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Editorial

The tension in contemporary culture formulated in terms of a hackneyed clash between premodern tradition and fully modernized enlightened subjects has proven to be a dangerous one—and it has easily given way to patently racist scenarios in which premodern tribal types (such as the EU citizens who happen to be Roma) invade fully modern Western metropolises. It seems much more useful, and interesting, to consider these conditions to be one and the same—two sides of a single, irreconcilable anxiety with regard to cultural tradition, the promises of modernism, and the shortcomings of both. From this singular vantage point, we can perhaps discern something like a primary limit—which can also be a raw material—guiding our very ability to produce, or even reflect, culture today.

On a visit to Mount Gyeryong, **Chan-Kyong Park** encounters a sensation that seems similar to what is called "the sublime" in Western aesthetics, and may very well be. But is this sensation actually available, or is the sublime in this case more of an imprecise way of describing something familiar to traditional culture, something whose name has been forgotten? And how to explain its strange familiarity? While an alleged disconnection from tradition is commonly considered to result from a modern break, could it be that not only this break, but the very remoteness of tradition itself is one of modernity's primary myths?

An author who has written and spoken extensively on the withdrawal of tradition, **Jalal Toufic** revisits the storytelling of *A Thousand and One Nights*, Inci Eviner's *Harem*, Francis Bacon, and the book of Genesis as an algebra of phantasmatic depiction and hallucination—an economy or scenario in which blood is recurrently traded for images and distortions of dreams and projections.

Svetlana Boym outlines a condition she has termed "off modern," whose lateral movements, fuzzy logic, edgy geography, and broken technology speak to an artificial intelligence of improvised and individuated maneuvers over and around established modern regimes. It is a way of seeing one's own reflection through the screen of a "black mirror"—the *film noir* of perception itself.

Diedrich Diederichsen looks to the economy of self-directed, self-motivated, self-determined labor that is a relic or orphan of the generation that witnessed 1968, and its belief in wild emancipatory ideas and the potential for life to be full of intensity and abandon. But now that much of this generation has reached middle age, and those who have clung to these values find them to exist only in precarious freelance labor markets far removed from punk rock and radical leftist politics, what remains of the life lived with intensity? And how did a hope for this life constitute a will to power that transformed into something else far removed from its original intentions?

In "Marx After Duchamp, or The Artist's Two Bodies,"

Boris Groys begins with Duchamp's readymade as the thing that liberated the artist from the manual labor of producing art objects by hand. However, it seems that the artist liberated from having to produce objects is now placed in the position of having to maintain entire museums to present his or her non-objects. And it should come as no surprise that the shift in the location of work away from the handmade object to, say, pure idea, has paralleled the proletarization and exploitation of intellectual and artistic labor—with or without objects or bodies.

—Julieta Aranda, Brian Kuan Wood, Anton Vidokle

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Svetlana Boym

The Off-Modern Mirror

History Out of Synch

The twentieth century began with futuristic utopias and dreams of unending development and ended with nostalgia and quests for restoration. The twenty-first century cannot seek refuge in either. There is something preposterous in our contemporary moment of postindustrial economic crisis and preindustrial cultural conflict. I see in it not a conflict between modern and anti-modern, or a pure "clash of civilizations," but rather as a clash of eccentric modernities that are out of synch and out of phase with each other both temporally and spatially. Multiple projects of globalizations and glocalizations overlap but don't coincide. In this context of conflicting and intertwined pluralities, the prefix "post" becomes itself passé. By the end of the last century various thinkers had mourned or celebrated the "ends" of history and of art, of the book and of humanity as we knew it. While the various "posts" succeeded one another, many premodern myths also claimed their share of the intellectual and spiritual territory.

