are privy to them.

Marcia Tucker, *Director*

FOREWORD AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OVER THE PAST ten years, a significant body of work has explored a complex terrain triangulated by the terms sexuality, meaning, and language. In literature, the visual arts, criticism, and ideological analysis, attention has focused on sexuality as a cultural construction, opposing a perspective based on a natural or biological "truth." This exhibition charts this territory in the visual arts. It presents work by its main participants. And it explores some of the radical implications of this approach. Its thesis—the continuous production of sexual difference—offers possibilities for change, for it suggests that this need not entail reproduction, but rather revision of our conventional categories of opposition.

As the title suggests, this exhibition pertains to recent interest in representation and, particularly, in the powers inherent in representation. However, it diverges—differs—in the role it accords to theory. The essays collected here indicate the influence on this work of psychoanalytic theory and its account of the development of sexed subjectivity. Central to it are Jacques Lacan's writings on the subject's construction in language. Underlying Lacan's theory is the conviction that the human subject is never a discrete self, that it cannot be known outside of the terms of society and, specifically, of the cultural formations of patriarchy. Implicit in his speculations is awareness of how gender informs, infuses, and complicates a range of social "texts," permeating supposedly neutral fields.

Since much work in this area depends on investigations initially pursued in film, it is impossible to view *Difference* in its separate parts. I thank Jane Weinstock, Film and Video Curator, for her insightful programming, and Fabiano Canosa and Stephen Soba of the Public Theater for screening the films. Although most of the still images reflect the artists' specific commitment, others were chosen for the illuminations they elicit when seen through the lens of psychoanalysis. The assistance of all the artists is gratefully appreciated; special mention should be made of Mary Kelly and Silvia Kolbowski, whose intellectual acumen and enthusiasm were instrumental in spurring this project along. Christopher Phillips brought his knowledge of the field to editing the catalogue texts, while Brian Wallis offered advice and essential support at many stages. John Jacobs and Eric Bemisderfer skillfully organized the shipping and installation of *Difference*, and Lisa Parr expertly administered the details of the exhibition tour. Finally, I would like to thank Marcia Landsman for her remarkable talent and astonishing good humor in attending to not only the catalogue production but to the myriad organizational matters involved in this exhibition.

Kate Linker, *Guest Curator*

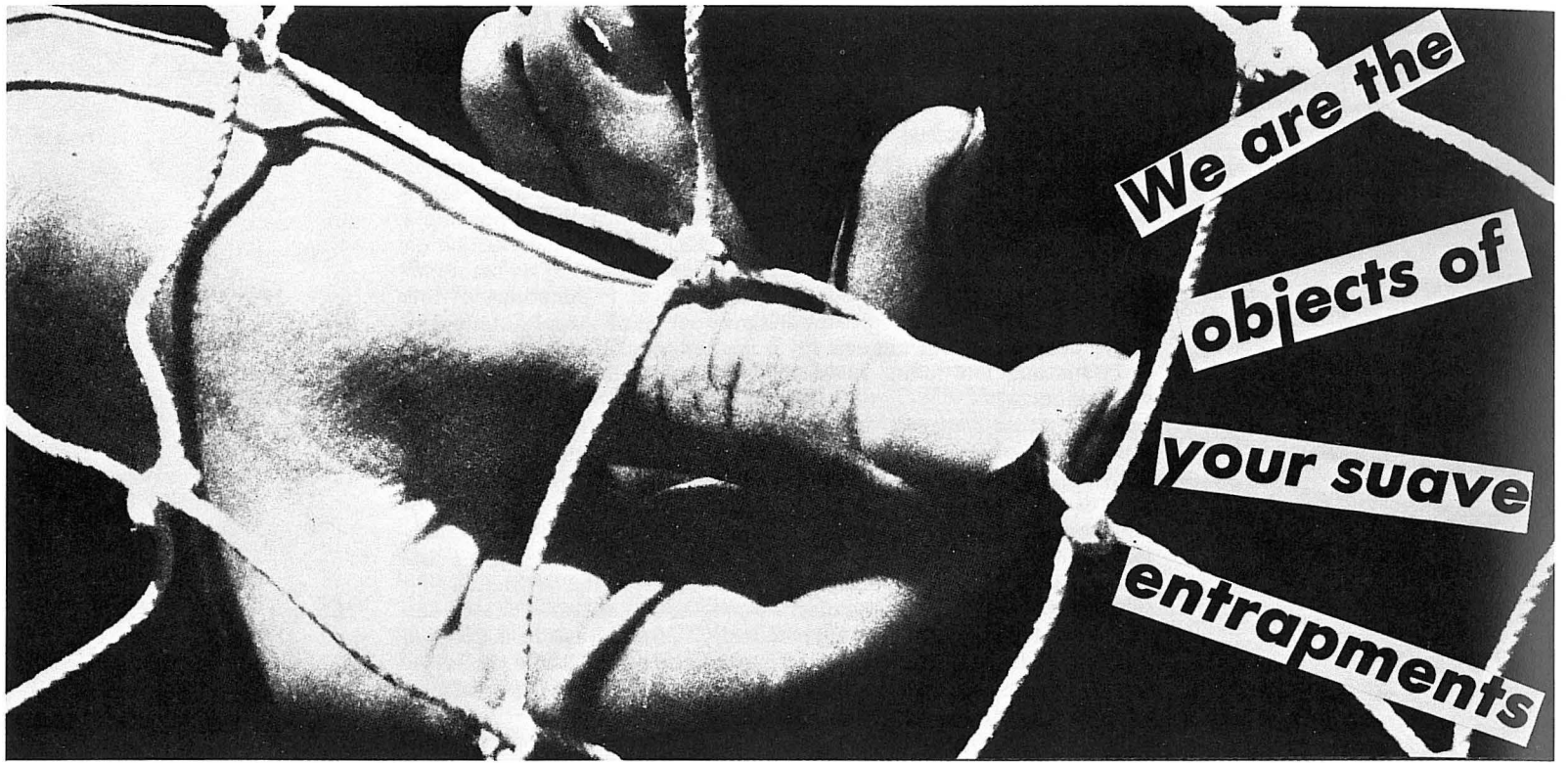


fig. 1. Barbara Kruger, *We are the objects of your suave entrapments*, 1983. Black and white photograph, 48 x 84".
Courtesy of Annina Nosei Gallery, New York

WHENEVER WE ARE dealing with imitation, we should be very careful not to think too quickly of the other who is being imitated. To imitate is no doubt to reproduce an image. But at bottom, it is, for the subject, to be inserted in a function whose exercise grasps it.

—Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*

In the last few years, a certain calculated duplicity has increasingly come to be regarded as an indispensable deconstructive tool. Both contemporary art and contemporary theory are rich in parody, *trompe l'oeil*, dissimulation (and not simulation, as is often said)—that is, in strategies of mimetic rivalry. The mimic appropriates official discourse—the discourse of the Other—but in such a way that its authority, its power to function as a model, is cast into doubt. Perhaps because of our culture's long-standing identification of femininity with masquerade—as Barbara Kruger proposes in an often-quoted statement, “We loiter outside of trade and speech and are obliged to steal language. We are very good mimics. We replicate certain words and pictures and watch them stray from or coincide with your notions of fact and fiction”¹—mimicry has been especially valuable as a feminist strategy (fig. 1). Thus, Gayatri Spivak recommends a procedure for the feminist literary critic—“To produce useful and scrupulously *fake* readings in place of the passively active *fake* orgasm”²—and Mary Ann Doane detects, in recent feminist film, “a frequent obsession with pose as position,”³ an “obsession” she attributes to its generally deconstructive approach.

Insofar as the artists represented in the present exhibition are also engaged in what Doane describes as the “uncoding, de-coding, deconstructing” of official images of the sexual body, their work exhibits a similar “obsession” (although it is precisely the fixation characteristic of obsession that is at issue here): Barbara Kruger addresses the transformation, in every photograph, of action into gesture or, as she puts it in one work, “prowess into pose”; Silvia Kolbowski deploys fashion photographs in series in order to expose the rhetoric of the pose; Sherrie Levine treats authorship as a (paternalistic) pose; both Victor Burgin and Jeff Wall carefully control the *mise en scènes* of their photographs, posing models after figures in nineteenth-century paintings (often of women). . . . Even Hans Haacke's project, which deals not with the properties of the work of art, but with the work of art as property (possession?), traces the provenance of Seurat's *Les Poseuses* (fig. 2). (Haacke's work has been included in the present exhibition presumably because its “object” belongs to a long tradition of images of the female nude—images destined for a male viewer, who supposedly accedes through the image to a position of imaginary control, possession. However, Haacke's emphasis on the transmission of the work of art from generation to generation—works of art are, of course, part of the *patrimony*, the legacy of the father—displaces, *dispossesses*

the viewer, leading us to speculate, Who is really posing here? Is it the models, or their custodians?)

But if these artists all regard sexuality as a pose, it is not in the sense of position or posture, but of imposition, imposture; judging from the work exhibited here, neither the masculine nor the feminine position would appear to be a tenable position. *Imposition*: Sexuality comes not from within, but from without, imposed upon the child from the world of adults.⁴ *Imposture*: Sexuality is a function that imitates another function that is inherently nonsexual (the psychoanalytic theory of *anaclysis* or “propping”: “Sexual activity,” Freud wrote, “attaches itself to [props itself upon] functions serving the purposes of self-preservation”—nourishment, self-defense, etc.).⁵

In recent critical writing, the question of the pose has been approached from two different perspectives, one social, the other psychosexual. The social approach tends to identify posing as a response to the surveillance of society by the agencies of the state. Homi Bhabha, writing of mimicry in colonial discourse (a strategy which he regards as an ironic compromise between “the synchronic *panoptical* vision of domination—the demand for identity, stasis—and the counter-pressure of the diachrony of history—change, difference”) speaks of that “process by which the look of surveillance returns as the displacing gaze of the disciplined, where the observer becomes the observed.”⁶ And Dick Hebdige proposes an apotropaic politics of pose—“To strike a pose,” he writes, “is to pose a threat”—based on the self-display of punk women who, posing, supposedly “transformed the fact of surveillance into the pleasure of being watched.”⁷ Although this approach, which regards the pose as a defensive maneuver against the increasing penetration of the public into the private sphere, has much to recommend it, in this essay I want to approach the question of the pose from the perspective opened to us by psychoanalysis, which is concerned with precisely what the social approach tends to elide—namely, desire.

In Victor Burgin's *Zoo 78*, however, these two approaches are superimposed: in one of the sixteen images which compose this work, Burgin juxtaposes a photograph of a nude model posed after a scene he observed in a West Berlin peep show, with a passage from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*. The text describes an architectural arrangement, Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon—the prototype for modern prison architecture, as well as for the contemporary society of surveillance:

The plan is circular: at the periphery, an annular building; at the center, a tower pierced with windows. The building consists of cells; each has two windows: one in the outer wall looks onto the tower, or rather is looked upon by the tower, for the windows of the tower are dark, and the occupants of the cells cannot know who watches, or if anyone watches.

In an interview, Burgin proposes a homology between the architecture of the Panopticon and that of the peep show, “where a naked girl dances on a small revolving stage with booths all around it which you can enter and, by putting a coin in a slot, get a peep at the girl.” Understanding this homology, however, requires a psychoanalytic detour: “If we turn to psychoanalysis,” Burgin suggests, “we find that Freud’s discussion of voyeurism links it with sadism—the ‘drive to master’ is a component of scopophilia (sexually based pleasure in looking); this look is a mastering, sexually gratifying look, and the main object of this look in our society is the woman.”⁸ The implication being that both the peep show and the Panopticon are fueled by the same desire—specifically, a sadistic desire for mastery.

Foucault, however, explicitly rejected the notion that the Panopticon runs on any desire in particular; in fact, it is an apparatus engineered expressly to neutralize desire. “The desire which animates it,” he wrote, “is entirely indifferent: the curiosity of the indiscreet, the malice of a child, the thirst for knowledge of the philosopher who wants to visit this museum of human nature, or the perversity of those who take pleasure in spying and punishing”—that is, Burgin’s sadistic voyeurs. “The Panopticon,” Foucault continues, “is a marvelous machine which, beginning with the most diverse desires, manufactures homogeneous effects of power.”⁹ What is more, if the Panopticon reduces desire to indifference, it also renders representation obsolete: “What I want to show,” Foucault said in an interview, “is how power relations can materially penetrate the body in depth without depending even on the mediation of the subject’s own representation.”¹⁰ In fact, the peep show is an inverted Panopticon: in the former, the voyeurs occupy the peripheral booths, the spectacle, the central stage; whereas in the latter, the (over)seer occupies the central tower, the prisoners the peripheral cells. All of which suggests that “the oppressive surveillance of woman in our society” may not be, as Burgin proposes, “the most visible, socially sanctioned form of the more covert surveillance of society-in-general by the agencies of the state.”

I raise these objections here not in order to engage Burgin in an arcane theoretical debate (besides, Foucault’s skepticism towards psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysts’ hostility to Foucault, are well known). Rather, I want to point to a certain incommensurability which troubles every attempt to attribute a sexual motive to power (or a will-to-power to sexuality). Thus, my own psychoanalytic treatment of the pose should be read as fragmentary, incomplete, for it is only half of the story; it is, however, the half that Foucault would excise—that concerned with desire and representation.

That every subject poses in relation to the phallus has been understood. But that the phallus is the mother: it is said, but here we are all arrested by this “truth.”

—Julia Kristeva, *Polylogue*

Mary Kelly’s *Post-Partum Document* may appear somewhat out of place in the present context, for it testifies to a refusal to pose. Thus, among the multiple representational modes employed in the *Document*—in addition to written texts, Kelly deploys charts, graphs, diagrams, drawings, imprints, plaster casts, found objects, even paintings (the dirty diaper

“Les Poseuses”
(small version)
purchased 1922 for \$5,500 by



John Quinn

Born 1870 Tiffin, Ohio. Son of Irish immigrants. Father James William Quinn, prosperous baker in Fostoria, Ohio. Mother Mary Quinlan, orphan. Sister Julia married to William V. Anderson, successful pharmacist of Fostoria. Sister Clara nun of Ursuline Convent, Tiffin.

Graduate of Fostoria High School, 1888 at University of Michigan, 1890-93 in Washington, D.C., as private secretary of Secretary of the Treasury Charles Foster (friend of Quinn family), under President Benjamin Harrison. Graduates from Georgetown University Law School 1893, Harvard University Law School 1895.

1893 clerkship in New York law firm of General Benjamin F. Tracy, 1900 junior partner with Alexander & Colby, 1906 own law practice specializing in financial and corporate law. Offices at 31 Nassau Street in Wall Street district.

Chief Counsel to National Bank of Commerce, second largest bank in U.S. Instrumental in acquisition of Equitable Life Assurance Society by Thomas Ryan, financier with extensive interests in coal, tobacco, Congolese and Angolan diamond mining. His chief counsel as of 1906. Negotiates merger of Bowling Green Trust and Madison Trust with Equitable Trust, 1908-1909. New York Stock Exchange counsel on tax law, 1913. Special counsel to N.Y. State Comptroller in inheritance tax proceedings against estate of John Jacob Astor, 1914. Represents munitions makers in Federal Tax case, 1917. Submits brief in Congress for adoption of Alien Property Act, same year. Represents U.S. Alien Property Custodian and private American interests in suit over seizure of German properties. Wins 1920 in U.S. Supreme Court establishing the law’s constitutionality (legal fee \$174,000).

Tammany Hall Democrat. Delegate to National Convention 1908 and 1912. Campaigns for candidacy of Oscar W. Underwood against Woodrow Wilson. Theodor Roosevelt a personal friend.

Staunch supporter of Irish causes. Contemptuous of American cultural life, francophile, anti-semitic, anti-German; proposes to French President Poincaré take-over of German Ruhr industries by Allies, 1923.

Collects 19th and 20th century French and English painting and sculpture, including Cézanne, van Gogh, Gauguin, Seurat, Derain, Matisse, Picasso, Duchamp-Villon, Brancusi, Epstein. Investment in art estimated at \$500,000. Has personal contact with artists in Paris and London. Helps with organization and promotion of Armory Show, 1913. Conducts successful campaign in Congress for the exemption of modern art from customs duty. Wins in Congress tax exemption of art sales by living artists, 1918.

Sponsors U.S. tours of Irish writers and theater productions. Assists in the publication of works by W. B. Yeats, J. M. Synge, Joseph Conrad, T. S. Eliot, James Joyce. Extensive correspondence with writers. Buys literary manuscripts, including all of Joseph Conrad’s. Sells most in auction 1923 (Conrad for \$110,000 and Joyce’s “Ulysses” for \$2,000). Defends “Ulysses” against obscenity charges in New York Court.

Lives, as of 1911, in top floor apartment at 58 Central Park West. Frequent travels to Ireland, England, and France. Remains bachelor, though has several romances.

Member of numerous exclusive clubs, of Metropolitan Art Society, and Société de Cent Bibliophiles. 1915 appointed Honorary Fellow of Metropolitan Museum, 1918 Chevalier of Legion of Honor.

Dies of cancer in New York, 1924.

Photo around 1921. From “The Man from New York,” by B. L. Reid

fig. 2. Hans Haacke, Seurat’s “Les Poseuses” (small version, 1888-1875), 1975 (detail). Ink on paper, and one color photograph, 14 panels: 30 x 20”. Courtesy of John Weber Gallery, New York

liners in “Documentation I”)¹¹—there is one that is conspicuous in its absence. While it was composed primarily out of a mother’s keepsakes (the objects to which she clings in order to disavow separation from her child), Kelly’s “archaeology of everyday life” contains no photographs, no pictures of either mother or child, as if the family snapshot were not our culture’s principal form of memorabilia. Lest this absence be attributed to an iconoclastic motive—a feminist prohibition of representation—Kelly has related it instead to her refusal of narrative closure:

[*Post-Partum Document*] is not a traditional narrative; a problem is continually posed but no resolution is reached. There is only a replay of moments of separation and loss, perhaps because desire has no end, resists normalisation, ignores biology, disperses the body.

Perhaps this is also why it seemed crucial . . . to avoid the literal figuration of mother and child, to avoid any means of representation that risked recuperation as a slice of life.¹²

Still, the book in which this statement appears, and which documents the *Document*, opens with precisely such an image: a photograph of mother and son recording one of the conversations transcribed and annotated in “Documentation III” (fig. 3). Perhaps Kelly chose this image as frontispiece for her book because it appears to illustrate the symbolic economy investigated in the *Document* itself, which is concerned primarily with the mother’s investments (*Besetzungen*, literally, the occupation of territory; from *setzen*, to pose or posit; translated in the *Standard Edition* as *cathexis*, literally, holding fast, clinging) in the child. Kelly refers to Freud’s speculation, in “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex,” that the woman may postpone recognition of lack (castration) “in view of the promise of having the child. In having the child,” she writes, “in a sense she has the phallus. So the loss of the child is the loss of that symbolic plenitude—more exactly, the ability to represent lack.”¹³ In the photograph in question, the child—upright in his mother’s lap, entirely contained within the silhouette of her body—indeed appears to serve as maternal phallus. This reading might seem exorbitant, but it is re-marked, within the image itself, by the phallic attribute the child holds in his left hand—a microphone connected to a cassette recorder, thereby linking possession of the phallic signifier with access to the symbolic order of speech, language (“the ability to represent lack”).

Although we may never have seen Kelly or her son before, we nevertheless recognize their pose, for it is identical to that of hundreds of thousands of cult images of mother and child—monuments to mother. Not just any mother, but the *phallic* mother of which both Freud and Lacan—and Kelly in the preface to the *Document*—speak, a mother whose attribute is wholeness, completeness or, as this is valorized in the West, *virginity*. (Remember that, to risk a solecism, the name of the mother here is Mary.) The Virgin is a regressive figure: not only does it stage that split between knowledge and belief which is characteristic of fetishism; it also suspends—the Virgin does not believe in—the incest prohibition (in medieval tradition, the Virgin is both *mother and bride of Christ*). Thus, the Incarnation suspended the ancient Mosaic prohibition of representation—which Jean-Joseph Goux has convincingly linked with the prohibition of incest; historically, the Mosaic taboo was



fig. 3. Mary Kelly, *Recording Session* from *Post-Partum Document*, 1973-1979; *Documentation II*, 1975. Mixed media, 18 units: 10 x 8" (edited version). Courtesy of the artist

the proscription of the cult of female or maternal divinities, and the rites of (both symbolic and actual) incest it celebrated¹⁴—resulting in a proliferation of images of the Madonna and Child; but it also inaugurated an entire regime of representation based on the maternal body. As Julia Kristeva has written:

It is significant that it should be the theme of maternity, of the woman's or the mother's body (Mona Lisa, the Virgin), that establishes the main pieces of the economy that will determine Western man's gaze for four centuries. Servant of the maternal phallus, the artist will deploy an art . . . of reproducing the body and space as objects to be seized and mastered, as existing within the compass of his eye and his hand. The eye and hand of a child, a minor. . . . Body-objects, passion for objects, canvas divided into form-objects, picture-object: the series is initiated for centuries of object-libido . . . which delights in an image and is capitalized upon in art-as-merchandise. Among the supports of this machine: an un-touchable mother with her baby-object, as we see them in Leonardo, in Raphael.¹⁵

Or, centuries later, in the frontispiece to the *Post-Partum Document*.

What is most fascinating about this image, however, what holds our attention, arrests us—what Roland Barthes would have called its punctum—is the child's gaze, which seems to puncture the otherwise impenetrable surface of the image in order to fix us, its viewers, in place. What is this immobilizing gaze if not the figuration—the appropriation by the image as its own—of the gaze of the otherwise invisible photographer who framed and stilled this scene?¹⁶ For there are not just two, but three subjects represented here; the identity of the third party is acknowledged outside the frame, in a caption that gives credit for considerably more than the image, since the name of the photographer is also the name of the father: Ray Barrie.

The Lacanian concept of the Name-of-the-Father refers to the legal attribution of paternity, the law whereby the son is made to refer to the father, to represent his presence (as in the photograph in question). Since such attributions can never be verified, but must be taken on faith, the Name-of-the-Father is both a juridical and a theological concept: “The attribution of paternity to the father,” Lacan wrote, “can only be the effect of a pure signifier, of a recognition, not of a real father, but of what religion has taught us to refer to as the Name-of-the-Father.”¹⁷ Although Christianity suspended the Mosaic prohibition of representation, the interdiction of images of the Father remained in force; nevertheless, he returns as pure, disembodied gaze (fantasies of an all-seeing being) which subjects both mother and son—and, as relayed by the latter, the viewer as well—to His scrutiny.

Phallic Mother, Name-of-the-Father—can there be any doubt that here we are at Oedipus, at the crossroads at which the question of the child's sexual identity will be posed? Thus, the child's gaze seems to pose for the viewer a question similar to that which Lacan detects in the floating signifier—an anamorphic phallus-skull—in the foreground of Holbein's *Ambassadors*: Where is your phallus? (A question which, as we know from Freud's essay, “Medusa's Head,” is capable of turning the subject to stone.) As Herman Rapaport writes in his Lacanian study of Lewis Carroll's photographs of little girls, “Such a question . . . refers

on the register of the *Symbolique* to the annihilation of the subject, an annihilation that can be warded off only if the subject can convince himself that annihilation (castration, death) can be defeated by means of mastering events through overcoming time, that is, by image formation, immortalization in terms of photography (or Photo-Graphie: pictures but also narratives).”¹⁸

What is involved in this photograph, then—or, for that matter, in any photograph—is the figuration of a gaze which objectifies and masters, of course, but only by immobilizing its objects, turning them to stone.

The world of signs functions, and it has no type of signification whatsoever. . . . What gives its signification is the moment that we stop [arrêtons] the machine, the temporal interruptions we make. If these are faulty, we will witness the emergence of ambiguities that are sometimes difficult to resolve, but to which in the end we will always attribute a signification.

—Jacques Lacan, *Le moi dans la théorie de Freud*

In *Gradiva* Victor Burgin re-presents Wilhelm Jensen's novella “Gradiva: A Pompeian Fancy” (1903) as an allegory of photography. Jensen's tale concerns an archaeologist (in Burgin's version, a generic “he”) obsessed with an antique marble bas-relief of a young woman distinguished by her peculiar manner of walking: one foot rests squarely on the ground, while the other rises almost perpendicular to it (fig. 4). Gradiva, he names her, “the girl splendid in walking.” In 1907, when he wrote “Delusion and Dream in Wilhelm Jensen's ‘Gradiva,’” Freud had yet to elaborate his theory of the castration complex, and hence the ingenious theory of fetishism which proceeds from it; thus, he overlooked the fetishistic implications of the tale. Burgin, however, who has compared the photograph with the fetish—“The photograph, like the fetish, is the result of a look which has, instantaneously and forever, isolated, ‘frozen,’ a fragment of the spatio-temporal continuum”¹⁹—reads Jensen's tale in the light of Freud's subsequent work, foregrounding its fetishistic aspects.

Composed of seven photographs with accompanying narrative captions (photo-graphie), *Gradiva* is not simply a series of straightforward illustrations for Jensen's text; nor is it, as is sometimes said dismissively of Burgin's work, merely an “illustration” of (psychoanalytic) theory. For what is illustrated here is the process of—the desire for—illustration itself. To illustrate a text is in a sense to punctuate it, to arrest its development by the insertion of a gaze in the form of a figure or illustration—a gaze which brings the textural machine to a standstill. Thus, Burgin's work is itself punctuated by a series of three close-ups—figurations of the photographer's immobilizing gaze—which were themselves generated by interrupting the continuous flow of cinematic images (Burgin took these photographs in a theater during the screening of a film). These three gazes alternate with three images of Gradiva: first, as she appears in the bas-relief (a picture of a picture, of the frontispiece of the ninth volume of the *Standard Edition*, which includes “Delusion and Dream”); then, Burgin's photograph of a model posed as Gradiva among classical ruins; finally, Gradiva *rediviva* in the streets of contemporary Warsaw, reflected in what appears to be the mirrored facade of a building, next to an advertising poster of a couple locked in an embrace. This picture-



SHE COULD TAKE NO INTEREST IN ANY SUITOR.
SHE RESIGNED HERSELF
TO THE COMPANIONSHIP OF HER FATHER,
ACCOMPANYING HIM
ON HIS TRIPS ABROAD.

fig. 4. Victor Burgin, *Gradiva*, 1982 (detail). Seven black and white photographs with text, 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ ". Collection of The Chase Manhattan Bank, New York

within-a-picture might itself serve as an illustration for the seventh and final image—a “scene of writing,” a passage Burgin copied out by hand and then photographed. Its source is neither “Gradiva” nor “Delusion and Dream,” but Leopold Sacher-Masoch’s *Venus in Furs*, and it deserves to be quoted here in full, for it alludes to the desire which activates the entire series or, rather, brings it to a standstill.

My gaze slid by chance towards the massive mirror hanging in front of us and I uttered a cry: in this golden frame our image appeared like a painting, and this painting was marvelously beautiful. It was so strange and so fantastic that a deep shiver seized me at the thought that its lines and its colours would soon dissolve like a cloud.

The specular image, then, is accompanied by anxiety—anxiety that it will “soon dissolve like a cloud.” It is the nature of visions (apparitions) to dissolve before our very eyes without disclosing their secrets, just as dream-images are quickly forgotten upon awakening. Thus, when Jensen’s protagonist, in a dream of the eruption of Vesuvius (the pivot of Freud’s interpretation of the tale), sights Gradiva walking calmly through the rain of volcanic debris which fills the air, he is immediately seized by anxiety: “Because of a feeling that the living reality would quickly disappear from him again, he tried to impress it accurately on his mind.”²⁰ Burgin illustrates this anxiety dream in his penultimate image, a close-up of a woman’s face, eyelids closed, resembling nothing so much as a death mask; the caption reads: “In a dream of the destruction of Pompeii he believed he saw Gradiva, as if turning to marble.” What is this scene of petrification if not the “fulfillment” of the protagonist’s wish to halt Gradiva, to arrest her, pin her down?

This is not the place for an extended analysis of Jensen’s tale (which Burgin’s work nevertheless prompts). It should be noted, however, that the narrative is structured around a persistent opposition between mobility and immobility. Thus, Gradiva appears to represent, within the text itself, the mobility which recent criticism attributes to every text; as one commentator has written, “Gradiva is a pure force, a movement that carries in its wake, a motion that mobilizes, an emotion that makes everything into trance, into dance. The dance of signs: Gradiva crossing with singular indifference the stiff, cold frame of representation to engage Norbert to follow her.”²¹ And every time the protagonist succeeds at momentarily halting Gradiva, he is confronted with one of those ambiguities that are “sometimes difficult to resolve” of which Lacan speaks. Thus, the bas-relief gives rise to the question of sexual difference: He “could not say whether a woman’s manner of walking was different from that of a man, and the question remained unanswered.”²² And upon encountering Gradiva (actually, his neighbor and childhood playmate Zoe Bergang posing as Gradiva) among the ruins of Pompeii, an even more undecidable antinomy confronts him: “Gradiva, dead and alive at the same time. . . .”²³

What we are dealing with, then, is an arrest which is also an *arrêt de mort*, a phrase which has been very much on the mind of Jacques Derrida of late.²⁴ In French, *arrêt de mort* signifies both a death sentence and a stay of execution; the *arrêt* both condemns and grants reprieve, postpones the deciding of an antinomy. It is at precisely such

points at which the laws of contradiction are suspended that fixated representations make their symptomatic appearances: “Suddenly images of power raise themselves up, erect themselves in the thoughts of the patients, and the metapsychological or economic reasons for this are clear: the subject does not want to lose his energy, to break into pieces, but to conserve himself in the monolithic *aporia* of an axis or crossing point that is endlessly forestalled in the undecidable suspension of an *arrêt de mort*.” The fetishistic implications of this structure are clear: “If the poet as obsessive builds his monoliths at the crossroads, places his *arrête* on the *arrêt de mort*, it is not only to ward off death by an ambivalent forestalling, but to build a monument to mother, to worship the virgin and child.”²⁵ Or the girl splendid in walking.

Looking at a photograph, I invariably include in my scrutiny the thought of that instant, however brief, in which a real thing happened to be motionless in front of the eye. I project the present photograph’s immobility upon the past shot, and it is this arrest which constitutes the pose.

—Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida*

The photograph as record of a previous arrest: What do I do when I pose for a photograph? I freeze—hence, the masklike, often deathly expressions of so many photographic portraits. From a technical standpoint, this self-imposed immobility is entirely superfluous: thanks to rapid exposures and high-speed films, the camera itself is perfectly capable of suspending animation, arresting life—so-called “action” photography. (This has not always been the case; as Barthes reminds us, in the nineteenth century, “a device called the *appui-tête* was invented, a kind of prosthesis invisible to the lens, which supported and maintained the body in its passage to immobility: this *appui-tête* was the base of the statue I would become, the corset of my imaginary essence.”)²⁶ Still, I freeze, as if anticipating the still I am about to become; mimicking its opacity, its still-ness; inscribing, across the surface of my body, photography’s “mortification” of the flesh.

We customarily regard technology—image-technology in particular—as an instrument of rationalization, thereby overlooking its longstanding alliance with the irrational (and the unconscious). I believe that we can detect, in our subjective response to the photographic encounter (at least as I have described it), a very ancient superstition: as if the camera were simply a device engineered to reproduce the effects of the evil eye. As Lacan writes in the ninth chapter, titled “What is a Picture?,” of *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*:

The evil eye is the *fascinum*, it is that which has the effect of arresting movement and, literally, of killing life. At the moment the subject stops, suspending his gesture, he is mortified. This anti-life, anti-movement function of the terminal point is the *fascinum*, and it is precisely one of the dimensions in which the power of the gaze is exercised directly.²⁷

Lacan’s theory of vision is a theory of scopic fascination (*fascinum* = witchcraft, sorcery), the power of images to arrest us, take us into custody. Thus, it undermines the idealist presuppositions upon which visual arts practice has been based for centuries, specifically, the tendency to identify the subject as the subject of perception/consciousness,

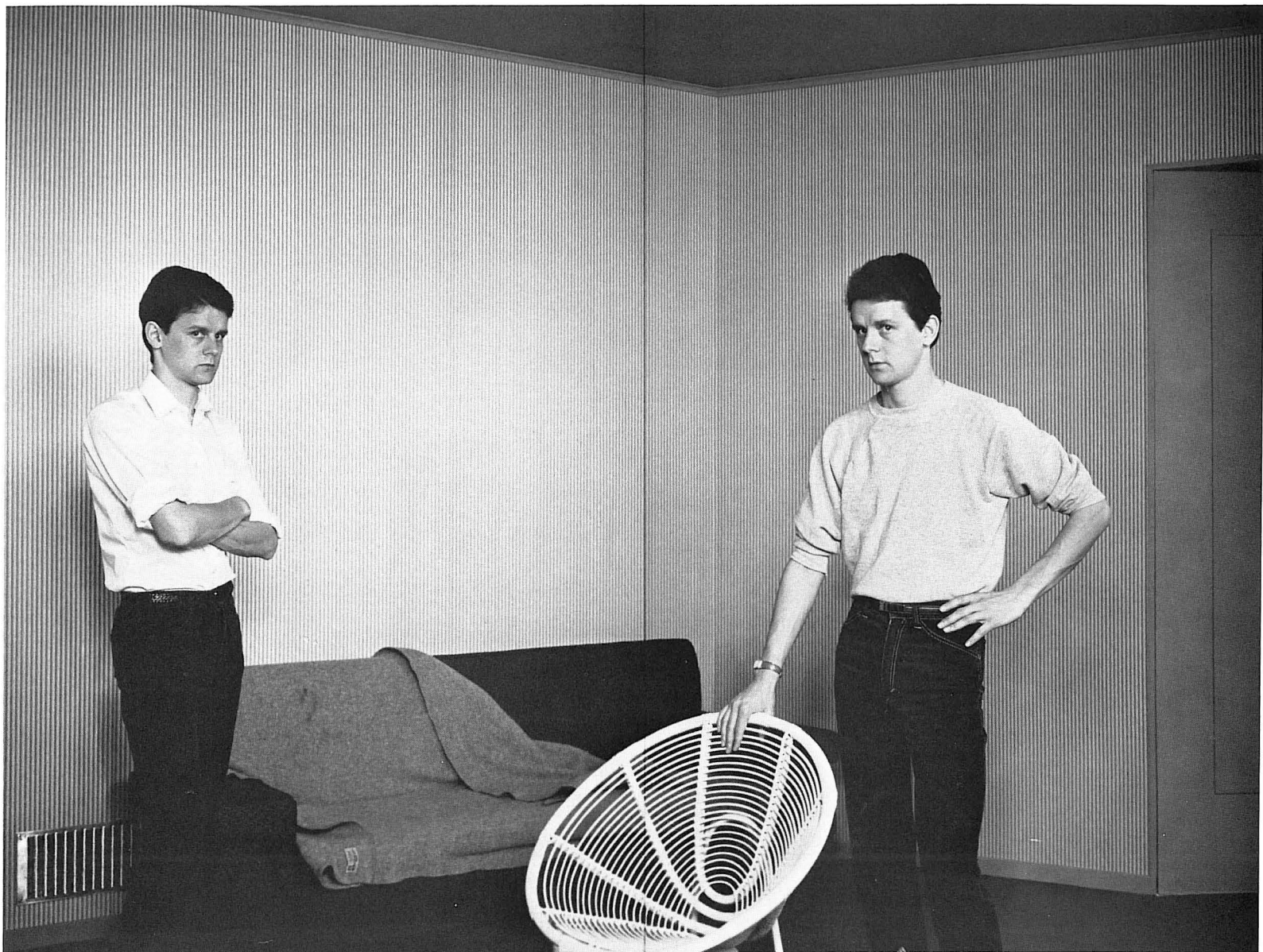


fig. 5. Jeff Wall, *Double Self-Portrait*, 1979. Cibachrome transparency and fluorescent light, 64 x 85". Collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

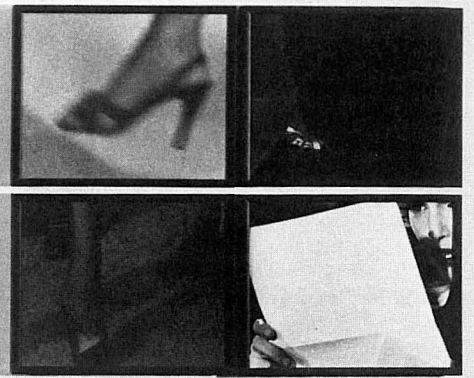
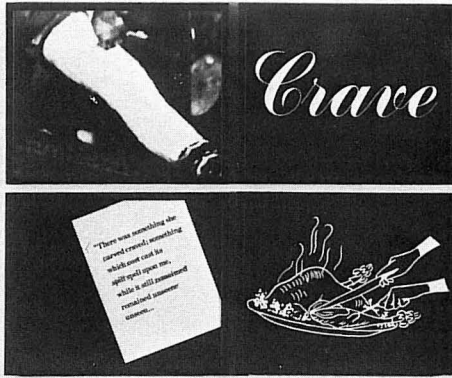
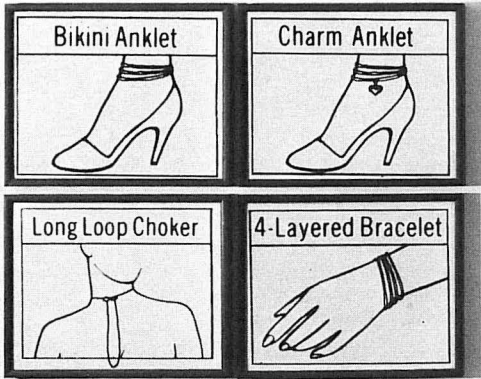


fig. 6. Silvia Kolbowski, *Model Pleasure*, Part 3, 1983. Four color and eight black and white photographs, 8 x 10" each. Courtesy of the artist



fig. 7. Silvia Kolbowski, *Model Pleasure*, Part 7, 1984. One black and white photograph, 25 x 35". Courtesy of the artist

as *master* of the visual field. For Lacan, the “subject” in the scopic field—that is, the visual field insofar as it is crosshatched by desire—occupies the position not of subject of the gaze, but of its object: “In the scopic field, the gaze is outside, I am looked at, that is to say, I am a picture. . . . The gaze is the instrument through which light is embodied and through which—if you will allow me to use a word, as I often do, in a fragmented form—I am *photo-graphed*.”²⁸

Embodied in a “point of light, the point at which everything that looks at me is situated,”²⁹ the Lacanian gaze is *punctual*: it both punctuates (arrests, suspends) and punctures (pricks, wounds). If, posing for a photograph, I freeze, it is not in order to assist the photographer, but in some sense to resist him, to protect myself from his immobilizing gaze; as Lacan observes of the fight scenes staged by the Beijing Opera ballet, “They are always punctuated by a series of times of arrest in which the actors pause in a frozen attitude. What is that thrust, that time of arrest of the movement? It is simply the fascinator effect, in that it is a question of dispossessing the evil eye of the gaze, in order to ward it off.”³⁰

Posing, then, is a form of mimicry; as Lacan observes of the phenomenon of mimetic rivalry in nature, “The being breaks up [se *decompose*], in an extraordinary way, between its being and its semblance, between itself and that paper tiger it shows to the other. . . . The being gives of himself, or receives from the other, something that is like a mask, a double, an envelope, a thrown-off skin, thrown off to cover the frame of a shield.”³¹ Thus, mimicry entails a certain *splitting* of the subject: the entire body detaches itself from itself, becomes a picture, a semblance. (Elsewhere, Lacan refers to it as a “separated” image: separate, from *se parare*, *se parer*, “to dress oneself, but also to defend oneself, to provide oneself with what one needs to be on one’s guard,” and, via *se parere*, *s’engendrer*, “to be engendered.”³² As we will observe momentarily, posing has everything to do with sexual difference.) This splitting of the subject is staged in Jeff Wall’s *Double Self-Portrait*, for which the artist posed not once, but twice—double ex-posure—as if to illustrate the fundamental duplicity of every pose (fig. 5). Thus, the image itself is split along a central seam which seems to represent that bi-partition which the subject undergoes when it assumes an image. What is that seam if not the seam of castration, the unbridgeable divide which separates the sexes? As Lacan remarks, “It is in so far as all human desire is based on castration that the eye assumes its virulent function, and not simply its luring function as in nature.”³³ And Wall’s picture is (supposedly) split according to the sexual differential; but why, then, do I find it so difficult to determine which Wall is masculine, which feminine?