Instead of fast-changing prefixes—"post," "anti," "neo," "trans," and "sub"—that suggest an implacable movement forward, against or beyond, and try desperately to be "in," I propose to go off: "off" as in "off kilter," "off Broadway," "off the map," or "way off," "off-brand," "off the wall," and occasionally "off-color." "Off modern" is a detour into the unexplored potentials of the modern project. It recovers unforeseen pasts and ventures into the side alleys of modern history at the margins of error of major philosophical, economic, and technological narratives of modernization and progress. Critic and writer Viktor Shklovsky proposes the figure of the knight's move in chess that follows "the tortured road of the brave," preferring it to the master-slave dialectics of "dutiful pawns and kings."[1] Oblique, diagonal, and zigzag moves reveal the play of human freedom vis-à-vis political teleologies and ideologies that follow suprahuman laws of the invisible hand of the market or of the march of progress. As we veer off the beaten track of dominant constructions of history, we have to proceed laterally, not literally, and discover the missed opportunities and roads not taken. These lie buried in modern memory like the routes of public transportation in the American landscape traversed by decaying highways and superhighways, surveyed by multitasking traffic controllers.

Off modern is not a lost "ism" from the ruined archive of the avant-garde. Neither is it merely a new brand in the fast-paced market of current artistic derivatives. Off modern is a contemporary worldview that took shape in the "zero" decade of the twenty-first century that allows us to recapture different, often eccentric aspects of earlier modernities, to "brush history against the grain"—to use Walter Benjamin's expression—in order to understand the preposterous aspects of our present. In other words, off modern is not an "ism" but a prism of vision and a mode of

acting and creating in the world that tries to remap the contemporary landscape filled with the ruins of spectacular real estate development and the construction sites of the newly rediscovered national heritage. The off-modern project is still off-brand; it is a performance-in-progress, a rehearsal of possible forms and common places. In this sense off modern is at once con-temporary and off-beat vis-à-vis the present moment. It explores interstices, disjunctures, and gaps in the present in order to co-create the future.

[figure splitpage
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Svetlana Boym, *Leaving Sarajevo (Ruined Prints)*, 2002-2004.

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The preposition "off" is a product of linguistic error, popular etymology, and fuzzy logic. It developed from the preposition "of," with the addition of an extra "f," an emphatic and humorous onomatopoeic exaggeration. The "off" in "off modern" designates both the belonging to the critical project of modernity and its edgy excess.

In the twenty-first century, modernity is our antiquity. We live with its ruins, which we incorporate into our present, leaving deliberate scars or disguising our age marks with the uplifting cream of oblivion. Off modern, then, is not anti-modern; it is closer, in fact, to the critical and experimental spirit of modernity than to the existing forms of industrial and postindustrial modernization. In other words, it opens into the modernity of "what if," and not only modernization as it was. It unsettles and embarrasses many political and theoretical narratives that we've grown accustomed to.

Cultural Exaptation

The off-modern perspective invites us to rethink the opposition between development and preservation and proposes a nonlinear conception of cultural evolution through trial and error.[2] The off-modern artist finds an interesting comrade-in-arms in contemporary science, in particular in Stephen J. Gould's subversive theory of exaptation that unsettles evolutionary biologists and proponents of intelligent design, techno-visionaries and postmodernists. Exaptation can be seen as a redemption of the eccentric and unforeseen in natural history, a theory that could only have been developed by an imaginative scientist who sometimes thinks like an artist.[3]

Exaptation is described in biology as an example of "lateral adaptation," which consists in a cooption of a feature for its present role from some other origin. It happens when a particular trait evolves to serve one particular function, but subsequently comes to serve another. A good example from biology would be bird feathers: originally employed for the regulation of body temperature, they came to be adapted for flight. Exaptations are useful structures by virtue of their having been coopted—that is the *ex-apt* part of the term: they are apt for what they are for other reasons than their original use; they were not built by natural selection for their current role. Exaptation is not the opposite of adaptation; neither is it merely an accident, a human error or lack of scientific data that would in the end support the concept of adaptation. Exaptation questions the very process of assigning meaning and function in hindsight, the process of assigning the prefix "post" and thus containing a complex phenomenon within the grid of familiar interpretation.[4]

Exaptations have mostly been studied in terms of biological and technological evolutions. Bizarre as it may sound, our homey microwave ovens started their adventurous life as radar magnetrons. Edison's phonograph, which evolved into a cinematic apparatus, was born as a recording device for dictation; the internet was introduced as a military communication exchange network. Of course, technological evolution moves much faster than biological evolution does, leaving us many discarded projects and possibilities. A bird's flight and the unpredictable beauty of a butterfly still amaze us, while Edison's phonograph and Technicolor film are now part of the twentieth century's museum of "Jurassic technologies." (Hopefully the art of cinema is not going to end up on the same museum shelf with the toaster ovens).

Art history as well as the virtual archives of most writers and artists abound in unfulfilled projects of the *future anterior*. The artistic equivalent of bird's wings could be found in the silk wings of Vladimir Tatlin's flying vehicle Letatlin, one of the most famous "failed" projects. Letatlin (in Russian, a play on the verb "letat"—to fly—and Le-Tatlin, the artist's pseudo-French signature), a cross between the mythical firebird and the prototype of Sputnik with silk wings, was a technical failure: it didn't fly, not in a literal sense at least, but it enabled many flights of dissident imagination. Its dysfunctional wings became phantom limbs of experimental architecture, art, and technology in the second half of the twentieth century.

Perhaps the best things in life that money cannot buy—like happiness, love, art, and other such useless non-commodities—are examples of exaptation. Yet the off modern is not merely a tautology for any form of aesthetic knowledge or human longing. For the first time in history, exaptation is explicitly reframed, placed at the site of new exploration.

[figure splitpage
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Svetlana Boym, *Leaving New York (ruined prints)*, 2003.

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Exaptation is an artistic perspective on evolutionary

biology that unsettles scientific determinism yet does not also skew the empirical evidence. Off-modern thinkers and artists sometimes recover experimental paradigms of modernist science abandoned by the scientists themselves. Vladimir Nabokov found non-utilitarian delights in his study of butterflies, but it took the artist in him, not an entomologist, to see them. The strategy of off-modern aesthetic exaptation is particularly apt at bringing together the techne of art and science and can thus produce an alternative form of new media. As Vladimir Nabokov explained: in the fourth dimension of art, alternative geometrical and physical parameters are made probable and thus parallel lines might not meet, not because they cannot, but because they might have other things to do.[5] The off modern has a quality of improvisation, of a conjecture that doesn't distort the facts but explores their echoes, residues, implications, shadows. The off modern is not ashamed of unconventional aesthetic judgment that puts the world off kilter.

Human Error

To err is human, said the Roman proverb, both excusing and celebrating human imperfection. It is not by chance that the off-modern project engages with errands and errors of all kinds. Artists know how slight can be the line between flying and falling, between a failure and a co-creation with human fallibility. These human errors are not mere serendipities, examples of statistical randomness. The off-modern artist plays *with* the "human error," making it into a cognitive operation, a new form of passionate thinking. The practice of erring traces the shadow play of evolution and metamorphosis, makes visible the act of change and its nonlinear outlines. It reveals the *pentimenti*, the compositional exercises, the palimpsests of forgotten knowledge and practice. Erring allows us to touch—ever so tactfully—the exposed nerves of cultural and human potentiality, the maps of possible if often improbable developments.

Erring traces unexpected connections between different forms of knowledge, art, and technology, beyond the prescribed interactivities of specific technological media; makes new flexible cognitive maps based on aesthetic knowledge and ahead of software calculations. This practice is not to be confused with multitasking, which, as recent neurological research shows, can actually dull the brain, substituting surfing for thinking, facility in operating more or less expensive gadgets for original ideas. Making lateral connections requires concentration, creative distraction, gadgetless daydreaming, and longer durations than multitasking would allow.