Watching Babette Mangolte’s film *Je: Le Camera/The Camera: Eye*, in which models are filmed posing for their photographs, Mary Ann Doane observes, “The subjects, whether male or female, invariably appear to assume a mask of femininity in order to become photographable (filmable)”³⁴—although it is the assumption of a mask, rather than the mask itself, that is customarily regarded as “feminine.” Femininity is not a mask; rather, the mask is feminine (as Doane suggests when she appends, “as if femininity were synonymous with the pose”). We are by

now familiar with that psychoanalytic notion—proposed by Joan Riviere, seconded by Lacan—that femininity be defined as masquerade, as a mask that conceals a non-identity. Riviere regarded female masquerade as compensation for the (intellectual) woman’s “theft” of masculinity: “Womanliness,” she wrote, “could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it—much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove that he has not the stolen goods.”³⁵ (The vaginal nature of Riviere’s image should be noted: the empty pocket as the sign of femininity.) Lacan, however, treats the masquerade as compensation, not for the possession of masculinity, but for its lack: “I would say that it is in order to be the phallus, that is to say, the signifier of the desire of the other, that the woman will reject an essential part of her femininity, notably all its attributes, through masquerade.”³⁶

As Gayatri Spivak has written, the definition of femininity as masquerade, as simulation and seduction, constitutes an “originary displacement” of the figure of the woman; thus, Spivak glosses Nietzsche’s aphorism “The female is so artistic”:

Or: women impersonate themselves as having an orgasm even at the time of orgasm. Within the historical understanding of women as incapable of orgasm, Nietzsche is arguing that *impersonation* is woman’s only sexual pleasure. At the time of the greatest self-possession-cum-ecstasy, the woman is self-possessed enough to organize a self-(re)presentation *without an actual presence (of sexual pleasure) to re-present*.³⁷

The fake orgasm disrupts the philosophy of mimesis, of representation, which presupposes the presence of an original, a model which exists both prior to and outside of its re-presentation. (The logic of this disruption is detailed in Jacques Derrida’s *La double séance*.) In her “Model Pleasure” series, Silvia Kolbowski also works to expose the myth of the “model,” or the model as a myth (figs. 6, 7). In her earlier work, Kolbowski dealt primarily with pose as position, literalizing, through the erratic placement of her photographs on the wall, the Lacanian postulate that sexual “identity” is primarily a matter of position in language (i.e., vis-à-vis the phallic “term”); her recent work, however, asks us to regard position itself as pose. Thanks to the serial disposition of these works—all-but-identical fashion poses mounted side-by-side—any image in the series can become the “model” for all the others; conversely, every image in the series is but an imitation of all the others. Thus, the “model” is dissolved by the series into a potentially endless repetition of identical gestures and poses. What is at issue, then, is its authority as “model,” the supposed inimitability which, paradoxically, makes it imitable.

Lacan asks us to recognize that all human subjects are subject to castration—“The relation to the phallus,” he wrote, “is set up regardless of the anatomical difference between the sexes”—although, in a discourse that privileges the phallus, only women have been diagnosed as such. Thus, he regards all human sexuality as masquerade: “The fact that femininity takes refuge in the mask . . . has the strange consequence that, in the human being, virile display itself appears as feminine.”³⁸ Which might lead us to speculate whether it is not the man who envies



fig. 8. Sherrie Levine, *After Alexander Rodchenko*, 1984. Two black and white photographs, 37 x 32"; 37 x 36". Courtesy of the artist

woman's lack of phallus—as Spivak writes, “The virulence of Nietzsche's misogyny occludes an unacknowledged envy: a man cannot fake an orgasm. His pen must write or prove impotent”—since such a lack always presents itself as a phantom phallus. For Lacan, however, the theoretical importance of the masquerade—Spivak's “actively passive fake orgasm”—resides in the fact that it displaces the over-worked active/passive opposition according to which masculinity and femininity are conventionally represented: “Carrying things as far as they will go,” he proposes, “one might even say that the masculine and the feminine ideal are represented in the psyche by something other than this activity/passivity opposition. . . . Strictly speaking, they spring from . . . the term *masquerade*.”³⁹

Although Barthes describes the pose as an “active” transformation of the subject, *to pose* is, in fact, neither entirely active nor entirely passive; it corresponds, rather, to what in grammar is identified as the *middle voice* or *diathesis* (literally, *dis + position*: voice names the attitude/position of the subject to the action implied by the verb). Both the active and the passive voices indicate activity or passivity *vis-à-vis* an external object or agent; the middle voice, on the contrary, indicates the *interiority* of the subject to the action of which it is also the agent. Freud invokes the middle voice in his discussion, in “Instincts and their Vicissitudes,” of the sado-masochistic drive: In addition to an active, externally directed stage, characterized by the desire to exercise violence or power over some other person as object—a stage which Freud terms “sadism,” but which, as both Jean Laplanche and Leo Bersani have pointed out, is not sexual at all—and a masochistic stage, in which the active aim is changed into a passive aim, and the subject searches for another person as object of the drive (but subject of the action), in addition to these two stages, Freud posits a third, intermediary stage, a “turning round of the drive upon the subject's self” (as in self-punishment, self-torture) *without the attitude of passivity towards an external object/subject* that characterizes masochism. (As Laplanche observes, it is only at this stage that the desire for mastery is transformed into sexual desire.)⁴⁰ “The active voice is changed,” Freud writes, “not into the passive, but into the reflexive middle voice.”⁴¹

Lacan's treatment of the drives in *The Four Fundamental Concepts* follows “Instincts and their Vicissitudes” *à la lettre*. However, in his discussion of the scopic drive, Lacan modifies Freud's formulation

“*Sexualglied von eigener Person beschaut werden*”—a sexual organ being looked at by an extraneous person (but where is the subject in this formulation?): “In place of *werden* I put *machen*—what is involved in the drive is *making oneself seen* (*se faire voir*). The activity of the drive is concentrated in this *making oneself* (*se faire*).”⁴² In other words, the subject in the scopic field, insofar as it is the subject of desire, is neither seer nor seen; it *makes itself seen*. The subject poses as an object *in order to be a subject*.

Lacan's observation that the subject of the scopic drive is essentially a subject whose pose allows us to avoid both the reductive logic which assigns positionality in the scopic field according to gender—woman as object, man as subject of the “look”—as well as the banal moralism of such statements as “To photograph people is to violate them” (Susan Sontag), which ultimately rest upon a definition of the body as private property (a definition that is essential to the worker's being able to sell his labor power as a commodity). In her appropriated self-portraits, Sherrie Levine exposes precisely this presupposition: for what is offered to the gaze of the other is always a purloined image, a double or fake (fig. 8). (It is not accidental that Levine's self-portraits should be expressionist in origin, thereby exposing both the expressionist myth of authenticity, as well as the pervasive sense of inauthenticity which sustains the current expressionist “revival.”) But Levine's work intersects with the question of the pose in another manner as well: as I have indicated elsewhere, until recently her work dealt consistently with images of the Other—women, children, Nature, the poor, the insane, etc. What Levine's work has consistently exposed is the desire for a domesticated other, an other which is almost the same, but not quite; her subject, then, has been the social production of an acceptable, purely marginal difference—a difference which is also a disavowal of real cultural, social, sexual division. However, as Derrida writes at the end of his interview “Positions,”

If the alterity of the other is *posed*, that is *simply posed*, doesn't it amount to the same, in the form, for example, of the “constituted object,” the “informed product” invested with meaning, etc. From this point of view I would even go so far as to say that the alterity of the other inscribes something in the relation which can in no way be posed.⁴³

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NOTES

1. Barbara Kruger, Statement for *Documenta VII* catalogue, Kassel, 1982, p. 286.
2. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Displacement and the Discourse of Woman," in *Displacement: Derrida and After*, ed. Mark Krupnick (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983), p. 186, italics added.
3. Mary Ann Doane, "Woman's Stake: Filming the Female Body," *October*, no. 17 (Summer 1981): 25.
4. Jean Laplanche, *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1976), pp. 43ff.
5. Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1962), p. 48. On "propping," see Laplanche, esp. pp. 15-24.
6. Homi Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, no. 28 (Spring 1984): 129.
7. Dick Hebdige, "Posing . . . Threats, Striking . . . Poses: Youth, Surveillance, and Display," *SubStance* 37/38 (1983): 86.
8. Victor Burgin, "Sex, Text, Politics," interview by Tony Godfrey, *Block*, no. 7 (1982): 15.
9. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 202, translation modified.
10. Foucault, "The History of Sexuality," interview by Lucette Finas, in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings, 1972-1977* and trans., ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), p. 186.
11. Lacan: "The authenticity of what emerges in painting is diminished in us human beings by the fact that we have to get our colors where they're to be found, that is to say, in the shit. . . . The creator will never participate in anything other than the creation of a small dirty deposit, a succession of small dirty deposits juxtaposed." (*The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan [New York: W. W. Norton, 1978], p. 117. What is Kelly's "Documentation I" if not "a succession of small dirty deposits juxtaposed?")
12. Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. xvii.
13. *Ibid.*, p. xvi.
14. Jean-Joseph Goux, "Moïse, Freud—la prescription iconoclaste," *Les Iconoclastes* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1978), pp. 9-29.
15. Julia Kristeva, "Maternité selon Giovanni Bellini," *Polylogue* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1977), p. 417.
16. For a related reading of the gaze of the child, see Herman Rapaport, "Gazing in Wonderland: The Disarticulated Image," *Enclitic* 6, no. 2 (Fall 1982): 57-77.
17. Jacques Lacan, "On the possible treatment of psychosis," *Écrits, A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 199.
18. Rapaport, "Gazing . . ." p. 64.
19. Victor Burgin, "Photography, Phantasy, Function," *Thinking Photography* (London: Macmillan, 1982), p. 190.
20. Wilhelm Jensen, "Gradiva, A Pompeiiian Fancy," in Sigmund Freud, *Delusion and Dream and Other Essays* (Boston: Beacon, 1956), p. 154.
21. Sylverè Lotringer, "The Dance of Signs," *Semiotext(e)* 3, no. 1 (1978): 59.
22. Jensen, p. 151.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
24. Jacques Derrida, "Living On: *Border Lines*," trans. James Hulbert in *Deconstruction and Criticism*, ed. Harold Bloom et al. (New York: The Seabury Press, 1979), pp. 75-176.
25. Rapaport, "Staging: Mont Blanc," in *Displacement* p. 72.
26. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill & Wang, 1981), p. 14.
27. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 117.
28. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
29. *Ibid.*, p. 95.
30. *Ibid.*, pp. 117-118.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 107.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 214.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 118.
34. Doane, p. 24.
35. Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as a Masquerade" in *Psychoanalysis and Female Sexuality*, ed. Hendrik M. Ruitenbeek (New Haven: College and University Press, 1966), p. 213. Quoted in Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorising the Female Spectator," *Screen* 23, nos. 3-4 (September-October 1982): 81.
36. Lacan, "The Meaning of the Phallus," in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: W. W. Norton, 1983), p. 84.
37. Spivak, p. 170.
38. Lacan, "The Meaning of the Phallus," p. 85.
39. *Ibid.*, 193.
40. See Laplanche, pp. 88 ff.
41. *Ibid.*
42. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, p. 195.
43. Jacques Derrida, *Positions* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1972), p. 132.

SEXUALITY AND/IN REPRESENTATION: FIVE BRITISH ARTISTS

LISA TICKNER

THIS EXHIBITION draws together work from both sides of the Atlantic, with shared concerns but different aesthetic, theoretical, and political trajectories. It includes work by women and men on sexual difference that is devoted neither to “image-scavenging” alone (as the theft and deployment of representational codes), nor to “sexuality” (as a pre-given entity), but to the theoretical questions of their interrelation: sexuality and/in representation.

These questions have been rehearsed by American critics, largely under the diverse influences of Walter Benjamin, Jean Baudrillard, Guy Debord, and the Frankfurt School. A comparable body of writing in England has drawn more pointedly on the work of Bertolt Brecht, Louis Althusser, Roland Barthes, and tendencies in European Marxism, poststructuralism, feminism, and psychoanalysis.

The crucial European component in the debate has been the theorization of the gendered subject in ideology—a development made possible, first, by Althusser’s reworking of base/superstructure definitions of ideology in favor of the ideological as a complex of practices and representations and, second, by the decisive influence of psychoanalysis (chiefly Lacan’s rereading of Freud).

It was psychoanalysis that permitted an understanding of the psycho-social construction of sexual difference in the conscious/unconscious subject. The result was a shift in emphasis from equal rights struggles in the sexual division of labor and a cultural feminism founded on the revaluation of an existing biological or social femininity to a recognition of the processes of sexual *differentiation*, the instability of gender positions, and the hopelessness of excavating a free or original femininity beneath the layers of patriarchal oppression. “Pure masculinity and femininity,” as Freud remarked, “remain theoretical constructions of uncertain content.”¹

My concern here is with the work of the British-based artists and the priming influence of material produced over the past ten years. This work has its own history, but that history is bound up with the development of associated debates on the left and within feminism: debates on the nature of subjectivity, ideology, representation, sexuality, pleasure, and the contribution made by psychoanalysis to the unraveling of these mutually implicated concerns. What I want to turn to is a consideration of this relationship—that is, the relationship between these arguments and this work—rather than to a biographical account which treats each artist’s authorship as the point of entry into what they make. It is appropriate here to stress the importance of theory—which is always transformed and exceeded in the production of “art”—as part of the very texture and project of the work itself.

Representation: ideology, subjectivity²

The house is now filled with all sorts of replicas and copies: genuine imitations,

original copies, prints of paintings, prints of prints, copies of copies. . . . Do we feel that all is now becoming completely *framed* by representation and that there is no limit to this framing? Can just about everything today become an image? Are we caught within an endless process of duplication, an incessant flow whereby an image is infinitely repeatable and the real world merely a spectre, a ghost whose presence barely haunts the frame?³

We have no unmediated access to the real. It is through representations that we know the world. At the same time we cannot say, in an simple sense, that a representation or an image “reflects” a reality, “distorts” a reality, “stands in the place” of an absent reality, or bears no relation to any reality whatsoever.⁴ Relations and events do not “speak themselves” but are *enabled to mean* through systems of signs organized into discourses on the world. Reality is a matter of representation, as Stephen Heath puts it, and representation is, in turn, a matter of discourse.⁵

There is another reason why we cannot measure representations against a “real” to which they might be held to refer, and that is because “this real is itself *constituted* through the agency of representations.”⁶ What the world “is” for us depends on how it is described. In an example Victor Burgin gives, we cannot evaluate a particular representation of femininity against some true or essential feminine nature because the femininity we adapt to and embody is itself the product of representation.⁷ Since representations enter into our collective social understandings, constituting our sense of ourselves, the positions we take up in the world, and the possibilities we see for action in it must be understood as having their own level of effect and as comprising a necessary site of contention.

Ideology is a production of representations—although it does not present itself as such, but rather as a complex of common-sense propositions about the world, which are assumed to be self-evident. As an arrangement of social practices and systems of representations, ideology is materially operative through specific institutions. Such “ideological state apparatuses,” as Althusser calls them, include education, the family, religion, law, culture, and communications.⁸ Material circumstances may provide the raw materials on which ideological discourses operate, but these discourses, through the largely unconscious and naturalized assumptions of which they are comprised, effect certain closures and structure certain positions on that raw material.

At the same time, ideology has the further and necessary function of producing (“interpellating”) subjects for its representations. We imagine ourselves as outside of, even as originating, the ideological representations into which we are inserted and in which we “misrecognize” ourselves.

These Althusserian notions of interpellation and misrecognition have been productive, but they have also been contested. They do not

adequately account for the unconscious, for the constitution of the subject in language, or for the relations between ideology and language or discourse. Nor do they easily allow for the possibility of refusal and struggle in the ideological arena or for the range of interpellations to which individuals, by virtue of class, race, or sex, may be subject.⁹

The question of meaning relates not only to the social but also to the psychic formation of the author or reader,¹⁰ “formations existentially simultaneous and coextensive but theorized in separate discourses,”¹¹ as Burgin has written. We need to account for the deep hold of ideology, for the level on which social structures become an integral part of an identity which is in fact precarious—not fully conscious, rational, or coherent.

The subject, continually in process, is neither a fixed entity nor an autonomous being outside of history and representations. The (gendered) subject is inscribed in the symbolic order through a series of psycho-social processes as “the product of a channelling of predominantly sexual basic drives within a shifting complex of heterogeneous cultural systems (work, the family, etc.)”¹² The formal devices of representation are effective here too, particularly the perspective and framing systems of Western painting and the camera, which produce both an object and a point of view (i.e., a coherent viewing subject) for that object. This setting-into-place of the subject is simultaneously secured through the harnessing of the sexual drives and their forms of gratification (fetishism, voyeurism, identificatory processes, pleasure in recognition and repetition). The breaking of these circuits, these processes of coherence that help secure the subject to and in ideology, becomes a central task for artists working, in Burgin’s distinction, not on the representation of politics, but on the politics of representation.¹³

Art is a practice of representation, and hence of ideology (it is productive of meanings and of subject positions for those meanings). The five artists under discussion here work *in*, but also *on*, ideology: their representations attempt, in differing ways and through particular strategies (such as montage and the manipulation of image with text), to dis-articulate the dominant and naturalized discourses on sexuality, class, subjectivity, and representation itself.

The course and impact of these debates can be understood by looking at the trajectory of Victor Burgin’s work since the mid-1970s. This work has put into play different concepts of ideology and representation:¹⁴ first a classical or economic Marxism, then its Althusserian inflection, and subsequently feminism and psychoanalysis, as interrelated in theories of the construction of the subject. “St. Laurent demands a whole new lifestyle,” from *UK 76*, is concerned with economic relations and a concept of ideology as “false consciousness.” In setting the language of *haute couture* (and consumption) against the image of an immigrant female textile worker (and production), it renders visible the invisible social relations that commodity fetishism disavows. Similarly, it attempts to bring the outside world into the gallery through both the content of the image and its reference to advertising.

Burgin later concluded, however, that the meanings and politi-

cal/aesthetic effects of this work were too quickly exhausted: “they could be simply consumed as the speech of any author, there was very little space left for the productivity of the reader.”¹⁵ He began to alter his practice in *US 77*, which is informed by the Althusserian notion of ideological apparatuses and their relation to the construction of subjectivity. In a panel such as *Framed*, image and text offset each other in a more elliptical way than in the head-on confrontation of *UK 76*. We are drawn by their interplay into the world of frames (poster, photograph, mirror, the work itself) and of framing (the process of [mis]representation and [mis]recognition in which we find our sexed identity).¹⁶

Most recently, *Tales from Freud* draws on psychoanalysis not only for its concepts but also for its form, asking us to think about memory, desire, sexuality, masculinity and femininity, drawing us into and across the relations of image and text through the devices of representation, condensation, and displacement that characterize what Freud called the dream-work. This is a very different process—more enveloping and associative, more pleasurable and less conscious—from that of reading off the ironic distance of image from text in the “St. Laurent” panel of *UK 76*. It is produced within the purview of psychoanalysis, rather than at the intersection of psychoanalytic and Marxist theories of ideology; it is centered on a notion of sexual identity as an everyday process of structuring and positioning; and it is concerned now with what might be called the “deep springs” of ideology in the constitution of subjectivity itself. (Burgin: “There’s going to be no major shift in extant social forms without a shift in the construction of masculinity.”)¹⁷

Sexuality

. . . there is no such thing as sexuality; what we have experienced . . . is the fabrication of a “sexuality,” the construction of something called “sexuality” through a set of representations—images, discourses, ways of picturing and describing—that propose and confirm, that make up this sexuality to which we are then referred and held in our lives . . .¹⁸

What we experience as “sexuality” has both an endogenous and an exogenous history. It is regulated and understood at the “social” level—the level of investigation of writers such as Michel Foucault, Heath, and Jeffrey Weeks, who are concerned with the history of discourses and cultural practices.¹⁹ But it is also organized in the history of each (sexed) subject. This is the “psychic” level, to which psychoanalysis addresses itself, positing a sexual energy or libido that is established as “sexuality” during the course of early life, changing in both its mechanisms and its aims.