It is not always possible to make exaptation into a deliberate practice, but one can at least try not to miss the chance when it engages us in some minor dissent, encouraging our defiance of the framed world of omnipresent technological and bureaucratic apparatuses that can be so ingratiating. If we adapt too well—to the market, to the e-world, to the artworld, to political regimes, to the particular institutions we inhabit—we might evolve to the point that the adventure of human freedom would become obsolete. The off modern does not rush to imagine the apocalyptic posthuman future capturing the imagination of frustrated producers of bankrupt TV channels. Artistic exaptation is ultimately a practice of human freedom.

Unlike the new media based on technology alone, the off-modern new media dwells on human error and dances with it. It is driven by the technique of estrangement, a meditation on technology itself, and not by the latest sales pitch for technological gadgets. And for the off-modern nerds there is always a good website, "www.gethuman.com," which offers useful instructions and phone numbers in the offline world and helps to recover the fuzzy logic of human error.

Edgy Geography

Off-modern perspective affects our understanding of our elective affinities and alternative solidarities through time and space. Off-modern art has both a temporal and a spatial dimension: projects from different corners of the globe can appear belated or peripheral in the familiar centers of modern/postmodern culture. The off modern has been embraced by international artists from India to Argentina, from Hungary to Venezuela, from Turkey to Lithuania, from Canada to Albania. To give a few examples: Raqs Media Collective from New Delhi with their projects on porous time; Guillermo Kuitca with his portable homes and mattress maps; the Hungarian documentary filmmaker Péter Forgács with his "what if" histories and recreated home movies; Anri Sala with his "out-of-synch videos; New York–based artist Rebecca Quaytman with her "lateral moves" towards the forgotten tradition of the East European avant-garde; South African artist William Kentridge with his re-animation of the atonal Soviet opera; experiments in the reinvention of the public sphere through art in the Tirana façade project orchestrated by the artist, Mayor Edi Rama; and experimental public performances using mimes and commedia dell'arte to enforce urban citizenship and the performance of law in Bogota, Colombia, organized by the former mayor of the city, mathematician, philosopher, and unconventional theater director Antanas Mockus. The seemingly peripheral situation of these artists and politicians reveals the eccentricity of the center, and asynchronicity questions the progress of cultural trends and artistic movements that are supposed to succeed one another like well-behaved citizens in the express checkout line. The off modern does not focus on the external pluralism and values of states, with their political PR and imperial ambitions, but on internal pluralities within cultures tracing elective affinities and diasporic intimacies

across national borders.

We might be living on the edge of an era when the accepted cultural myths of late capitalism and of technological or digital progress no longer work for us. We are on the cusp of a paradigm shift, and to anticipate it we have to expand our field of vision. The logic of edginess is opposed to that of the seamless appropriation of popular culture, or the synchronicity of computer memory. This is a logic that exposes wounds, cuts, scars, ruins, the afterimage of touch. Its edginess resists incorporation and doesn't allow for a romance of convenience. Clarification: the off-moderns are edgy, not marginal. They don't wallow in the self-pity or resentment that comes with marginalization, even when some of this is justified.

So the off-modern edge is not a line in the sand, but a space. Thoreau once wrote that one has to have "broad margins" to one's life. The off-modern edges are not sites of marginality but those broad margins where one could try to live deliberately, against all odds, in the age of shrinking space and resources and forever accelerating rhythms. To be edgy, then, could also mean avoiding the logic of the cutting edge, even if the temptation is great not to. If you are just off the butcher's knife on the cutting edge, you will end up devoured before you are examined. The logic of the cutting edge makes you part of the bloody action movie so common in contemporary popular culture, where tears and affect are only computer generated. Edginess requires a longer duration. Only at the risk of being outmoded could one stay con-temporary.