The term “sexuality” is a nineteenth-century one, emerging at a particular conjuncture and within the specific context of medicine, where it was understood in relation to reproduction, abnormality, and disease.²⁰ As Heath remarks, not until Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905) do we enter “a new conception, no longer organs, the sexual act, normal penis, genital finality: sexuality now as complex history and structure and patterning of desire.”²¹ Two things follow from this. First, that in psychoanalysis sexuality is not reducible to reproduction and

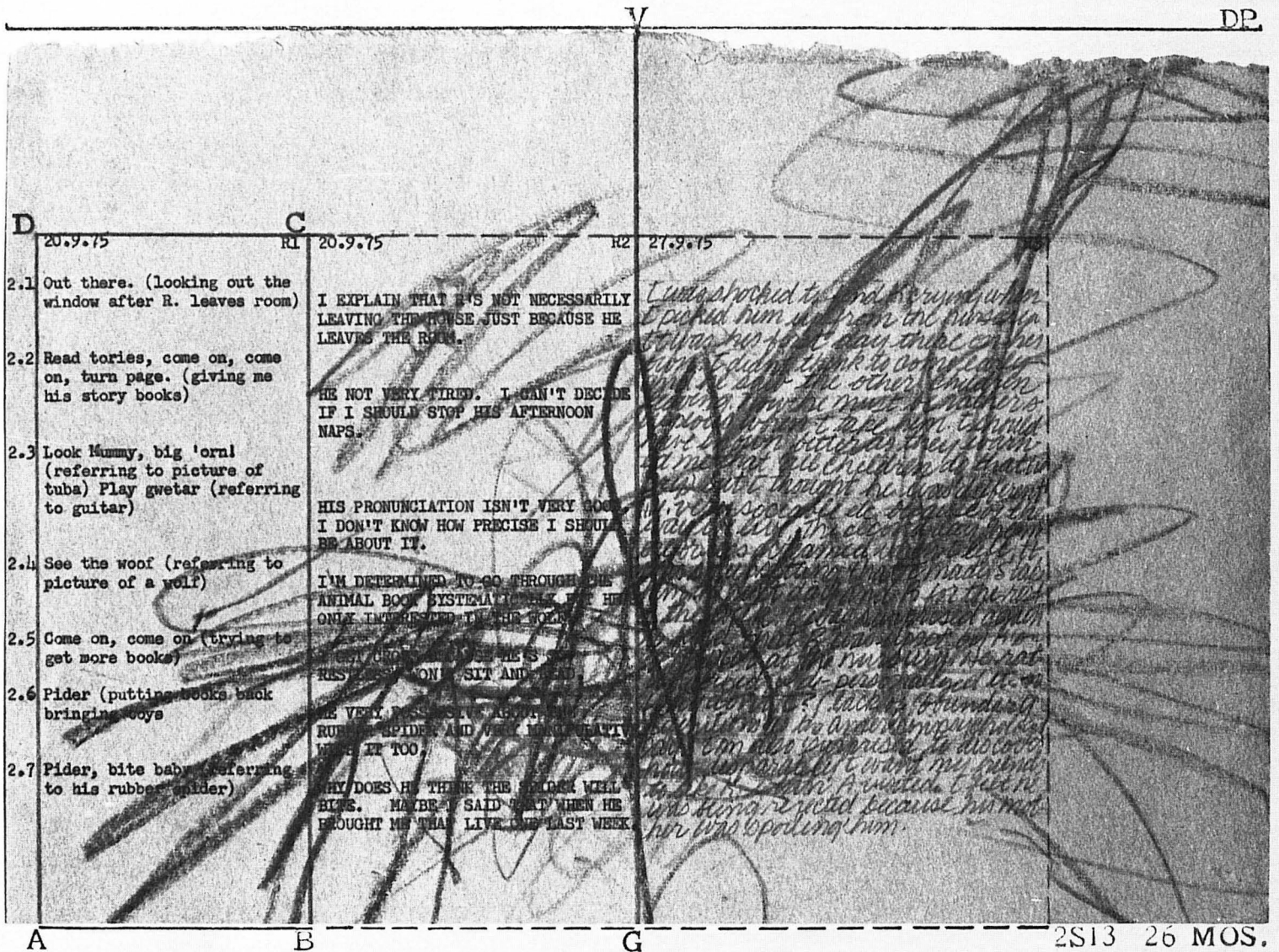


fig. 1. Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document, 1973-1979; Documentation II, 1975*. Mixed media, 18 units: 10 x 8" (edited version). Courtesy of the artist

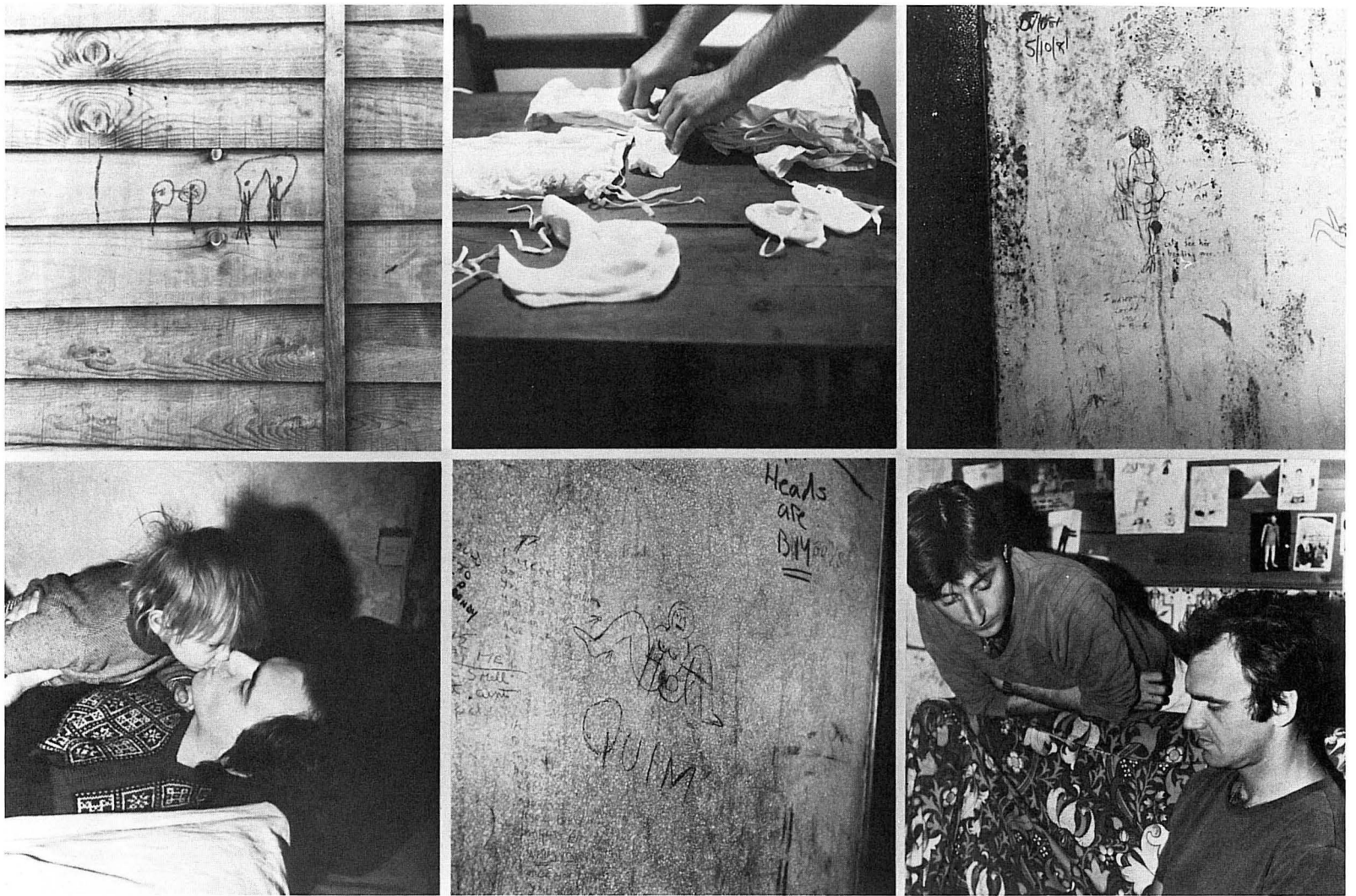


fig. 2. Ray Barrie, "Master/Pieces," 1981. Yellow, blue, red, and green autone photographs, 6 units: 30 x 30" each. Courtesy of the artist

the genital act. It "arises from various sources, seeks satisfaction in various ways, makes use of diverse objects,"²² and includes a range of phenomena that are not manifestly sexual but are held to be derived from, or traversed by, the infant and adult sexual drives. Second, that the subject is understood as precipitated by and through sexuality (specifically, around the moment of the Oedipal and castration complexes). Thus in psychoanalysis "the development of the human subject, its unconscious and its sexuality go hand-in-hand, they are causatively intertwined . . . a person is formed through their sexuality, it could not be added to him or her."²³

Both the history of the social ordering of sexuality and its psychic organization oblige us to rethink the relations between sexuality and representation. That is, to remove them from any conception as two distinct domains (representation and sexuality), or as a given, homogeneous, and anterior sexuality (the representation of sexuality), in favor of the recognition of how each is bound up in the processes of the other. On one hand, we cannot speak of a body organized sexually outside of the processes of representation.²⁴ On the other, we have to recognize the organization of the sexual drive in representation and in the viewing subject. "The structure of representation is a structure of fetishism," as Heath puts it, following Barthes—and visual pleasure is bound up with gratifications in looking that are sexually impelled.²⁵

Questions of "sexuality" and "representation," then, are complicated beyond a certain point by their mutual entanglement. They are simply not discrete, as mechanisms or as structures. Nevertheless, we can unravel some strands within that relation that are particularly relevant to the work of the artists here.

First, there is the concept of the psychic construction of gender identity through the organization of the bisexuality of the drives (Freud), reworked as an understanding of the formation of subjectivity within language (Lacan). Since these processes are neither final nor secure, there is a struggle at all levels for the definition and redefinition of negotiated categories: "sexual difference is not an immediately given fact of 'male' and 'female' identity but a whole process of differentiation," as Heath notes.²⁶

Second, this differentiation is produced and reproduced in the representations of a range of discourses (medicine, law, education, art, the mass media). This moves us beyond the question of stereotypes to an understanding of how representations operate discursively, and in relation to subjectivity. It is within this complex of discourses on sexuality that a sexual politics attempts to intervene, to contest the strategies of representations, as well as those of the legal, political, and economic institutions through which they are guaranteed.

Third, there is the implication of sexual difference in the structuring of pleasure. The ordering of libidinal investments in looking is not symmetrical. For the young child, looking and being-looked-at are equally possible and pleasurable activities; in the social world of the adult, there is a division of labor between the two. In Laura Mulvey's account:

The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simul-

taneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.²⁷

Finally, the point for these artists of taking up such issues is to interrogate and reorder them as part of a political project. Their work points to the contradictory relations among discourses. It involves a refusal of the fixing of the feminine and femininity (and, increasingly, of the masculine and masculinity). It argues for a form of female fetishism and for a place for the mother's desire. It interrogates the Lacanian identification of women and "lack." And it attempts forms of representation that can engage with the primary processes of visual and verbal condensation and displacement to construct new pathways of meaning and pleasure.

Mary Kelly's *Post-Partum Document*, for example, draws on psychoanalysis (and particularly Lacan) in its insistence that "the development of the human subject, its unconscious and its sexuality go hand-in-hand." It uses psychoanalysis for its "secondary revision," its way of working through difficult experiences; at the same time it attempts a deconstruction of the psychoanalytic discourse on femininity. The *Document* stresses the continuous production of difference through systems of representation (there is no essential femininity outside of representational practices); and in Kelly's terms, it argues "against the self-sufficiency of lived experience and for a theoretical elaboration of the social relations in which 'femininity' is formed."²⁸

Conceived as "an ongoing process of analysis and visualization of the mother-child relationship,"²⁹ the *Document* was produced in six sections of 135 frames between 1973 and 1979 (fig. 1). Through its strategic deployment of found objects, diagrams, diary fragments, and commentaries, the idea of motherhood as a simple biological and emotional category is displaced in favor of the recognition of motherhood as a complex psychological and social process—a double movement of setting-in-place that is masked by the ideology of an instinctive and natural "mothering."

The physical and psychic interdependence and the pleasurable "completeness" of the first post-natal period must gradually give way as the infant takes his/her place in the world through a series of separations or "weanings."³⁰ The six stages of the *Post-Partum Document* trace this process to the point where the child signs his own name, confirmed in language and culture as a sexed individual. But at the same time these stages give a voice to the mother's fantasies, "her desire, her stake in that project called motherhood."³¹ The structure of recognition-and-denial that characterizes fetishism can be found in the woman's castration fears which center on the loss of her loved objects, especially her children.³² The fetishizing of the child through his gifts and memorabilia is the mother's disavowal—a fetishization that Mary Kelly as artist has tried to displace onto the work, at the same time drawing attention to the fetishistic nature of representation itself.

With hindsight, as she indicates, another story unfolds across the *Document*—"a kind of chronicle of feminist debate within the women's movement in Great Britain during the 1970s."³³ And, through the empirical data and their reworking in artistic practice, a series of con-

ceptual shifts was also taking place: the *Document* moves from a primary emphasis on sexual division in 1973 to the question of sexual difference in 1976, to a point at which notions of a “negative entry into the symbolic of patriarchy” were replaced by the development of theories of representation—that is, representation in both the psychoanalytic sense (the “feminine” as position in language) and the ideological sense (the reproduction of difference within specific discourses and social practices). *Documentation VI* attempts to bring these analyses of sexual division and sexual difference together—it is together that they work and find their effectiveness in describing “the construction of the agency of the mother/housewife within the institution of the school.”³⁴

Masculinity, of course, is implicated here as well. Sexuality is not just women’s problem (or symptoms, or politics), but the consequences for men of psychoanalytic and feminist theories of subjectivity are usually ignored.³⁵ The question “can men make feminist work?” becomes “can men make work on masculinity from a feminist position?” Both Ray Barrie and Burgin are concerned with mapping “the constantly shifting landscape of fantasy and reminiscence that shapes male sexual identity.”³⁶

Barrie’s “*Master/Pieces*” and *Screen Memories* are conceived from the position of a male author questioning masculinity (men do not speak as men, men speak as *authority*), and the authorship of the work is raised as an issue and a problem in terms of its sexuality (fig. 2). Both pieces deal with the repressed in the sense of phantasy and desire, but also as that which is lost to collective representation. (How often do we see images of a *domestic* masculinity?) They also deal with masculinity in the naturalizing processes of signification—the phallic investment of the natural and manufactured worlds in the shark and the car (“the hottest shape on the road”)—and with the exchange of meanings from and for a masculine position that is common to both the public world of advertising and the private space of toilet graffiti. Advertisements offer meaning and pleasure in the process of consuming the representation as well as the product. This kind of graffiti, which is based on a reduced iconography of the sex of women, of sex with women, also offers pleasure in consumption. It reconstructs an active, possessive, phallic sexuality for the male, and through the symbolization of women it enables an exchange of meanings around that sexuality among men.

The title and format of *Screen Memories* connect in two directions: first, to the counterpoint of visual and verbal elements in film (the first-person narrative, taken from John Dos Passos, suggests the difficulty and cost of a masculine position); and second, to psychoanalysis and Freud’s concept of the “screen memory”³⁷ that effects a compromise between what must be simultaneously remembered and repressed. The apparent insignificance of a sharply recalled childhood memory is an alibi, its survival a trace of that which stands behind it. Like the backdrop to *Screen Memories*—spectral images, formed in dust, of picture frames in a derelict house—it is the seemingly trivial clue to an absent history.

Burgin’s work has been concerned with male sexuality primarily through an exploration of the structures of voyeurism and fetishism in

phantasy. Although at first sight the picturing of the naked woman in the surveillance panel of *Zoo*, or of *Olympia* and her stand-in in *Tales from Freud*, seems to enforce dominant relations of specularly, these images are placed within a network of references that begins to open up and challenge this very issue (fig. 3). The alternative and “positive” image of the woman immigrant worker in *UK 76* gives way to a different project, that of the “interrogation of the ‘male voice’ as it is constructed across the specific discourses of photography.”³⁸ Or, we might say, a series of “male” voices as they are alluded to in *Olympia*, or a series of positions on female sexuality—each a kind of consumption, each with its nexus of knowledge, pleasure, and power.

There are narrative fragments but there is no linear coherence. We are encouraged to read vertically, through association, across the relations of text to image, along the terms of the primary processes of condensation and displacement. No longer consumers at the margin of a finished work, we are drawn onto the site and into the process of meaning itself. In this process our sexed subjectivity and its pleasures in representation are also implicated, and indeed become the subject matter of the work.

Narrative

A characteristic of the kind of society in which we live is the mass production of fictions: stories, romances, novels, photo-novels, radio serials, films, television plays and series—fictions everywhere, all-pervasive, with consumption obligatory by virtue of their omnipresence, a veritable requirement of our social existence . . . This mass-production of fictions is the culture of what might be called the “novelistic,” the constant narration of the social relations of individuals, the ordering of meanings for the individual in society.³⁹

The work of these artists employs and relates to narrative, but it does so in order to deconstruct the “fictions of coherence” that Stephen Heath describes. It uses fragments of narrative—or the ingredients for a narrative or particular narrative devices—in opposition to a modernist elimination of content in the image. At the same time, it draws on the disruption of anticipated sequence and closure in modernist writing, and on more recent analyses of narrativity in structuralist literary criticism. It refuses the authority of the “master narrative,” the gratification of an enigma posed and solved, and the resulting coherence and fullness of subject position (“A narrative is a sequence of something for somebody”).⁴⁰

Behind Heath’s “mass production of fictions” lies the classic realist text⁴¹ in which one discourse—that of narration—is privileged over all others. From a position of dominance it presumes to tell us what really happens. It is both ubiquitous and persuasive, and we have every reason to take pleasure in its devices, its resolutions and its promise of authority and truth because they answer our own needs for coherence and control.⁴² Just as the classic realist text conceals the fact that its master discourse is another articulation—one story amongst others—so it also conceals the position of the subject as inside this articulation, offering us instead an imaginary and coherent place external to it from which we may view things “as they are.”

In contrast, the production of work in which there is narration but no privileged narrative aims at engaging our storytelling tendencies while

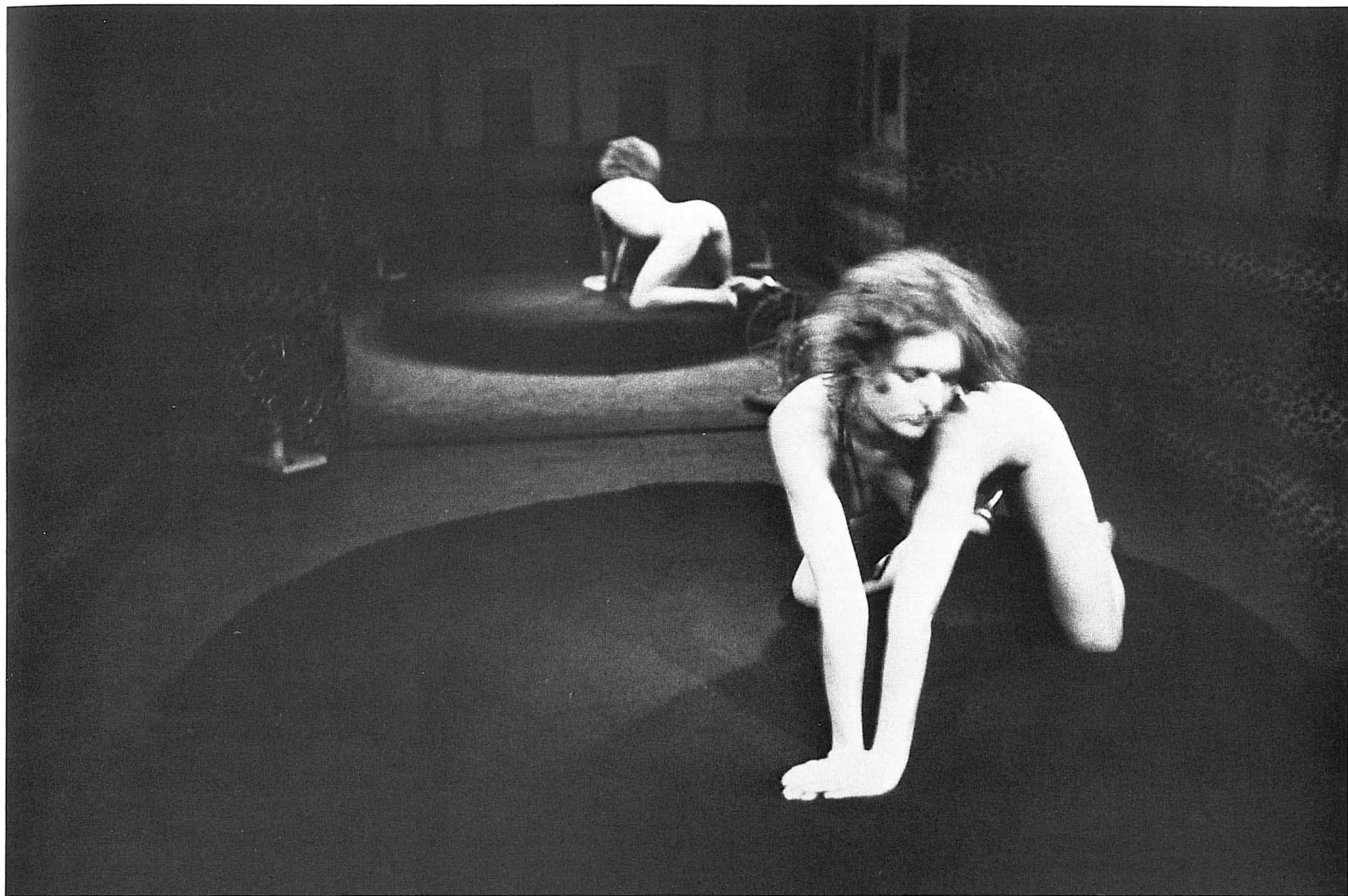
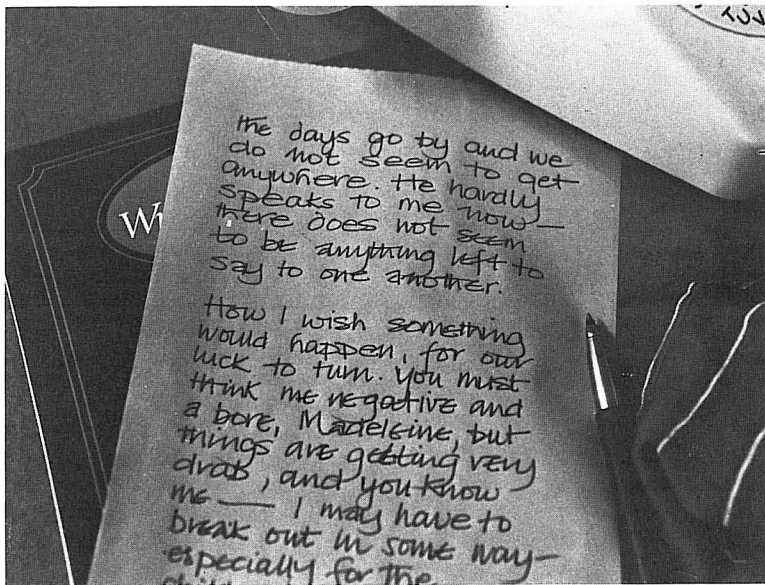


fig. 3. Victor Burgin, *Zoo 78*, 1978 (detail). Black and white photograph on board, 2 panels: 29 x 38". Courtesy of John Weber Gallery, New York



fig. 4. Marie Yates, *The Missing Woman, Phase II*, 1984 (detail). Twenty-one black and white photographs on cardboard, and blockboard, 8 panels: 12½ x 20"; 9 panels: 18¾ x 21½"; 4 panels: 19½ x 30". Courtesy of the artist

fig. 5. Marie Yates, *The Missing Woman, Phase II*, 1984 (detail)



refusing us a fixed position of knowledge. Robert Scholes says that the postmodernist anti-narratives:

bring the codes to the foreground of our critical attention, requiring us to see them as codes rather than as aspects of human nature or the world. The function of anti-narrative is to problematize the entire process of narration and interpretation for us.⁴³

We should therefore distinguish between “narrative” as a conventional means for representing and structuring the world, and the employment of certain narrative devices in an art that seeks to interrogate the processes of representation. Such work stresses the contradictions in the “real,” the incoherence of the ego, and unexpected transformations of meaning across image and text. This disruption of the codes of the classic realist text, this relocation and imbrication of image and script, this interplay of multiple discourses without offer of a fixed position—all this is part of the productivity of the work and common to such otherwise disparate projects as the *Post-Partum Document*, *Tales from Freud*, *The Missing Woman*, *Metaphorical Journey*, and *Screen Memories*.