Nostalgic Technologies

The term "off modern" came to me by accident, as I was dueling with my computer printer, turning it on and off, violating its instructions in the hopes of performing an unpredictable knight's move in a battle with so-called artificial intelligence. I didn't have a new black-ink cartridge and wanted to see how my cheap printer would cope with the situation of technical scarcity. It continued working, letting its psychedelic unconscious spill out and yielding a few photographic prints that were unrepeatable and unpredictable. Images without black (without melancholia?) led to a project about nostalgic technologies that involved even more battles with the printer. In a series of "ruined prints" showing our decaying modern landscapes, I pulled the photographs prematurely from the printer, leaving the lines of passages. This error made each print unrepeatable and uniquely imperfect. The process is not Luddite but ludic, not destructive but experimental. An error has an aura.

Erring was also erotic; it teased the technological superego of the digital apparatus, subduing the machine and yielding to it at the same time. *Technê*, after all, once referred to arts, crafts, and techniques. Both art and technology were imagined as forms of human prosthesis, missing limbs, imaginary or physical extensions of human space.

Many technological inventions, including film and space rockets, were first envisioned in science fiction; imagined by artists and writers, not scientists. The term "virtual reality" was in fact coined by Henri Bergson, not Bill Gates. Originally it referred to the virtual realities of human imagination and consciousness that couldn't be mimicked by technology. In the early twentieth century the border between art and technology was particularly fertile. Avant-garde artists and critics used the word "technique" to mean an estranging device that lays bare the artistic medium and makes us see the world anew. Later, advertising culture appropriated the avant-garde as one style among many, as an exciting marketable look that domesticates, rather than estranges, the utopia of progress. New Hollywood cinema uses the most advanced technology to create special effects; if artistic technique revealed the mechanisms of consciousness, the technological special effect domesticates illusions and manipulations.

[figure a1d297ec8f3ae6f8b72c7b4bf0da8fa5.jpg
Svetlana Boym, *Multitasking with Clouds*, 2008.

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Off modern came to me at the critical edge of artistic practice, or at the aesthetic margin of theory. At the interface between the digital and the material, the metaphorical and the physical. It began as play until distant friends and other artists began to believe in it. The off modern became a con-dition—a state of speaking together.

If in the 1980s artists dreamed of becoming their own curators, and borrowed from the theorists, now the theorists dream of becoming artists. Disappointed with their own disciplinary institutionalization, they immigrate into each other's territory: the lateral move again. Neither backwards nor forwards, but sideways. An amateur, as Barthes understood it, is one who constantly unlearns the institutional games, unlearns and loves, not possessively, but tenderly, inconstantly, desperately. Grateful for every transient epiphany, an amateur is not greedy.

Black Mirrors

What if we used digital devices improperly and transformed their pixelated interfaces into reflective surfaces and "black mirrors"?

The black mirror—an ancient gadget used by artists, magicians, and scientists from Mexico to India—offers insight into another history of *technê* that connected art, science, and magic, producing an enchanted technology of wonder. European painters used black mirrors to focus

on composition, perspective, and perception itself. When a digital surface becomes a "black mirror" it reflects upon clashing forms of modern and premodern experience that coexist in contemporary culture. In my project *The Black Mirror* I engaged with pictorial and photographic genres of the past to document a confrontation between modern industrial ruins and virtual utopias. I took a train journey through the American industrial landscape, multitasking with clouds on my digital screens. I used the digital surface as a "black mirror" held up to nature and to the contemporary anxieties on the ground and in the air. The surface of my broken PowerBook looked like a Milky Way spotted with forgotten stars.

[figure partialpage 8a1686aa06221310aa514a553b9ab27c.jpg
Svetlana Boym, *Flows (Black Mirrors)*, 2009.

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This project is *techno-errotic*—more erratic than erotic, engaged in errand and detour in order to question the new techno-evangelism.