In Marie Yates’ *The Missing Woman* we are teased by a narrative process which is first offered and then withdrawn (figs. 4, 5). Images are paired with fragmentary texts—letters, diaries, newspaper cuttings, official reports—that we designate as documentary, but which we might well subsume under Heath’s “mass production of fictions.” Marie Yates describes her project as:

a play on that [i.e., Lacan’s] process of identification exploring our persistence as subjects in language in our belief that somewhere there is a point of certainty, of knowledge and truth.⁴⁴

Through visual and verbal signs, by means of characters and occurrences, we are invited to construct the identity of a woman, “A,” and encouraged to believe that by following the sequence we will be rewarded at this point of “certainty, knowledge and truth.” The relations between text and image appear at times straightforward and at others elliptical. We do our best, as we do with novels, to construct the image of a whole character from the evidence we are given: to find “A’s” story, identity, and relationship to the child, for instance, in a still life of domestic paraphernalia.

In pursuing the enigma of “A” we are tracing the production of sexual difference in fragments of discourse—feminine identities in social relationships, the family, property rights, and legal ceremonies that are not necessarily either whole or wholesome. “Identity” is a narrativization of life, a story that satisfies us about who we are. But the pull towards narrative is finally refused, so that character and sequence remain elusive (the panels can be hung in any order), and any sense of closure or equilibrium is undermined by an assertion (attributed to “B”) that calls us into consciousness of what we do:

however much photography is equated with content, and painting with “thing-in-itself” or “window-on-the-world,” whenever we look at an image we are its authors through the field of discourse and generally put images to use in providing narratives to our satisfaction.⁴⁵

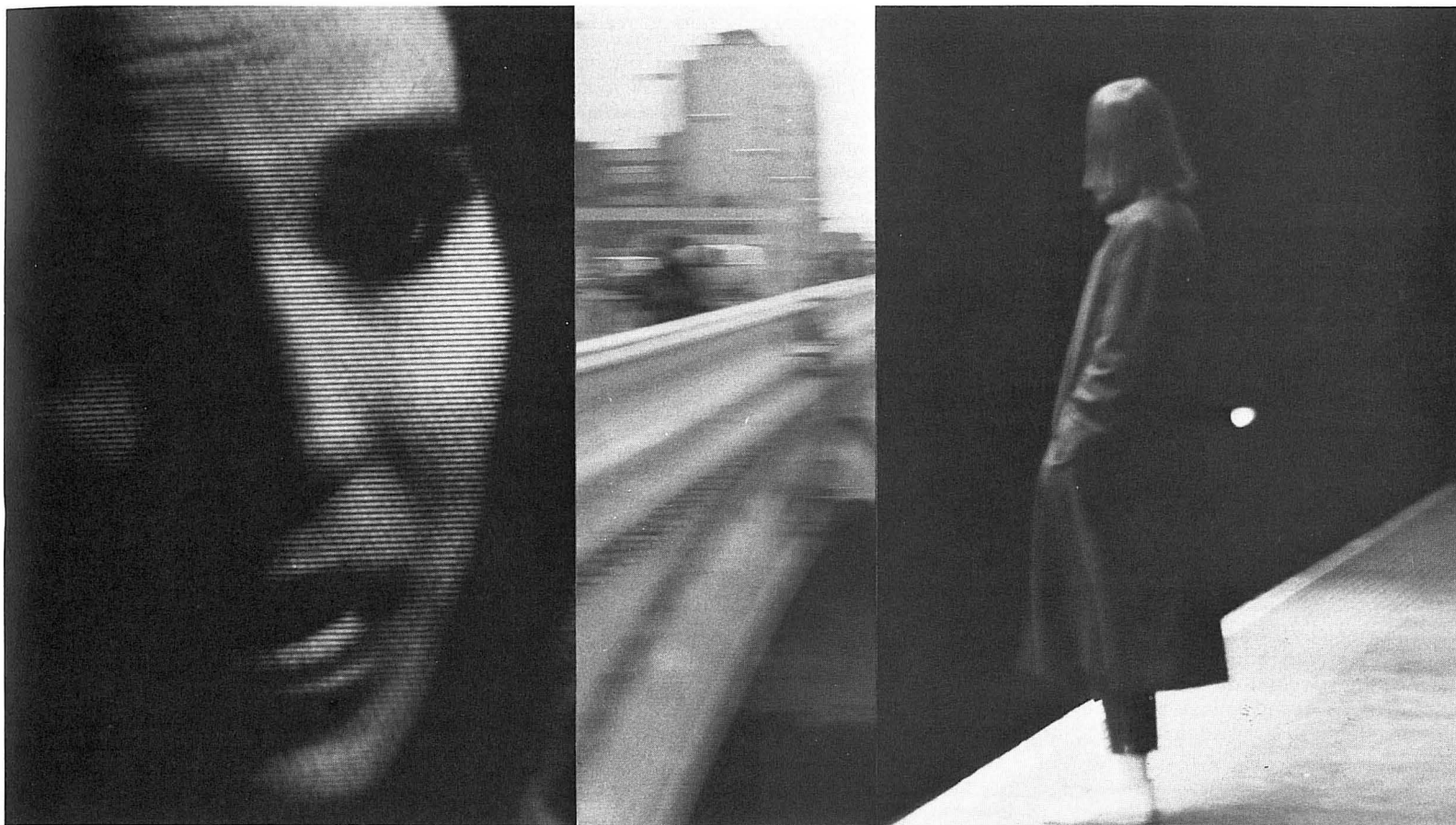


fig. 6. Yve Lomax, *Open Rings and Partial Lines*, 1983-84 (detail). Fifteen black and white and color photographs, 23 x 32" each. Courtesy of the artist

In seeking to make sense of images, we also work to produce a coherent position for ourselves.

But the question remains: who is *The Missing Woman*? (Lacan: "Woman as such does not exist.") Is the feminine itself the missing (woman defined as absence or lack)? Or is there—as the discrete references to culture and class in the piece suggest—no one femininity, present or missing? Perhaps we have been distracted and the absence is not "A's" but that of whoever has ordered these elements for our reworking. Is the artist outside or inside the work ("B," an artist. "Y," a woman who resembles "B")? Is the narrator the author, a character ("B") among others, or, effectively, ourselves (on what other point does this "evidence" converge)? Who speaks, in narrative? (Benveniste: in narrative, no one speaks.)⁴⁶ Is the image a tableau offering the fictional promise of "a sleek and whole identity" or, as Yates suggests in her

writing, a mirror "which can reveal its operation through mobilizing the discursive in its mode of address"?⁴⁷

Partial narratives—or the invitations to attempt them—are present in Yve Lomax's work too. What suggests a story is not the representational tableau that Barthes likened to a hieroglyph condensing past, present, and future,⁴⁸ but something closer to a frame cut from a *film noir*: a moment of anonymity and anomie with no "before" or "after" except those that we propose.

The limited identifications offered by the female figures in Lomax's *Open Rings and Partial Lines* quickly come unraveled (fig. 6). They are in all senses flat: the sense of a represented space, a rounded character, or a moment's emotional resonance is undercut by the insistent play between narrative and surface. (Lomax: "Think about the question of representation falling flat, spreading out and becoming a question of the

horizontal assemblage of parts.”)⁴⁹ Surface marks and blocks of primary color effect this pull-back from narrative and illusion, together with a particular use of montage. Representations of femininity from fashion photography, television, B-movies and advertising, technically degraded through their reproduction, abrade each other. But between the paired segments there lies a gap which challenges the classic, Eisensteinian notion of montage as the production of a third meaning from the juxtaposition of two images. As the artist remarks:

I would say that montage is concerned with bits as bits, not as fragments broken from some original whole . . . [and] the politics of montage concerns the way in which we negotiate heterogeneity and multiplicity . . . the way in which we take up with practices (literature, science . . . sex) as assemblages, indeed as montages, and not as monolithic wholes.⁵⁰

Pleasure

Laura Mulvey’s account of “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema” assumes that pleasure is bound up in the structuring of sexual difference. Asking how systems of representation (in this case Hollywood cinema) play on unconscious pleasures in looking, she suggests a distinction: between the voyeuristic pleasure of the male-positioned viewer presented with the fetishization of woman as spectacle; and the different pleasure that the viewer takes in identifying with the (male) character who appears to control the narrative and move the plot along.

The pleasures accorded to women (or to the female-positioned subject) in this regime are those of a complementary exhibitionism. Because we are formed by it we are not immune to a narcissistic fascination with images apparently addressed to men—with finding our own satisfactions in the spotlight of that controlling gaze. Alternatively, but with some discomfort and collusion, we may cross-identify with the bearer of the look. But in so far as such forms of gratification are oppressive to us, pleasure becomes a political issue:

The man’s relation to the whole problematic differs fundamentally from the woman’s: the woman must, by discovery and invention, locate herself-for-herself in representation (where now, predominantly, she takes place only for men); the man, on the other hand, is everywhere in representation in his own interest . . .⁵¹

Within the psychic economy, pleasure cannot be refused. Images will gratify scopophilic components in the libido, will engage the structures of fantasy and desire, will invoke narcissistic identifications by various means. We cannot, in Victor Burgin’s terms, “dispense with the phantasmatic relation to representation.”⁵² We can work with it (in Burgin’s case, by the direct quotation of voyeuristic imagery in the context of a critique); we might be able to subvert or reconstruct it in less oppressive forms. Or perhaps the drive is sufficiently undifferentiated that there is no one thing that pleasure is: it may follow familiar paths, but cannot ultimately be defined in isolation from the social and discursive formations in which it occurs.

There is also the question of pleasure, not just as it relates to a variety of psychic investments but in relation to knowledge. Something here connects with Barthes’ distinction in *The Pleasure of the Text* between “pleasure” and “jouissance.” The text of pleasure is the text we know

how to read (the representation that supports our identifications and offers us the satisfaction of recognition). The text of “jouissance” (or ecstasy), on the other hand,

imposes a state of loss, . . . discomforts . . . unsettles the reader’s historical, cultural, psychological assumptions, the consistency of his tastes, values, memories, brings to a crisis his relation with language.⁵³

Such disruption of the “readerly” text is necessary if the social and psychic economy is not simply to be reproduced in its dominant mechanisms and effects. But some return is necessary for this effort: the “thrill that comes from leaving the past behind,”⁵⁴ as Mulvey calls it, or the pleasures of play as a strategy for the work as Lomax intends:

Play . . . in all senses of the word: to disquiet; to disturb but also to engage in an amusing and pleasurable activity . . . it is also, in a sense, its politics: to no longer separate politics from pleasure.⁵⁵

How willing the spectator is to enter into “play” may depend on their self-perception and situation. Disruption of this order is threatening, and not only to the security of the already known. Work that denies identity and emphasizes the subject-in-process, in a sense proposes the viewer’s undoing. For men, perhaps, a pleasurable reading of this work will be difficult at best. Women, on the other hand, have an investment in the deconstruction of “femininity” and compensatory pleasures: in answering back (Barbara Kruger: “Your gaze hits the side of my face”), in hide-and-seek (Cindy Sherman presenting herself as object of the look while refusing, in mobility of self-constructed identities, to be discovered by it), and in evacuating woman’s image in favor of a more circuitous route to “the mother as subject of her own desire.”⁵⁶

Context: feminism, modernism, and postmodernism

The first question to pose is therefore: how can women analyze their exploitation, inscribe their claims, within an order prescribed by the masculine? Is a politics of women possible there?⁵⁷

Since the nineteenth century at least, pro- and anti-feminist positions have been engaged in struggles over the varied propositions that culture is neutral, androgynous, or gender-specific. What these debates generally have not addressed is the problematic of culture itself, in which definitions of femininity are produced and contested and in which cultural practices cannot be derived from or mapped directly onto a biological gender.

The most important contribution of the feminism under consideration here is the recognition of the relations between representation and sexed subjectivity in process, and of the need to intervene productively within them. The artists considered here hold the common aim of “unfixing” the feminine, unmasking the relations of specularly that determine its appearance in representation, and undoing its position as a “marked term” which ensures the category of the masculine as something central and secure.

This is a project within feminism that can be seen as distinct from, say, the work of Judy Chicago. The importance of *The Dinner Party*⁵⁸ lies in its scale and ambition, its (controversially) collaborative production,

and its audience. But its deployment of the fixed signs of femininity produces a reverse discourse,⁵⁹ a political/aesthetic strategy founded on the same terms in which “difference” has already been laid down. What we find in the work in this exhibition is rather an interrogation of an unfixed femininity produced in *specific systems of signification*. In Burgin’s words,

meaning is perpetually displaced from the image to the discursive formations which cross and contain it; there can be no question of either “progressive” contents or forms in themselves, nor any ideally “effective” synthesis of the two.⁶⁰

This work has been claimed for modernism (for a Russian, rather than a Greenbergian formalism) and for postmodernism (via poststructuralist theory rather than new expressionist practice), but we need, finally, to see it in yet another context. Not as the phototextual work of the ‘70s now eclipsed by the panache of the new, not as one ingredient amongst others guaranteeing the plurality of the new, not even as a “postmodernism of resistance”⁶¹ (despite the equivocal attractions of

the term). Rather as that “cinematic of the future”⁶² Barthes called for, that concern with sexuality in process which Luce Irigaray described as “woman as the not-yet”⁶³—a continued countering of cultural hegemony in its ceaseless and otherwise unquestioned production of meanings and of subject positions for those meanings.

She had acted out for long enough, inside those four corners: frame, home, tableaux or scene. She no longer wanted to be found, where she was expected to be found, as if each time she was found it were all the same. As if it were all a matter of one pattern from which, on and on, the same was cut out, pressed out, and indeed could be put back . . . She arose. She straightened herself out. She made ready to go. But as she turned to look at what she was leaving behind, she knocked some metaphors off the table . . .⁶⁴

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NOTES

- I have drawn freely from conversations with the artists and from their writing. I am grateful to them for discussing their work with me but it does not necessarily follow, of course, that they would agree with all aspects of my account.
1. Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), vol. 19, *Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes* (1925), pp. 241-258.
 2. I have kept the term “representation” although it has been contested. Paul Q. Hirst’s critique “Althusser and the Theory of Ideology,” *Economy and Society* 4, no. 5 (November 1976): 385-412 insists on *signification* and *signifying practices* as concepts that avoid, in his view, the suggestion that representation has a fixed correspondence to a “real.”
 3. Yve Lomax, “When Roses are No Longer Given a Meaning in Terms of Human Future,” *Camerawork*, no. 26 (April 1983): 10-11.
 4. Cf. Jean Baudrillard, “The Precession of Simulacra,” in *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983). [Reprinted in Brian Wallis, ed. *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art/Boston: David R. Godine, Publisher, 1984), pp. 251-281].
 5. Stephen Heath, “Narrative Space,” *Screen* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1976): 73.
 6. *Ibid.*
 7. Victor Burgin, ed., *Thinking Photography* (London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Press, 1982), pp. 8-9.
 8. Louis Althusser, “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes Towards an Investigation),” in *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, trans. Ben Brewster (London: New Left Books, 1971), pp. 121-173. This essay gave rise to extensive and detailed discussion which is not possible to outline here, but see Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, particularly chapter 3, “Photographic Practice and Art Theory”; and Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, “Marxism, language, and ideology,” *Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977), pp. 61-92.
 9. Cf. Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, p. 7.
 10. For a useful outline see Rosalind Coward, “Sexual Politics and Psychoanalysis: Some notes on their relation,” in *Feminism, Culture and Politics*, ed. Rosalind Brunt and Caroline Rowan (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1982), pp. 171-187.
 11. Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, pp. 144-145.
 12. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
 13. Tony Godfrey, “Sex, Text, Politics: an Interview with Victor Burgin,” *Block*, no. 7 (1982): 2-26; also Yve Lomax, “The Politics of Montage,” *Camerawork*, no. 24 (March 1982): 8-9.
 14. Burgin outlines this himself in the interview with Tony Godfrey cited above, and adds that he used three “voices” in *US 77*: a didactic voice, a narrative voice (as in “framed”), and a paradoxical voice.
 15. Godfrey, “Sex, Text, Politics,” p. 16.
 16. Psychoanalytic concepts were present in *US 77* (see especially *Graffiti*) but were taken further in *Zoo*; for example in the bringing together of Foucault and Freud with the image of the peep show model, proposing “the oppressive surveillance of woman in our society as the most visible, socially sanctioned, form of the more covert surveillance of society-in-general by the agencies of the state” (Burgin in Godfrey, “Sex, Text, and Politics,” p. 20).
 17. Burgin, in conversation with Lisa Tickner.
 18. Stephen Heath, *The Sexual Fix* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1982), p. 3.
 19. Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1: *An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978); Heath, *The Sexual Fix*; Jeffrey Weeks, *Sex, Politics, and Society: The Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800* (New York: Longman, 1981).
 20. Heath, *The Sexual Fix*, especially p. 7 where he notes that in relation to “sexuality” the *Oxford English Dic-*
 - tionary cites James Matthews Duncan, *Clinical Lectures on the Diseases of Women*, 1889.
 21. Heath, *The Sexual Fix*, p. 44.
 22. Juliet Mitchell, “Introduction-1,” in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: W.W. Norton & Co./Pantheon Books, 1983), p. 2. See also the entry on “Sexuality” in Jean Laplanche and Jean-Baptiste Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psychoanalysis, 1980), pp. 417 ff.
 23. Mitchell, “Introduction-1,” p. 2.
 24. Cf. Parveen Adams, “Representation and Sexuality,” *m/f*, no. 1 (1978): 78.
 25. Stephen Heath, “Lessons from Brecht,” *Screen* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 106. Also Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18. [Reprinted in Wallis, ed., *Art After Modernism* pp. 361-373]; and Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, p. 190.
 26. Heath, *The Sexual Fix*, p. 144.
 27. Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure,” p. 11. It has to be said that this question is complicated by the bisexuality of the drives, and by possible disjunctions between the (predominantly) “male” or “female” sexuality of author or reader, and the gendered positioning inscribed by the text. Victor Burgin (*Block*, no. 7, p. 24) refers to an unconscious, pre-Oedipal “tourist” of a subject “which can take up positions more or less freely on either side of the divide of gender, or even on both sides simultaneously.” Laura Mulvey herself, in an article on *Duel in the Sun* (*Framework*, no. 15/16/17 [Summer 1981]: 12-15) provides some “afterthoughts on ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’” in which she attempts to account for the position of the female spectator, her pleasure and identifications, and the use of a female protagonist in Hollywood melodrama.
 28. Mary Kelly, “Notes on Reading the Post-Partum Document,” *Control*, no. 10 (November 1977): 10.
 29. Mary Kelly, *Post-Partum Document* (London: Rout-

- ledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), p. xv. Ultimately the division of labor in childcare is insufficient to account for the structuring of *difference* which is in part determined by the place of the child in the mother's fantasies.
30. The six sections of the *Document* are headed "Weaning from the Breast"; "Weaning from the Holophrase"; "Weaning from the Dyad"; "On Femininity"; "On the Order of Things"; and "On the Insistence of the Letter." Across these, as Mary Kelly puts it, "a problem is continually posed but no resolution is reached. There is only a replay of moments of separation and loss, perhaps because desire has no end, resists normalization, ignores biology, disperses the body." (*Post-Partum Document*, p. xvii).
 31. Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*, p. xvii.
 32. See Mary Kelly, "On Femininity," *Control*, no. 11 (November 1979): 14-15.
 33. Kelly, *Post-Partum Document*, p. xix.
 34. Kelly, "The Post-Partum Document," *m/f*, nos. 5-6 (1981): 127.
 35. Ray Barrie quoted in Mary Kelly, "Beyond the Purloined Image," *Block*, no. 9 (1984).
 36. Kelly, "Beyond the Purloined Image."
 37. For Freud on "Screen Memories," (1899) see *Standard Edition III*, pp. 307, 315-316, 321-322 and chapter 4 of *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Laplanche and Pontalis provide a useful summary (pp. 410-411).
 38. Godfrey, "Sex, Text, Politics," p. 15.
 39. Heath, *The Sexual Fix*, p. 85.
 40. Robert Scholes, "Language, Narrative, and Anti-Narrative," *Critical Inquiry* 7, no. 1 (Autumn 1980): 209.
 41. I am drawing on Colin MacCabe's account in "Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses," *Screen* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 7-27.
 42. See Heath, "Lessons from Brecht," p. 121.
 43. Scholes, "Language, Narrative, and Anti-Narrative," p. 211.
 44. Marie Yates in a statement accompanying the exhibition of *The Missing Woman* in *Beyond the Purloined Image*, Riverside Studios, 1983. The *dramatis personae* are outlined for us:
 - A a woman known to B by sight
 - B the narrator, an artist
 - C a man who lives with A
 - D a child
 - Y a woman who resembles B
 Nowhere are we offered an adequate image of the woman or the narrator: "A" is spoken by the others and by the "evidence" (i.e., the signs) that surround her—and hence by us.
 45. "From a statement by 'B' Aug. 1982" partially reinserts this within the fiction; but because "B" has been identified as both artist and narrator, and because the statement offers itself as a meta-comment on the rest of the piece, its status as inside and outside the work remains equivocal.
 46. Benveniste quoted in Roland Barthes, "Introduction to the Structural Analyses of Narratives," *Image-Music-Text*, ed. and trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), p. 112.
 47. Marie Yates in a statement accompanying the exhibition of *The Missing Woman*. For her views on representation, narrative, and subjectivity, see also Lucy Lippard, *Issue: Social Strategies by Women Artists* (exhibition catalogue) (London: Institute of Contemporary Arts, 1980), n.p.
 48. Roland Barthes, "Diderot, Brecht, Eisenstein," *Screen* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1974): 36.
 49. Yve Lomax from *Sense and Sensibility in Feminist Art Practice* (exhibition catalogue) (Nottingham: Midland Group Gallery, 1982), n.p.
 50. Lomax, "The Politics of Montage," p. 9; Heath, "Lessons from Brecht," p. 112; and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (New York: Viking Press, 1977).

A note on image and text.

The "polysemy" of the image may be "anchored" or "relayed" in particular ways: by montage, by text, by context (i.e., in the space of intertextuality, and by the sense-making proclivities of the viewer, which are themselves the product of what Barthes called the *déjà vu*, the already-read, already-seen). See *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974), p. 10: "This 'I' which approaches the text is already itself a plurality of other texts, of codes which are infinite, or, more precisely, lost (whose origin is lost)."

Narrative, which "smooths reading into the forward flow of its progress" may be threaded through image and text, stringing them into a single sequence of meaning in which each is reconciled to the other. On the other hand, it may be the intention of a particular (and political) representational practice to disrupt this easy flow: by setting image against text (as in Burgin's *UK 76*); by opening up a gap between image and text (as in *The Missing Woman*, where we take what clues we can in our effort to stitch them together again); by entailing us in the process of pulling together fragments of discourses that already cut across image and text and whose signification emerges from this interplay (*Post-Partum Document*, *Screen Memories*); by exploiting in the construction of the work the transferability of word and image in the primary processes of the unconscious and in "inner speech."
 51. Godfrey, "Sex, Text, Politics," p. 25.
 52. Burgin, in conversation with Lisa Tickner, and see also Godfrey, p. 26. The possibility for change, in Burgin's account lies "precisely in the fact of the shared pre-Oedipal sexuality of men and women; the recognition of sexuality as a construct, subject to social and historical change; and the recognition of the body as not simply given, as essence, in nature, but as constantly reproduced, 'revised' in discourse."
 53. Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller (New York: Hill and Wang, 1975), p. 14.
 54. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure," p. 8.
 55. Yve Lomax from her unpublished notes to *Double-Edged Scenes*; see also Marie Yates' article in *Camera-work*, no. 26 (April 1983): 16: "for some years my work has not been about consumption but about play."
 56. Mary Kelly, *Sense and Sensibility*, and cf. Luce Irigaray as discussed in Mary Jacobus, "The Question of Language: Men of Maxims and *The Mill on the Floss*," *Critical Inquiry* 8, no.2 (Winter 1981): 210.
 57. Irigaray, quoted by Jacobus in "The Question of Language," p. 207.
 58. See Judy Chicago, *The Dinner Party: A Symbol of Our Heritage* (New York: Doubleday, 1979) and Judy Chicago and Susan Hill, *Embroidering Our Heritage: The Dinner Party Needlework* (New York: Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1980).
 59. Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, p. 101.
 60. Burgin, *Thinking Photography*, pp. 215-216.
 61. Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Post-modern Culture* (Port Townsend, Wash.: Bay Press, 1983).
 62. Barthes, *Image-Music-Text*, p. 66, and Victor Burgin in conversation with Lisa Tickner.
 63. Quoted in Meaghan Morris, "A-Mazing Grace: Notes on Mary Daly's Poetics," *Lip*, no. 7 (1982/3): 39.
 64. Yve Lomax, from *Metaphorical Journey*, exhibited in *Light Reading*, B2 Gallery, London, March 1982.
- [Note: Extensive footnote material had to be cut from this version of the essay for reasons of space.]

IN AN UNTYPICAL moment Freud accuses Leonardo of being unable to draw.¹ A drawing done in anatomical section of the sexual act is inaccurate. What is more, it is lacking in pleasure: the man's expression is one of disgust, the position is uncomfortable, the woman's breast is unbeautiful (she does not have a head). The depiction is inaccurate, uncomfortable, undesirable, and without desire. It is also inverted: the man's head looks like that of a woman, and the feet are the wrong way around according to the plane of the picture—the man's foot is pointing outwards where the woman's foot should be, and her foot is in his place. In fact, most of Freud's monograph on Leonardo is addressed to the artist's *failure*, to the restrictions and limitations that Leonardo apparently experienced in relation to his potential achievement. Freud takes failure very seriously, even when it refers to someone who, to the gaze of the outside world, represents the supreme instance of artistic success. But in this footnote on the sexual drawing, Freud goes beyond the largely psychobiographical forms of interpretation that he brings to Leonardo's case. He relates—quite explicitly—a failure to depict the sexual act both to bisexuality and to a problem of representational space. The uncertain sexual identity muddles the plane of the image so that the spectator does not know where she or he stands in relationship to the picture. A confusion at the level of sexuality brings with it a disturbance of the visual field.

An artistic practice which sets itself the dual task of disrupting visual form and questioning the sexual certainties and stereotypes of our culture can fairly return to this historical moment (historical analytically as well as artistically, since the reference to Leonardo is now overlaid with the reference to the beginnings of psychoanalysis itself). Not for authority (authority is one of the things being questioned here), but for its suggestiveness in pointing up a possible relation between sexuality and the image. We know that Freud's writing runs parallel to the emergence of modern art; he himself used such art as a comparison for the blurred fields of the unconscious psychic processes which were the object of his analytic work.² But in this footnote on Leonardo's failure in the visual act, we can already see traced out a specific movement or logic: that there can be no work on the image, no challenge to its powers of illusion and address, which does not simultaneously challenge the fact of sexual difference, whose self-evidence Leonardo's drawing had momentarily allowed to crumble.³

The rest of Freud's writing shows that sexual difference is indeed such a hesitant and imperfect construction. Men and women take up positions of symbolic and polarized opposition against the grain of a multifarious and bisexual disposition, which Freud first identified in the symptom before recognizing its continuing and barely concealed presence across the range of normal adult sexual life. The lines of that division are fragile in exact proportion to the rigid insistence with which

our culture lays them down; they constantly converge and threaten to coalesce. Psychoanalysis itself can therefore explain the absence of that clear and accomplished form of sexuality that Freud had unsuccessfully searched for in the picture.

Freud often related the question of sexuality to that of visual representation. Describing the child's difficult journey into adult sexual life, he would take as his model little scenarios, or the staging of events, which demonstrated the complexity of an essentially visual space, moments in which perception *founders* (the boy child refuses to believe the anatomical difference that he sees)⁴ or in which pleasure in looking tips over into the register of *excess* (witness to a sexual act in which he reads his own destiny, the child tries to interrupt by calling attention to his presence).⁵ Each time the stress falls on a problem of seeing. The sexuality lies less in the content of what is seen than in the subjectivity of the viewer, in the relationship between what is looked at and the developing sexual knowledge of the child. The relationship between viewer and scene is always one of fracture, partial identification, pleasure, and distrust. As if Freud found the aptest analogy for the problem of our identity as human subjects in failures of vision or in the violence that can be done to an image as it offers itself to view. For Freud, with an emphasis that has been picked up and extended in the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, our sexual identities as male or female, our confidence in language as true or false, and our security in the image we judge as perfect or flawed, are fantasies.⁶ And these archaic moments of disturbed visual representation, these troubled scenes that expressed and unsettled our groping knowledge in the past, can now be used as theoretical prototypes to unsettle our certainties once again. Hence one of the chief drives of an art which today addresses the presence of the sexual in representation—to expose the fixed nature of sexual identity as a fantasy and, in the same gesture, to trouble, breakup, or rupture the visual field before our eyes.

The encounter between psychoanalysis and artistic practice is therefore *staged*, but only in so far as that staging has *already taken place*. It is an encounter which draws its strength from that repetition, working like a memory trace of something we have been through before. It gives back to repetition its proper meaning and status: not lack of originality or something merely derived (the commonest reproach to the work of art), nor the more recent practice of appropriating artistic and photographic images in order to undermine their previous status; but repetition as insistence, as the constant pressure of something hidden but not forgotten—something that can only come into focus now by blurring the field of representation where our normal forms of self-recognition take place.

The affinity between representation and sexuality is not confined to the visual image. In fact, recognition of this affinity in the domain of the

artistic image could be said to manifest something of a lag in relation to other areas of theoretical analysis and activity.⁷

In one of his most important self-criticisms,⁸ Barthes underlined the importance of psychoanalysis in pushing his earlier exposé of ideological meanings into a critique of the possibility of meaning itself. In his case studies Freud had increasingly demonstrated that the history of the patient did not consist of some truth to be deciphered behind the chain of associations that emerged in the analytic setting; it resided within that chain and in the process of emergence that the analysis brought into effect. Lacan immediately read in this the chain of language, which slides from unit to unit, producing meaning out of the relationship between terms; its truth belongs to that movement and not to some prior reference existing outside its domain. The divisions of language are in themselves arbitrary and shifting; language rests on a continuum that gets locked into discrete units of which sexual difference is only the most strongly marked. The fixing of language and the fixing of sexual identity go hand in hand; they rely on each other and share the same forms of instability and risk. Lacan read Freud through language, but he also brought out by implication, the sexuality at work in all practices of the sign. Modernist literary writing could certainly demonstrate, alongside the syntactic and narrative shifts for which it is best known, oscillations in the domain of sexuality, a murking of the sexual proprieties on which the politer world of nineteenth-century realist fiction had been based. The opposition between the two forms of writing has often been overstated, but it is no coincidence that Barthes chose to illustrate this tension between “readerly” to “writerly” fiction with a story in which the narrative enigma turns on a castrato (Balzac’s *Sarrasine*).⁹ The undecipherable sexuality of the character makes for the trouble and the joy of the text.

It is worth pausing here to consider the implications of this for a modernist and postmodernist artistic practice that is increasingly understood in terms of a problematic of reading and a theory of the sign. Again the historical links are important. Freud takes modern painting as the image of the unconscious. But the modernist suspension of the referent, however, with its stress on the purity of the visual signifier, belongs equally with Saussure who, during the same period, was criticizing the conception of language as reference and underlining the arbitrary nature of the sign (primacy to the signifier instead of language as a nomenclature of the world). Lacan’s move then simply completes the circuit by linking Saussure back to Freud. The unconscious reveals that the normal divisions of language and sexuality obey the dictates of an arbitrary law—thus undermining the possibility of reference for the subject since the “I” can no longer be seen to correspond to some pre-given and permanent identity of psycho-sexual life. The problem of psychic identity is therefore immanent to the problem of the sign.

The same link of language and the unconscious can be discovered in the transition to postmodernism, if we consider that transition as a return of the referent, not as a given, but as a problem.¹⁰ Piles of cultural artifacts bring back something we recognize, but in a form that refuses any logic of the same. The objects before the spectator’s eyes cannot be

ordered; in their disjunctive relation, they produce a problem of vision more acute than the one that had resulted when at an earlier moment reference was simply dropped from the frame. Above all—to return to the analogy with the analytic scene—these images require a reading that neither combines them into a false unity, nor struggles to move behind them into some realm of truth. The only possible reading is one that repeats their fragmentation of a cultural world they both echo and refuse.

In each of these transitions—artistic and theoretical—fundamental aspects of the way we recognize and respond to our subjectivity are called into question, along with our response to a world with which we are assumed to be familiar, yet which we both know and do not know. In each of these instances, however, it is precisely the psychoanalytic concepts of the unconscious and sexuality, specifically in their relationship to language, which are ultimately obscured.

Thus the modernist stress on the purity of the visual signifier easily dissolves into an almost mystical contemplation. Language can be used to rupture the smoothness of the visual image but it is language as pure mark, uninformed by the psychoanalytic apprehension of the sign. Cultural artifacts are presented as images within images to rob them of the values they seem naturally to embody, but the fundamental sexual polarity of that culture is not called into account. Finally, meaning is seen to reside in these images as supplement, allegory or fragment, but with no sexual residue or trace: the concept of textuality is lifted out of psychoanalytic and literary theory but without the sexual component that was its chief impetus and support.

Across a range of instances, language, sexuality, and the unconscious in their mutual relation appear as a present-absence which these various tendencies seem to brush against, or elicit, before falling away. The elisions can be summarized schematically:

- purity of the visual signifier
and the unconscious as mystique no language
- language as rupture of the
iconicity of the visual sign no unconscious
- cultural artifacts as indictment
of the stereotype no sexual difference
- reading as supplement,
process or fragment no sexual determinacy
of the signifier or
of visual space

Artists seeking to engage the sexuality in representation (representation as sexual) enter at precisely this point. By calling up the sexual component of the image, they explicitly draw out an emphasis that exists in *potentia* in the various instances they inherit and of which they form a part.¹¹ Their concern is not to provide a moral corrective. They draw upon the critical and artistic tendencies they also seek to displace, and belong within the context of (for example) that postmodernism which demands that reference, in its problematized form, re-enter the frame.

But the emphasis on sexuality produces specific effects. First, it adds to the concept of cultural artifact or stereotype the political imperative of feminism that holds the image accountable for the reproduction of norms. Secondly, to this feminist demand for scrutiny of the image it adds the idea of a sexuality that now moves beyond the issue of content to take in the parameters of visual form (not just what we see but how we see, visual space as more than the domain of simple recognition). The image therefore submits to the sexual reference, but only in so far as reference itself is questioned by the work of the image. And the aesthetics of pure form are implicated in the less pure pleasures of looking, but these in turn are part of an aesthetically extraneous political space. The arena is simultaneously that of aesthetics and sexuality, and art and sexual politics. The link between sexuality and the image produces a particular dialogue, which cannot be covered adequately by the familiar opposition between the formal operations of the image and a politics exerted from outside.

The engagement with the image therefore belongs to a political intention. It is an intention that has also inflected the psychoanalytic and literary theories on which such artists draw. The model is not one of applying psychoanalysis to the work of art (what application could there be, finally, which does not reduce one field to the other or inhibit by interpretation the potential meaning of both?). Psychoanalysis offers a specific account of sexual difference, but its value (and also its difficulty) for feminism lies in the place assigned to the woman in that differentiation. In his essay on Leonardo, Freud himself says that once the boy child sees what it is to be a woman, he will “tremble for his masculinity henceforth.”¹² If meaning oscillates when a castrato comes onto the scene, as in Balzac’s *Sarrasine*, our sense must be that it is in the normal image of the man that our certainties are invested and, by implication, that when faced with the image of the woman, they constantly threaten to collapse.

A feminism concerned with the question of looking can therefore turn this theory around, stressing that particular and limiting opposition of male and female which any image seen to be flawless serves to hold in place. More simply, we know that women are meant to look perfect, presenting a seamless image to the world so that the man, in that confrontation with difference, can avoid any apprehension of lack. The position of woman as fantasy thus depends on a particular economy of vision (the importance of “images of women” might take on its fullest meaning from this).¹³ Perhaps this is also why only a project, which

comes via feminism, can demand so unequivocally of the image that it renounce all pretensions to a narcissistic perfection of form.

At the extreme edge of this investigation, we might argue that the fantasy of absolute sexual difference, in its present guise, could be upheld only from the point when painting effectively reduced the human body to the eye.¹⁴ This would give the history of the image in Western culture a particularly heavy weight to bear. For, even if the visual image has indeed been one of the chief vehicles through which such a restriction has been enforced, it could only operate like a law that always produces the terms of its own violation. It is often forgotten that psychoanalysis describes the psychic law to which we are subject, but only in terms of its *failing*. This is important for a feminist (or any radical) practice which has often felt it necessary to claim for itself a wholly other psychic and representational domain. Therefore, if the visual image, in its aesthetically acclaimed form serves to maintain a particular and oppressive mode of sexual recognition, it nevertheless does so only partially and at a cost. Our previous history is not the petrified block of a singular visual space since, looked at obliquely, it can always have been seen to contain its moments of unease.¹⁵ We can surely relinquish a monolithic view of that history, if doing so allows us a form of resistance that can be articulated *on this side* (rather than beyond) the world against which it protests.

Among Leonardo’s early sketches, Freud discovers the heads of laughing women, images of exuberance that have fallen out of the great canon of his art. Like Leonardo’s picture of the sexual act, these images appear to unsettle Freud as if their pleasure somehow correlated with the discomfort of the sexual drawing—the sexual drawing unsettling through its failure, the heads of laughing women through their excess. These images, not well known in Leonardo’s canon, now have the status of fragments. But they indicate a truth about the tradition that excludes them, revealing a strangely persistent presence to which these artists return. “*Teste di femmine, che ridono*”:¹⁶ laughter is not the specific emphasis here, but the urgent engagement with the question of sexuality persists, a question as pertinent now as then.