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The black mirror was an object of cross-cultural fascination, trade, conquest, and sometimes misappropriation. The Aztecs used black mirrors made of obsidian or volcanic glass in divination and healing practices. If a child was suffering from "soul loss," for example, the healer would look at the reflection of the child's image in a mirror and examine his shadows. After the discovery of the "New World," Europeans appropriated the obsidian for anatomic theaters and occult practices, dissecting dead bodies and bringing ghosts back to life. Since the Renaissance, European painters and architects—including Leonardo da Vinci and Claude Lorraine—have used their own black mirrors to focus on composition and perspective in the landscape and to take a respite from color. Sometimes the artists stared into the black mirror to take a break—to catch a breath, so to speak—in order to purify the gaze from the excess of worldly information. The black mirror allowed them to suspend and renew vision .

In the nineteenth century, black mirrors were rescued from oblivion and found their place in the new popular culture of the picturesque. English travelers carried miniature black mirror–like opera glasses, framing and fetishizing fragments of landscape. Absorbed by the possibility of capturing the beauties of the world in the palm of a hand, voyeurs of the picturesque left the world behind. American doctor and spiritualist Paschal Beverly Randolph went beyond the picturesque. Believing in the mystical vitality of the black mirror, he supposedly used opium and his own and his wife's (and his mistress') "sexual fluids"—to use Victorian language—to polish its surface.

At the turn of the twentieth century, modern artists from Manet to Matisse resorted to the black mirror, not to reflect an image but to reflect upon sensation itself, on the ups and downs of euphoria and melancholia, or the syncopations of modern creativity. Although the black mirror dims colors, it also sharpens perspective, not framing realistic illusions, but estranging perception itself. The black mirror offers a different kind of mimesis and an uncanny and anti-narcissistic form of self-reflection, in which we spy on our own phantoms in this dim internal *film noir*.

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Svetlana Boym, *Phantoms (Black Mirrors)*, 2009.

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We no longer live at the end of history, in the time of the forward march of technology or of endless growth. Ours is an off-modern moment, a moment of clashing modernities, industrial and digital. We have become accustomed to accelerated rhythms and the urgent demands of instant, but not intimate, communication. Surrounded by garrulous screens, we barely get a quiet moment for contemplation. The dim realm of personal chiaroscuro has given way to the pixelated brightness of a homepage, bombarded by hits and unembarrassed by total exposure. This new form of overexposed visuality has not been properly documented. When captured on camera, it appears ambivalent, confusing, and barely readable.

I try to catch the digital gadgets unawares, confront them with each other using the alchemy of cross purposes, to put different forms of modern and premodern, technological, existential, and artistic experience in counterpoint. Once upon a time, trains ran on time. These days they rarely do, but now we have a great opportunity to text about it. My train runs through ruins and construction sites of industrial modernity, factories, cemeteries of deceased cars and dismembered bicycles, service buildings that serve no purpose anymore, with graffiti palimpsests on their walls. This landscape is the crisis of the picturesque.

My BlackBerry screen is supposed to be a window onto the fast digital world, not a reflection of the "snail world" of the train running forever behind time. With the BlackBerry off, I get a respite from colorful virtual life. Distracted from "friending" or doing work, I stay in a state of contemplative slumber. I know that nostalgia is not an answer to the speeded-up present, that time is irreversible and shadows will never conspire in the same way again. No longer a seductive digital fruit, my BlackBerry reveals its second life as a melancholic black mirror that puts into sharp focus the *decaying non-virtual* world that is passing us by.

X

Svetlana Boym is a writer, theorist, and media artist. As a founder of the off-modern movement, Boym likes to make knight's moves in life and art. She is the author of *The Future of Nostalgia* (2001) and *Architecture of the Off-Modern* (2008). Her new book *Another Freedom* (2010) spans from Greek tragedy to contemporary art scandals, and explores spaces of public co-creation and adventure in a cross-cultural context. Boym's artistic and architectural projects *Nostalgic Technologies, Phantasmagorias*, and *Wire Arabesques* were exhibited at the Venice Architectural Biennial (2010), Madrid Center for Contemporary Art (CA2M), BKS Garage of the Royal Academy of Art, Copenhagen, and at the Book Art Center and Prometheus Gowanus in New York City. When not working on art projects, Svetlana Boym teaches Comparative Literature at Harvard University and is an Associate of the Graduate School of Design. A native of St. Petersburg, Russia, she now lives and works in Cambridge, MA, and on svetlanaboym.com.