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NOTES

1. Sigmund Freud, "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of his Childhood," (1910), *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works*. 24 volumes. Translated by James Strachey. (London: Hogarth Press, 1953), vol. XI, p. 70, note 3.
2. Freud, "The Dissection of the Psychological Personality," Lecture 31, *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*, 1933 (1932), *Standard Edition*, vol. XXII, p. 79; passage retranslated and quoted by Samuel Weber, *The Legend of Freud* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1982), p. 1.
3. Peter Wollen makes a similar point on the relationship between perceptual and sexual contradiction in Manet's *Olympia* in "Manet: Modernism and Avant-Garde," *Screen* 21, no. 2 (Summer 1980): 21.
4. Freud, "Some Psychical Consequences of the Anatomical Distinction Between the Sexes," (1925), *Standard Edition*, vol. XIX, p. 252.
5. Freud, "From the History of an Infantile Neurosis," 1918 (1914), *Standard Edition*, vol. XVII, pp. 29-47, 80-81.
6. On the centrality of the visual image in Lacan's topography of psychic life, see "Le stade du miroir comme formateur de la fonction du Je," 1949, *Écrits* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1966), pp. 93-100; translated by Alan Sheridan as "The mirror stage as formative of the function of the I," *Écrits, A Selection* (London: Tavistock, 1977), pp. 1-7; "Du regard comme objet petit a," *Les quatre concepts fondamentaux de la psychanalyse, Le séminaire XI*, 1964 (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973), pp. 65-109; translated by Alan Sheridan as "Of the Gaze as objet petit a," *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (London: Hogarth, 1977), pp. 67-119; and on enunciation and the lying subject, "Analyse et vérité ou la fermeture de l'inconscient," *Les quatre concepts*, pp. 127-30, translated "Analysis and Truth or the Closure of the Unconscious," *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 138-42.
7. For discussion of these issues in relation to film, see Laura Mulvey's crucial article "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 13, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 6-18, and also Jane Weinstock's article in this catalogue.
8. Roland Barthes, "La mythologie aujourd'hui," *Esprit*, no. 39 (April 1971); translated by Stephen Heath, "Change the Object Itself," *Image-Music-Text* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), pp. 165-169.
9. Barthes, *S/Z* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1970); trans. Richard Miller, *S/Z* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1974).
10. Leo Steinberg defined postmodernism as the transition from nature to culture; this is reinterpreted by Craig Owens in "The Allegorical Impulse: Toward a Theory of Postmodernism," Parts 1 and 2, *October*, no. 12 and no. 13 (Spring and Summer 1980), especially pp. 79-80, and also by Douglas Crimp in "On the Museum's Ruins," *October*, no. 13 (Summer 1980): 41-57. Craig Owens has recently used Freud's account of the creative impulse in an appraisal of the expressionist revival in his "Honor, Power and the Love of Women," *Art in America* 71, no. 1 (January 1983): 7-13.
11. Mary Kelly has written on some of these issues in relation to recent tendencies in feminist art in "Re-Veiling Modernist Criticism," *Screen* 22, no. 3 (Autumn 1981): 41-62. [Reprinted in Brian Wallis, ed. *Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation* (New York: The New Museum of Contemporary Art/Boston: David R. Godine Publisher, 1984), pp. 85-103.]
12. Freud, "Leonardo," p. 95.
13. The status of woman as fantasy in relation to the desire of the man was a central concern of Lacan's later writing. See Lacan, *Encore, Le séminaire XX, 1972-73* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1975), especially "Dieu et la jouissance de femme" and "Une lettre d'amour," pp. 61-62; translated by Jacqueline Rose, "God and the Jouissance of Woman" and "A Love Letter," in *Feminine Sexuality: Jacques Lacan and the école freudienne*, ed. Juliet Mitchell and Jacqueline Rose (New York: W. W. Norton & Co./Pantheon Books, 1983), pp. 137-161.
14. Norman Bryson describes post-Albertian perspective in terms of such a restriction in *Vision and Painting, The Logic of the Gaze* (London: Macmillan, and New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983).
15. See Lacan on death in Holbein's *The Ambassadors, Les Quatre Concepts*, pp. 80-83, translated in *The Four Fundamental Concepts*, pp. 85-90.
16. Freud, "Leonardo," p. 111. An exhibition entitled "The Revolutionary Power of Women's Laughter," including works by Mary Kelly and Barbara Kruger, among others, was held in New York at Protetch McNeil in January 1983.

COUNTER-CINEMA AND SEXUAL DIFFERENCE

PETER WOLLEN

THE TURN TOWARDS “new narrative” in avant-garde film took place in two phases. First, running from 1968 through 1975, was the assimilation of Jean-Luc Godard’s move away from the mainstream (*Le Gai Savoir* and the work of the Dziga Vertov group). This phase was marked by the fragmentation of narrative into a mass of heterogeneous discourses, often burying the story beneath political and/or theoretical material. It was radical, confrontational, Marxist, Brechtian. It showed the impact of the first wave of French theory—the Marxist structuralism of Louis Althusser, the semiology of Roland Barthes, the hermetic vanguardism of the *Tel Quel* group.

The second phase is associated with the invasion of the new narrative by a phalanx of women filmmakers—Chantal Akerman, Marguerite Duras, Laura Mulvey, and Yvonne Rainer among them. This phase marks the moment when the post-Godardian current in avant-garde filmmaking encountered the unstable dyad newly produced by the meeting of feminism and psychoanalysis. It coincides with the growing presence and cultural force of the women’s movement and the development within it of a Freudian tendency. Drawing on the work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, the construction of “woman” was now theorized as a category (fetish, sign) under patriarchy. Psychoanalysis, feminism, and semiotics thus converged in questioning the basis of image, code, and representation in mainstream cinema and in searching for alternative and oppositional strategies.

The onset of this new phase was particularly visible in Britain. In 1973, Mary Kelly began work on *Post-Partum Document*. Laura Mulvey made her film *Penthesilea* and Juliet Mitchell completed her book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, both appearing in 1974. All three women had previously been members of the same study group within the Women’s Liberation workshop, and their different projects (in art, film, and theory) clearly shared a common background. At the same time, the first contacts occurred between filmmakers such as Akerman and Mulvey, and films such as Yvonne Rainer’s *Lives of Performers* and Jackie Raynal’s *Deux Fois* were first screened in London at the 1973 Festival of Avant-Garde film. That same year, Claire Johnston’s *Women’s Cinema as Counter-Cinema*, one of a series of pioneering texts, was published.

In addition this was also the period when psychoanalysis began to shape not only a current in film practice but also a whole body of film theory, which was associated in particular with *Screen* magazine. *Screen*, which had been relaunched as a theoretical journal in 1971, moved away from its original Brechtian orientation towards a growing interest in psychoanalytic work that culminated in the “Psychoanalysis and Cinema” issue in 1974 and the follow-up conference at the Edinburgh Film Festival the next year. Mulvey’s essay, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” also appeared in *Screen* in 1975; it called, in the

name of a Freudian feminism, for a radical, confrontational rejection (“scorched earth policy”) of mainstream cinematic codes, images, and pleasures. During the same period in France, Luce Irigaray and others broke with Lacan over the issue of feminism and prompted his response in his “Seminar XX.”

Naturally the shift from one phase to another was neither total nor abrupt. Both in theory and in films, traditional class-political and Brechtian discourse ran parallel with psychoanalytic and feminist discourse. This was particularly true of Britain, where the two *Nightcleaners* films combined class and sexual politics in focusing on a strike of women workers and its aftermath. In the Mulvey-Wollen films as well, class discourse remained one of the constituent elements in a series of heterogeneous texts. For some, a link between Brechtian and Lacanian positions was provided by Althusser’s theory of ideology or by Barthes’ eclectic practice.

Now that the micro-historical stage has been set, however schematically and anecdotally, it is possible to proceed to the theoretical and formal implications of this turn towards Freud and feminism in film culture. It should be stressed that this was very different from earlier recourse to psychoanalysis, such as the surrealist vision of the unconscious as a liberating force or the Hollywood *film noir* use of the unconscious as a source of the uncanny and the disturbing. The investigation of the unconscious in this case was far more theoretical and sprang from a search for the origins of sexual difference (almost a “myth” of origins). Freud was read alongside Claude Lévi-Strauss and other anthropological studies of sexual difference, in addition to the classical Marxist account given by Engels.

Reading Freud and Lacan provided a theoretical explanation of sexual difference in terms of contrasted trajectories for boy and girl during the Oedipus complex. For Lacan, the Oedipus complex primarily involved the entry of the child into language and into a Symbolic Order governed by the Name-of-the-Father (the dead father of Freud’s own myth of the origins of patriarchy in *Totem and Tabu*). Each child was socialized, as a boy or as a girl, by being placed, in a manner that he/she could not consciously control or understand, within a system of ritual and symbol, of which verbal language was the paradigm. This entry into, and positioning within, the Symbolic Order broke up the earlier dyadic and prelinguistic relation between child and mother by introducing the Name-of-the-Father as a third structuring term, thereby dividing humanity into two denominations, two sexes. Thus the ideas of sexual difference, patriarchy, and the unconscious were linked together. This Freudian-Lacanian approach had the advantage, especially visible to those coming from the 1960s Marxist tradition, of placing sexual difference within a social setting, rather than positing its origin in nature, biology or any predetermined “essence” of female identity. And, by



fig. 1. Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen. Still from *Riddles of the Sphinx*, 1977, 90 minutes, color

identifying sexual difference as a social—and therefore historical—construct, the consequent possibility of change was brought forward as an issue.

However, two distinct versions of a strategy for change emerged. The first, generally associated with Paris, called for a refusal of the patriarchal order and a challenge to the language and systems of representation associated with it. This would entail a return (perhaps a “regression”) to a pre-Oedipal instance dominated by a relation to the mother and the body, rather than to an abstract Father and an abstract language. The second version, more prevalent in Britain, called for a subversion or overthrow of the order of patriarchy from within, starting from the different position of women within language and from their different trajectory through the Oedipus complex. The goal would thus be to undermine the paternal metaphor while still accepting separation from the mother. Feminists in France, it should be remembered, were confronted with Lacan, the self-proclaimed avatar of Freud, the Master and dominating “father.” In England, in contrast, the psychoanalytic tradition was carried by “mothers” (Anna Freud and Melanie Klein, for example) and, more recently, feminists themselves had reinvigorated the tradition, independent of any formal male authority or school.

It was also in England that the closer relationship between psychoanalytic feminism and film theory developed. In France film semiotics had remained separate, as the result of the introduction of new concepts and methods into the field of “filmology.” But when the work of leading French theorists such as Christian Metz and Raymond Bellour was introduced into Britain and America, it took on new political implications. Semiotics had always stressed the problems of film language and the analysis of the dominant codes of mainstream cinema. In semiotics, feminists found an already developed approach to their questions about the systems of representation through which the Symbolic Order is articulated in the cinema.

Two issues dominated discussion. First, the traditional codes of editing and the way in which they maintained the spectator in an imaginary position within an illusorily unfissured narrative flow. Second, the character of the “look,” the vicissitudes of the scopical drive in the cinema and, particularly, the placing of the image of woman as the object of the male gaze. Feminist filmmaking could base itself on a strategy of subverting these two codes, pillars of patriarchy within the cinematic instance of the Symbolic Order: the code of editing (“suture”) and the code of the look, as developed theoretically in *Screen* by Stephen Heath and Laura Mulvey, respectively. This theoretical work could then be mapped, politically and aesthetically, onto practices of montage and camera placement. Feminist cinema could potentially find ways of challenging, rather than reinforcing, the placement of the film spectator as a sexed object.

In this way feminist filmmaking encountered the post-Godardian project of a “counter-cinema,” one which would challenge mainstream cinema and its codes from a political standpoint. Akerman, Mulvey, and Rainer all used the films of Godard as models from which (and, in some respects, against which) they could develop their own film practice.

They used long takes, direct address, montage (of segments rather than of shots), tableaux, foregrounding of the formal features of filmmaking, and mixed camera work. (Most of these characteristics are held in common by three key films of 1974: Rainer’s *Film About A Woman Who . . .*, Akerman’s *Je, Tu, Il, Elle*, and Mulvey-Wollen’s *Penthesilea*.) These films have the quality of demonstrations, of palimpsests, of labyrinths—in Rainer’s words, “this meandering quality, constantly turning corners.”

At the same time, however, these filmmakers break with many of the preoccupations of Godard’s cinema. In particular, they transform the subject matter and the narrative mode, telling stories about the lives of women and often raising the question of how the personal relates to the political. They draw, too, on the conventions of the romantic melodrama, which has become the quintessential woman’s genre (*Film About A Woman Who . . .*, *Jeanne Dielman*, *Riddles of the Sphinx*) (fig. 1) At the same time, Godard, with Anne-Marie Miéville, made *Numéro Deux*, his first excursus in the wake of feminism into sexual politics. Its investigatory mode, however, still seems to be from an external standpoint, couched as an interrogative meta-language in the traditional Godardian way. While the filmmakers’ images and voices are present in the films of Akerman, Mulvey, and Rainer, they are interjected into the place of which questions are asked, rather than that from which questions are asked.

There has always seemed to me to be a striking contrast between Jon Jost’s *Speaking Directly* (1973) and many of the subsequent films by women filmmakers that could better be titled “Speaking Indirectly.” Jost’s film is one of a group from the early 1970s that deals with a male construction of sexuality (Shuji Terayama’s *Throw Away Your Books* and Steve Dwoskin’s *Behindert* also come to mind). It combines a post-Godardian style with a persistent ’60s stance. The women’s films that follow it deliberately break with the 1960s. They are ironic (“unstable irony”), problematic, and oblique. Rainer once described Alain Robbe-Grillet’s films as starting with a whole and then “cutting it up like a puzzle and re-assembling it.” Her own films, in contrast, are like puzzles that cannot be put together properly, riddles that have no simple answer, or mazes whose center can never be discovered.

The search for a secret is one of the governing principles of traditional narrative (Barthes’ “hermeneutic code”). The story ends, the diegesis is closed, when the secret is discovered and made public. Sexual difference, however, presents us with secrets, mysteries, and riddles that are not so easily solved and revealed. Direct answers are the prerogative of a patriarchal discourse that women cannot assume. Patriarchal discourse also, of course, posits “woman” as by definition “mystery” and locus of the Other. Thus women must perpetually oscillate between asking unanswerable questions and denying that there is any essential mystery. In the same way, women are caught in a shifting, erratic realm of masquerade which disallows the alignment of identity with role.

In other words, sexual difference cannot be redefined without challenging the terms of the Symbolic Order within which sexual difference is determined. While that Order persists, in its patriarchal form,



fig. 2. Sally Potter. Still from *Thriller*, 1979, 33 minutes, black and white

any redefinition can only be partial and unstable, any definition complicated and fetishistic to a certain degree. Hence a cinema that sets out to investigate sexual difference is caught in a dilemma. It must overthrow an Order, a system of representations, that still provides its own conditions of possibility. It must be a cinema founded on ambivalence and irony, the montage of discourses, mobility of identity, and openness of inquiry. In a sense, it is fated to be a hysterical cinema, always speaking from a place it knows it is not and occupying a place from which it knows it cannot yet speak.

It is only now, after more than a decade, that this project has crystallized into a "movement." The art world now sees itself at a moment of transition between modernism and postmodernism. Such periods of transition also produce a period of instability in which all kinds of hitherto suppressed options are made possible. The turn towards new narrative can be seen as the result of women filmmakers' break with the late modernism of structural film. Feminism thus acted as a crucial catalyst in breaking the hold of modernism. But at the same time, feminism is resistant to absorption into any new institutional chapter in an epochal history of art that remains patriarchal in its foundations, whether modernist or postmodernist. Feminism demands more than a redistribution or realignment within a persistent Symbolic Order, a persistent culture.

The project of a counter-cinema began under the aegis of Brecht and Godard as part of the general political and cultural project of May '68 (to name its emblematic moment). This project has been transformed and redefined under the impact of feminism, although the previous current still survives (Straub-Huillet, Haroun Farocki, Helmut Costard, Raul Ruiz). It has already moved through a number of phases, a number of different problematics: fetishism as the form of signification of the feminine; hysteria as the female speech of the body; the troubled fascination/critique of the "heroine"; the correlation of psychoanalysis and feminism with forms of class politics (such as trade union militancy in Britain, urban terrorism in New York, each reflecting different histories and distances from history); the dialectic of pleasure, thrill, detachment, and despair.

Meanwhile the theoretical and political context has changed. Since the Vietnamese victory in 1975 and the onset of a recession, there has been an unremitting rightward drift in both Europe and the United States. It is surely all the more necessary to preserve the legacy of the

1960s and 1970s—not uncritically, but as part of an ongoing work of transformation. The conjunction of feminism with psychoanalysis permitted us to foresee a world in which sexual difference was not immutable, since its genetic structures and consequent identities were subject to struggle and change. In short, those structures and identities were historical rather than natural (the natural can only be expressed, not changed) and unstable (asymmetrical, dysfunctional) rather than stable. Anatomy and biology figured in sexual difference but did not determine it; they worked within a complex structure, which involved our entry into language, the onset of desire and subordination to sexual norms, to produce split and unfulfilled subjects whose bonds were unstable and mutable. The politics of the unconscious was put on the agenda.

For film this meant envisioning a new approach to the cinematic codes, a new approach to character and to the female image, a new approach to narrative. In the last analysis, perhaps, the project of a counter-cinema will prove to be that of a counter-Oedipal cinema, like that suggested by Teresa de Lauretis. The Oedipal trajectory itself is that of a generative narrative form, with its episodes, actants, secrets, impostures, perils, and transformations. Along with its various versions and permutations, it demands to be rewritten—like Kleist's *Penthesilea* in Mulvey-Wollen's *Penthesilea*, *La Boheme* in Sally Potter's *Thriller*, or Freud's own "Dora" in the Jay Street Collective film (fig. 2.) This is also true of the melodramatic scenarios and journalistic legends that so often serve as filmic pre-texts. The most recent wave of films by women filmmakers (Lizzie Borden, Bette Gordon, Sheila McLaughlin, and Lynne Tillman) shows how rich the possibilities are for narrative inscribed as cinema, as spectacle, from a female standpoint or counter-standpoint. Godard and others showed how stories could be treated as raw materials and broken down into disjunctive and heterogeneous montages and zigzags. Counter-Oedipal cinema can transform narrative on a more fundamental level, that of its patriarchal organization and presuppositions.

[Note: It must be remembered that this is a first-person history, narrated, and theorized by a participant in the story.]

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FILMS

- 1971 Throw Away Your Books (Shuji Terayama)
 1972 History Lessons (Jean-Marie Straub & Danièle Huillet)
 Lives of Performers (Yvonne Rainer)
 Tout Va Bien: Letter to Jane (Jean-Luc Godard & Jean-Pierre Gorin)
 1973 Speaking Directly (Jon Jost)
 1974 Behindert (Steve Dwsokin)
 Film About A Woman Who . . . (Rainer)
 Je, Tu, Il, Elle (Chantal Akerman)
 Nathalie Granger (Marguerite Duras)
 Penthesilea (Laura Mulvey & Peter Wollen)
 1975 Ici et Ailleurs; Numéro Deux (Godard & Anne-Marie Miéville)
 India Song (Duras)
 Jeanne Dielman (Akerman)
 Nightcleaners (Berwick Street Collective)
 1976 Comment ça va (Godard & Miéville)
 Invisible Adversaries (Valie Export)
 Kristina Talking Pictures (Rainer)
 News From Home (Akerman)
 Son Nom de Venise . . . (Duras)
 1977 Baxter, Vera Baxter (Duras)
 Fortini/Cani (Straub & Huillet)
 Madame X (Ulrike Ottinger)
 The All-Round Reduced Personality (Helke Sander)
 Riddles of the Sphinx (Mulvey & Wollen)
 1978 Les Rendez-Vous d'Anna (Akerman)
 '36 to '77; Nightcleaners 2 (Berwick St. Collective)
 1979 From the Cloud to the Resistance (Straub & Huillet)
 Sigmund Freud's Dora (Jay Street Collective)
 Thriller (Sally Potter)

CINEMATIC CONTEXTS

- 1971 New Screen appears
 1972 Festival of Women's Films, New York
 Edinburgh Film Festival Women's Event
 "Godard and Counter-Cinema" (Wollen) *AfterImage*
 Women and Film appears
 "Sexual Politics and Film" *Velvet Light Trap*
 1973 "Women's Cinema as Counter-Claim" (Claire Johnston) in *Notes on Women's Cinema* (ed. Johnston)
 BFI International Festival of Avant-Garde Film, London, Musidora, Paris
 1974 "Work 1961-1973" (Rainer) and "Yvonne Rainer" (Annette Michelson) *Artforum*
 "Lessons from Brecht" (Stephen Heath) Screen
 "The Tutor Code of Classical Cinema" (Daniel Dayan) *Film Quarterly*
 "The Place of Women in the Cinema of Raoul Walsh" (Pam Cook & Johnston) Edinburgh Film Festival
 1975 "Psychanalyse et Cinéma" *Communications* 23, with "Le Blocage Symbolique" (Raymond Bellour)
 "Le Signifiant Imaginaire" (Christian Metz) and "Le Dispositif" (Jean-Louis Baudry)
 Edinburgh Film Festival Brecht Event
 "Psychoanalysis and Cinema" Screen
 "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (Mulvey) Screen
 "The Work of Dorothy Arzner" (Cook & Johnston) BFI
 "The Two Avant-Gardes" (Wollen) *Studio International*
 1976 Edinburgh Film Festival "Psychoanalysis and Cinema"
 Event and Book
 Edinburgh Avant-Garde Event
 Camera Obscura appears
 1977 Dossier on "Suture," Screen
 "Women and the Cinema" (ed. Karyn Kay & Gerald Peary)
 1978 "Difference" (Heath) Screen
 "Duplicité in Mildred Pierce" (Cook) BFI
 Argument booklet (Anthony McCall, Andrew Tyn-dall, Claire Pajaczkowska)
 Milwaukee "Cinematic Apparatus" conference
 1979 Edinburgh Women's Event II
 "Godard" *Cahiers du Cinéma* 200

THE EXTRA-CINEMATIC

- 1970 "Why Freud?" (Juliet Mitchell) *Shrew*
 1971 Grand Union Dreams (Rainer)
 True Patriot Love/Véritable Amour Patriotique (Joyce Wieland)
 1972 "French Freud" *Yale French Studies*
 "The Prison-House of Language" (Frederick Jameson)
 Jacques Lacan conducts Seminar XX
 1973 "Post-Partum Document" (Mary Kelly) begun
 "des femmes" founded
 1974 "Psychoanalysis and Feminism" (Mitchell)
 "Speculum de l'Autre Femme" (Luce Irigaray)
 "Des Chinoises" (Julia Kristeva)
 1975 "Le Séminaire XX, Encore" (Lacan)
 "Le Rire de la Méduse" ("The Laugh of the Medusa") (Hélène Cixous) *L'Arc*
 "Women and Madness: The Critical Phallacy" (Shoshana Felman) and "The Ghost of Lacan" (Jane Gallop) in *Diacritics*
 Fall of Saigon
 1976 "Post-Partum Document I-III" (Kelly) exhibited
 "Berlin" (Potter and Rose English)
 "From the Center" (Lucy Lippard)
 "Of Woman Born" (Adrienne Rich)
 October appears
 1977 "Le Sexe qui n'est pas un" (Irigaray)
 "Literature and Psychoanalysis" *Yale French Studies* 55/56 (ed. Felman)
 Eindhoven exhibition and catalogue (Victor Burgin)
 "Oh Bondage! Up Yours!" (Polly-Styrene)
 Heresies appears
 1978 "Decoding Advertisement" (Judith Williamson)
mlf appears

SEXUAL DIFFERENCE AND THE MOVING IMAGE

JANE WEINSTOCK

SIGHT UNSEEN, he fixes his gaze, casts his eye, eyes the scene. The so-called passive spectator of the cinema, he is the site of an active construction; he is not fixed, cast, or eyed. Rather, he cocks his eye, takes the active verb, and without a word.

As for her, she gets shot. She becomes an image, a projected surface, his projection. If she does act, it is only to cock the gun that points in her direction. For however fascinating, she must be deactivated.

The classical Hollywood cinema thus enacts a scenario that is both visually and narratively sadistic. Sustained by the drive that thrives on distance, that drive which subjects its object with a controlling look, this cinema focuses the scopic on the image of Woman. And as it locates this sadistic drive in the masculine spectator position and in the male characters, it relegates women to a position of “to-be-looked-at-ness”:

In a world ordered by sexual imbalance, pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure which is styled accordingly.¹

In other words, it is not a matter of a good role, but of pre-casting.

This visual casting is then coupled with a narrative subjugation. If he is not to be the object of the look, i.e., a woman, the hero must be active; he must control the course of events. And if the woman competes with him, if she refuses to be the perfect passive to his active, she is eventually pacified. In *film noir*, she may be permanently silenced, or detained for life, while in other genres, she may be deprived of her man, her children, and/or her looks. At the very least, her drive to act is extinguished.

The question then arises: who is doing the punishing? Is it the director, the hero, the spectator, or the institution itself—the camera, the conventions, etc.? But perhaps culpability is not the point, for these masculine entities cannot be isolated. A series of overlapping positions, they comprise a web of temporary identifications. The director may become the hero, the spectator the camera, the camera the director. And all of these identities may become the woman.

It becomes crucial, therefore, to look again at the look and at the exchange of looks over the course of a film. The three basic looks of the cinema—the look of the camera at the scene, the look of the spectator at the film, the look of the characters at each other—carry the spectator through a series of masculine and feminine points of view. In one scene, the spectator may literally see from the place of a female character; in the next that spectator may occupy the position of a moving camera in the middle of a sea. But in the end, he always finds a secure place. For the Hollywood trajectory can only reaffirm the spectator’s position as masculine subject, as Identity. And anyone different becomes that which he can easily locate, his Other.²

If this Other is his capital, his capitalized concept, then this cinema must be his Truth. Woman may appear to be a positive concept—Nature,

Transcendence, Pathos—but it is a positivity posited in opposition. She is not culture, not human, not logos, not man.

Thought has always worked by opposition, . . . By dual, *hierarchized* oppositions. Superior/Inferior. Myths, legends, books. Philosophical systems. Wherever an ordering intervenes, a law organizes the thinkable by (dual, irreconcilable; or mitigable, dialectical) oppositions. And all the couples of oppositions are couples? . . . Is the fact that logocentrism subjects thought—all of the concepts, the codes, the values—to a two-term system, related to “the couple man/woman?”³

Not simply the other side of the coin, a new persona has entered the scene. And if she is more active than her predecessor, it is because her activity is a semiotic one.⁴ She is not an active character, acting like a man, taking the dominant role in a dominant cinema. This new “she” cannot act like a real man; she is too two-dimensional.

Unlike the Hollywood star, “she” occupies a flat space, a space that refuses “the impression of reality.” It may be a surface that momentarily effects “reality,” but it is not in the service of a “reality effect.” For it offers a blatantly fabricated world—the cinema inside out—and it thereby exposes the well-sewn seams of Hollywood, the seams that seem to hold “reality” in place.⁵

At the same time, this new “she” is not reducible to a surface or to an exposed seam. She is more than an avant-garde device but less than a vanguard heroine, fuller than Stan Brakhage’s Jane but flatter than Rosie the Riveter. In short, she is a position, and a shifting one at that.

It is appropriate, then, that one of the first new “she’s” is a pronoun with too many referents. The “woman who . . .” of Yvonne Rainer’s *Film About a Woman Who . . .* (1974) cannot become “bearer of the look,” if only because she cannot be located (fig. 1). There are women in the film, but which one is the one “who . . .,” the woman of the unfinished dependent clause? Neither passive nor active, the incomplete clause refuses to identify the woman, to fix her to a single image. *Film About a Woman Who . . .* is about several women characters, including Rainer, but not about a woman. It may seem to offer a particular woman’s point of view (and therefore a “woman’s point of view”), but ultimately it is about an uncertain point of view, for “a woman” is a roving “I.” And so what appears to be an autobiographical film becomes a critique of the autobiographical film, the film whose “she” remains a stable “I.”

With *Je, Tu, Il, Elle*, “she” appears to be less ambiguous. In Chantal Akerman’s 1974 film, the “woman who . . .” is “je,” the filmmaker, the main character (fig. 2). Unlike Rainer, Akerman never runs the risk of being replaced; she is always seen. In fact, she joins the scenes, but not smoothly. The image of an autobiographical “I” may remain constant, but the film’s structure undercuts her presence. She is too much within each scene and not enough in between. Each episode of *Je, Tu, Il, Elle* is



fig. 1. Yvonne Rainer. Still from *Film About a Woman Who . . .*, 1974, 105 minutes, black and white

too realistic, too close to real time, and each transition too abrupt, too radical for a realistic film. Akerman, the “heroine,” becomes a repetitive image, loses her “I”; she becomes a narrative device, a consistency in a system that exceeds conventional film logic. She has no reality.

Marguerite Duras’ 1976 *India Song* also makes reference to the autobiographical mode, but with a different twist. Neither a shifting “she” nor a shiftless “I,” the filmmaker is simply a voice—and one of many. Literally an effect of language, she is difficult to locate, and she only materializes at the end of the film. An unidentified voice-off, she

completes a film that could be read as the projected story of her life. This disembodied “I” becomes a fantasy in Duras’ fantasy of an autobiography that could never take place. For the “I,” as unified subject, can only be imaginary.⁶

If the new “she” signals the end of autobiography, the end of the person as first, it is not in order to obliterate the “I.” A unified “she” is not so different from a singular “I”—both presuppose real characters, or “herstory.” But this new cinema makes no attempt to recover the women hidden from history. On the contrary, it implicitly questions a



fig. 2. Chantal Akerman. Still from *Je, Tu, Il, Elle*, 1974, 85 minutes, black and white

history which would give real women the status of real men.

The “true story” films here would give history a discourse. Whether the story of Frances Farmer (Sheila McLaughlin and Lynne Tillman’s *Committed*), of “Dora” (Anthony McCall, Claire Pajaczkowska, Andrew Tyndall and Jane Weinstock’s *Sigmund Freud’s Dora*), or of nineteenth-century seamstresses (Sally Potter’s *Thriller*), each figure is represented, is explicitly presented as a linguistic construction. In these discursive films, “history” is forced to confront its specific articulation, its status as something represented by an “I” for a “you.” Whether through the

distorting angle (*Committed*), the mismatched eyeline (*Sigmund Freud’s Dora*), or the still image (*Thriller*), these films repudiate the conventions of film history and thereby destroy the “impression of reality,” the impression of an image without an address.

It becomes necessary, then, to return to the viewing subject, to the new “you” proposed by the new “she.” With Hollywood, with “history,”

the seen does not know it is seen (in order to know, it would have to be, to a certain extent, a subject) and its ignorance permits the voyeur not to recognize

himself as voyeur. All that remains is the raw fact of seeing, lawless seeing, seeing of the Id ungoverned by an Ego, seeing without marks or place, directing us into vicarious experience like the narrator-as-God or the viewer-as-God; it is the “story” which exhibits itself, the story which reigns.⁷

But with “discourse,” you can’t just sit back and watch. Your position as addressee, as voyeur, is evident; you are implicated.

If the unconventional strategies of the “historical” film address a “you” who would remain invisible, similar tactics produce a more visible effect when the image itself is sexual. In Candace Reckinger’s *Occupied Territory*, Bette Gordon’s *Variety*, and Sigmund Freud’s *Dora*, the sex and violence of the look are brought to sight. All three films tempt the voyeur with sexual and/or sadistic scenes, but only in an attempt to catch him with his pants down. For as soon as he incorporates the pornography⁸ he is taken in, exposed as guilty, subjected to another’s look. And this other, this more analytical eye, is none other than the semiotic “she,” continuing her struggle to expose the conventional while at the same time exploring her own imaginary relation to it.

This is not, however, a low-risk operation. Sometimes the voyeur likes getting caught in the act. Or he would prefer having his pleasure, and then getting caught, to not having it at all. And although these films analyze images of sex (Sigmund Freud’s *Dora*, *Variety*), or of torture and rape (*Occupied Territory*), the analysis may not undermine the power of the image under investigation.

And there are more dangers, theoretical dangers. Might not a strategy that relies upon conscious responses shift the emphasis from the viewing subject (a position) to the concrete individual (a permanent fixture)? Might not such a move blur the distinction between conscious and unconscious effects—here, between conscious feelings of pleasure and pleasures that lie beneath the surface? Hasn’t recent theoretical work shown that the visible, the superficial, is not the only reality?

And what about the dangers of the psychoanalytic model that informs most film theory? In defining woman as “Other,” doesn’t it construct a single point of reference—the male? The woman is simply the opposite, the “non”—not the same, but not different either. Perhaps it is becoming necessary to move closer to what has been called the French “essentialism”⁹ in order to escape a position of perpetual otherness.¹⁰ Recent French psychoanalytic and post-psychoanalytic writings on sexual difference have focused on the female body, or “female specificity.” Might not this attempt to return the body to the subject lead to a differentiated viewing subject? But how? This is the question.

Postscript

If poststructuralist film theory engenders or is engendered by certain poststructuralist films, it also postulates a spectator who does more than watch movies. The passive-aggressive position described by recent film theory is also an effect of conventions outside of the cinema. A place in a history which is not reducible to the history of the cinema, this “he” position is repeatedly manufactured. Whether by film, photography, painting, advertising, or television, a “he” is invariably created. And he is juxtaposed to a “she” who remains tied to a phallic post.

But this theory’s sphere of influence extends well beyond other theories. By constructing a frame of reference larger than film, film theory has also made its mark on another kind of moving picture production—video production. Some video makers, when faced with theories about the “essence” of video (its immediacy, its continuity, its intangibility), have encountered a lack. In their attempt to do video differently, they have confronted, in video, a certain indifference to sexual difference. So they have refused to go with the flow. They have maintained video’s specificity, but at the same time they have begun to address other structures of identity and difference.

Most of the videotapes in this show are about women who . . . , constructed women, women constructed for advertising (Max Almy’s *Modern Times*, Judith Barry’s *Casual Shopper*, Cecilia Condit’s *Possibly in Michigan*), for comic books (Dara Birnbaum’s *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman*), for factual stories (here, autobiography, as in Theresa Cha’s *Paysage, Paysage* and Martha Rosler’s *Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained*). Like the filmic “she,” these reconstructed women lack substance, but not weight. The object of a lengthy medical examination, Martha Rosler is weighed and measured until she doesn’t exist; ultimately, she becomes a prop in a parodistic critique of the fact-finding fallacy. Similarly, Cecilia Condit’s characters eat the hands that feed them in a highly fragmented tale of cannibalism; literally consumers, they represent the consumer of the more palatable objects promoted by television advertising.

This is not to suggest that women are the only ones who. . . . In *A Journey of the Plague Year*, Stuart Marshall treats AIDS not as a disease for observation, but as an element in a larger ideological discourse. And



fig. 3. Jean-Luc Godard. Still from *France/Tour/Detour/Two/Children*, 1980, videotape, 30 minutes each, color

Jean-Luc Godard, in *France/Tour/Detour/Two/Children* (fig. 3), looks at children as he discloses some of the methods by which television tells stories:

I think it's time for a story. Not her story, not a story coming from her. But her coming from a story. And both. But both before. Her before and the story after. The story before and her after. Or superimposed. The story of . . .¹¹

None of these video stories in fact pretend to be about something. None claim to offer an object, a subject matter isolated from an act of representation. If they are about anything, they are about language itself. In Raymond Bellour and Philippe Venault's *The Image of Cinema*, representation becomes the central concern of the tape; the videotape performs an analysis of Hollywood. But in effect, all of the tapes set up an "about" in order to do an about-face, in order to show that nothing is

simply an object of the preposition "about." For behind the "about," there is always a discursive "for"; for the tape in question is always from someone to you.

One of the first tasks for video theory, then, might be to better articulate video's terms of address. Does its particular system of circulation posit a spectator who might not fit the description proposed by film theory? Does video's inevitable link to television, advertising, and rock video negate the realism debates that continue to rock film theory? Does its omnipresence as a form of surveillance lead to paranoid structures unknown in the Hollywood cinema? And where does sexual difference come in?

Jane Weinstock is a film critic and curator of the film and video sections of this exhibition.

NOTES

1. Laura Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16, no. 3 (Autumn 1975): 11. My description of the cinematic subject is largely based upon the groundbreaking work of Pam Cook, Claire Johnston, and Laura Mulvey. See also Claire Johnston, ed., *Notes on Women's Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1973).
2. Raymond Bellour has provided the most persuasive argument for this position in his textual analyses. Most of these have been translated in *Camera Obscura*, a journal of feminism and film theory.
3. Hélène Cixous, "Sorties" in *New French Feminisms*, eds. Elaine Marks and Isabelle de Courtivron (Amherst, Mass.: University of Massachusetts, 1980), pp. 90-91.
4. The term "semiotic" refers to semiotics, the science of signs, and to Julia Kristeva's concept of the semiotic as the extra-linguistic, that which is not of the symbolic. See Julia Kristeva, *Desire in Language*, trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1980), pp. 133-35.
5. This is not to say that any film which provides a critique of realism is by definition progressive. Rather, it suggests that the conventions of cinema serve to construct a world where everything seems natural and therefore immutable.
6. For more detailed discussion of the work of Rainer, Akerman, and Duras see *Camera Obscura*, nos. 1, 2, 3-4, 6 (1976-1980).
7. Christian Metz, "Story/Discourse: A Note on Two Kinds of Voyeurism" in *The Imaginary Signifier: Psychoanalysis and the Cinema*. Translated by Celia Britton et al. (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 91-98.
8. By pornography, I mean that which is institutionally defined as such.
9. "Riddles of the Sphinx" has been criticized for "essentialism."
10. Such a move cannot be confused with "essentialism," which would start with a real rather than a fantasized body.
11. Quoted in Constance Penley, "Les Enfants de la Patrie," *Camera Obscura*, no. 8-9-10 (1982): 39.

WORKS IN THE EXHIBITION

Height precedes width. Unless otherwise noted, all works are courtesy of the artist.

RAY BARRIE, London

"Master/Pieces," 1981, yellow, blue, red, and green autone photographs, 60 x 90", 6 units: 30 x 30" each

Screen Memories, 1983, black and white photographs with mixed media, 60 x 90", 6 units: 30 x 30" each

VICTOR BURGIN, London

Gradiva, 1982, seven black and white photographs with text, 18¾ x 22½", collection of The Chase Manhattan Bank, New York

Olympia, 1982, six black and white photographs with text, 18¾ x 22½", collection of Gilbert Silverman, Southfield, Mich.

Portia, 1984, three black and white photographs, 3 panels: 2 panels: 20 x 15"; 1 panel: 20 x 30", courtesy of John Weber Gallery, New York

HANS HAACKE, New York

Seurat's "Les Poseuses" (small version, 1888-1975), 1975, ink on paper, and one color photograph, 14 panels: 30 x 20", color photograph: 23¾ x 27¼", courtesy of John Weber Gallery, New York

MARY KELLY, London

Post-Partum Document, 1973-79

Documentation I, 1974, mixed media, 14 units: 14 x 11" (edited version)

Documentation II, 1975, mixed media, 18 units: 10 x 8" (edited version)

Documentation III, 1975, crayon and pencil on paper, 11 units: 11 x 14" (complete work), 6 diagrams: 14 x 11"

Interim, 1984, Part 1: Corpus, mixed media, 6 units: 48 x 36" (edited version)

SILVIA KOLBOWSKI, New York

Model Pleasure, Part 2, 1982, three color and four black and white photographs, 8 x 10" each

Model Pleasure, Part 3, 1983, four color and eight black and white photographs, 8 x 10" each

Model Pleasure, Part 4, 1983, three color and six black and white photographs, 8 x 10" each

Model Pleasure, Part 5, 1983, one color and seven black and white photographs, 8 x 10" each

Model Pleasure, Part 7, 1984, one black and white photograph, 25 x 35"

Model Pleasure, Part 8, 1984, one color photograph, 25 x 35"

BARBARA KRUGER, New York

Now you see us . . . Now you don't, 1983, black and white photograph, 72 x 48", courtesy of Annina Nosei Gallery, New York

We are public enemy number one, 1983, black and white photograph, 72 x 48", courtesy of Annina Nosei Gallery, New York

We are the objects of your suave entrapments, 1983, black and white photograph, 48 x 84", courtesy of Annina Nosei Gallery, New York

SHERRIE LEVINE, New York

After Walker Evans, 1981, two black and white photographs, 24 x 28" each

After Egon Schiele, 1982, nine color photographs, 20 x 16" each

After Ernst Ludwig Kirchner, 1982, three color photographs, 20 x 16" each

After Alexander Rodchenko, 1984, two black and white photographs, 37 x 32"; 37 x 36"

YVE LOMAX, London

Open Rings and Partial Lines, 1983-84, fifteen black and white and color photographs, 23 x 32" each

JEFF WALL, Vancouver

Double Self-Portrait, 1979, cibachrome transparency and fluorescent light, 64 x 85", collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, Toronto

Picture for Women, 1979, cibachrome transparency and fluorescent light, 59 x 79"

MARIE YATES, London

The Missing Woman, Phase II, 1984, twenty-one black and white photographs on cardboard, and blockboard, 8 panels: 12½ x 20"; 9 panels: 18¾ x 21½"; 4 panels: 19½ x 30"

VIDEOTAPES

A Journey of the Plague Year, 1984, Stuart Marshall, Great Britain, 24 minutes, color

Casual Shopper, 1980, Judith Barry, U.S.A., 3 minutes, color

France/Tour/Detour/Two/Children, 1980, Jean-Luc Godard, France, 30 minutes each, color

The Image of Cinema, 1982, Raymond Bellour and Philippe Venault, France, 79 minutes, color

Modern Times, 1979, Max Almy, U.S.A., 25 minutes, color

Paysage, Paysage, 1981, Theresa Cha, U.S.A., 11 minutes, black and white

Possibly in Michigan, 1983, Cecilia Condit, U.S.A., 20 minutes, color

Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman, 1979, Dara Birnbaum, U.S.A., 7 minutes, color

Vital Statistics of a Citizen, Simply Obtained, 1977, Martha Rosler, U.S.A., 40 minutes, black and white

FEATURE FILMS

Committed, 1984, Sheila McLaughlin and Lynne Tillman, U.S.A., 77 minutes, black and white

Film About a Woman Who . . ., 1974, Yvonne Rainer, U.S.A., 105 minutes, black and white

India Song, 1975, Marguerite Duras, France, 120 minutes, color

Invisible Adversaries, 1978, Valie Export, Austria, 109 minutes, color

Je, Tu, Il, Elle, 1974, Chantal Akerman, France, 85 minutes, black and white

Nightshift, 1981, Robina Rose, Great Britain, 75 minutes, color

Riddles of the Sphinx, 1977, Laura Mulvey and Peter Wollen, Great Britain, 90 minutes, color

SHORT FILMS

Sydney on the River Wupper—Dreamtime—, 1982, Bettina Woernle, West Germany, 47 minutes, color

An Epic Poem, 1982, Lezli-an Barrett, Great Britain, 25 minutes, color

Hotel New York, 1984, Jackie Raynal, U.S.A., 60 minutes, color

Light Reading, 1980, Liz Rhodes, Great Britain, 20 minutes, color

Occupied Territory, 1982, Candace Reckinger, U.S.A., 25 minutes, color

Sigmund Freud's Dora, 1979, Anthony McCall, Claire Pajaczkowska, Andrew Tyndall, and Jane Weinstock, U.S.A., 40 minutes, color

Table Conversation, 1978, Michael Oblowitz, U.S.A., 12 minutes, black and white

Thriller, 1979, Sally Potter, Great Britain, 33 minutes, black and white

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