1
Viktor Shklovsky, *The Knight's Move* , trans. Richard Sheldon (Champaign, IL: Dalkey Archive Press, 2005), 4. See also Viktor Shklovsky, "Art as Technique," in *Four Formalist Essays* , ed. and trans. Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press: 1965), 3–24. In Russian, "Iskusstvo kak priem," in *O teorii prozy* (Moscow: Sovetskii pisatel', 1983). For a detailed discussion see Svetlana Boym, "Poetics and Politics of Estrangement: Victor Shklovsky and Hannah Arendt," *Poetics Today* 26, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 581–611.

2
Shklovsky observed that artists often borrow and reuse the features of their uncles and aunts and not only of the giant grandparents. Innovation does not mean the invention of a new gadget or even a new language, rather it often follows the oblique moves of mimicry and ruse, and reuse of the features that were considered culturally irrelevant, residual, inartistic or outmoded, placing them into alternative configurations and thus altering the very horizons of interpretation.

3
Exaptation places eccentric imagination closer to innovation than the brutal struggle for survival of the fittest that extends from Darwin's theory of evolution to contemporary market capitalism. (It is also a mild consolation to some of us who won't win in the competition of the fittest but manage to survive thanks to our deviant imagination.)

4
In fact, the word "evolution" itself is a product of linguistic exaptation and errors of transmission. Originally it meant the unfolding of the manuscript, an opening up of potentialities; the word was not originally favored by the father of the theory of evolution, who only used it a few times at the end of his work, and was adapted by Darwin's followers.

5
Vladimir Nabokov, *Nikolai Gogol* (New York: New Directions, 1961), 145.

Diedrich Diederichsen

People of Intensity, People of Power: The Nietzsche Economy

1. Classical Music vs. Free Jazz

When an adult in Berlin or Vienna wants to spend an evening with company, there are two basic options: one can have a cozy dinner with friends at a restaurant or someone's apartment, or one can go out. The second option may not be a radical step into the unknown, as there are familiar signposts, but nevertheless, when we go out, we switch into an entirely different mode of experience.

Now "going out" can mean all sorts of things: an art opening followed by dinner with the artist or artists and a visit to a club, or a certain constellation of bars and clubs where we are sure to meet acquaintances. Or we go to a specific club straight away, one that offers everything in a single package. But really, the distances we cover, the outside world fading in and out of the theater of our increasingly inebriated perceptions, the glistening pavement, diffuse light, car doors slamming, unexpected music in the cab: these are all part of it, the whole program.

The first variant, dinner with friends, is not necessarily any shorter or more sober. This sort of night among friends can be no less long—and no less boozy. Here, however, we get intoxicated not in order to enable ourselves to react more smoothly to new stimuli, but so we can bear the social density and concentration. Friends often show up in couples, and when they don't, there are many long-term friendships boasting of accumulated intimacy not too different from the monogamous relationships that become the dominant model as we get older. This means that many possible constellations of arguments, agreements and disagreements of taste, antagonisms and harmonies of temperament and mentality, have already been played out, and may well have reached a stage at which they no longer ruffle any feathers. Still, these evenings demand our attention. We are curious to discern minute new details in well-rehearsed scripts.

To do so is a perfectly rewarding labor, one we are often fond of, but it is also taxing, requiring a focused mind. Those who prefer not to engage in it, who are not really interested in their friends, will quickly grow bored and provoke a scene or a fight—but this is not a big problem, nor does it really disrupt an evening that is otherwise business as usual. Meeting friends is precision work, and all sorts of events, even unusual ones, are permissible, as long as they are truly interesting, providing intellectual stimulus. Such a meeting calls for a review session with a best friend, partner, or *significant other*, as the Americans say. If we could put them into writing, these review sessions would read like reviews of classical music recordings: in a hyper-precise specialist's language, the participants frame observations in ways that only absolute connoisseurs could appreciate.

[figure 8190c49e0ab8048eda53acf1b6b960d4.jpg

Dorothy Iannone, *I Begin To Feel Love*, 1970. Collage, acrylic on canvas, 190 x 150 cm. Courtesy Anton Kern Gallery, New York.
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The night out is different. Here, casual sensation is always preferable to precise observation. A permanent state of distraction is desired. In conversation, our eyes permanently wander just past our interlocutor. Do I know the person back there, or would I only like to know him, or isn't he actually kind of butt-ugly? Even in the rare event of a truly detailed conversation taken seriously, the aim is to stage an intimate colloquy for the public, a form of ostentation, not the colloquy itself. That promises are made is what matters most, not that they are fulfilled. Everything breathes potentiality: Brecht's "So much might yet happen" rules the night.

And of course this pleasant feeling that so much might happen is sustained in the long run only by the things that do occasionally actually happen: the decisive events, beautiful or disastrous—either one being preferable to the delicate work of the night in. Yet the sense that something must actually happen changes its meaning over the course of a lifetime of nights out. When we are young, the drama of going out is defined by the climactic event: sex, drugs, or sex. Later on, going out becomes an end in itself; any overly targeted attempt at picking someone up would disrupt its magnificent potentiality. The promise we sense, and the risk we feel, is more important than really having something to fear or to hope for. We need to realize, and commit to, only as much as is absolutely necessary for maintaining this diffuse mood. The important thing is to enter into brief and dense contact with as many people as possible, people who are as different and distant from one another as possible; realizing in each instance a maximum degree of commitment for a brief moment—and this moment had better be as brief as possible to keep the number of encounters high. In this way we playfully learn what the Nietzsche economy calls *networking*.[1]

We keep the number of encounters high, while perceiving each one as less binding, entailing less commitment, because this strategy maintains the sense of freedom and potential whose fundamental message is that we are all interconnected to each other, or at least to those present. In encounters that entail commitment—whatever that means—I must act as a responsible and self-aware *I*; in the dense but noncommittal encounters that make up a hyperactive social—and sometimes sexual—promiscuity, I can shed my self-awareness and step outside myself. It is only when I am ecstatic, outside of myself, that I can be with everyone, that I can float in a sense of potential. A networker must always be ecstatic, must maintain a slightly exaggerated enthusiasm, must get high on the potential of so many contacts that can never be realized or translated into actual collaboration, using this high in turn to leap to the next encounter.

Coming home after an evening of this type—it is usually very late or already the next morning—we don't need to review anything, there is no need to go over our friends' texts with philological precision; it is enough to take pleasure in the birds singing outside our windows—so early and already so chipper!—signifying a world that is great and wide open. The word we use to describe the past six or eight hours is: *intense*. Now that was a pretty intense night. The resident of a metropolis like Vienna or Berlin leaving home at six in the morning will meet all these smiling faces, satisfied goers-out—sometimes even a newly formed couple, but most are alone—floating homeward, buoyed by the wealth of potential they have just inhaled. "Anything is possible," they think before falling asleep.

We may dispute what the word "intensity" means. We might argue, for instance, that the focused self-examination of a circle of friends, the refined micro-debates over micro-problems or the molecular shifts in articulating grand and tenacious problems that mar familiar vitae—that is to say, all that we experience when meeting friends—could also be called intense; whereas the openness and potentiality of a night out fail to fit the term. If I nonetheless call the experience of a night out intense, it is for two reasons. One is a matter of musical aesthetics: both types of experience can be compared to certain aesthetic experiences. The dinner with friends corresponds to the focused attention to a piece of classical music that has long been familiar or at least potentially familiar. The point is not what the next note will be, but rather how it arrives—how, within a set of elements defined with regard to instrumentation, timbre, sound, and so forth, everything is decided by subtle shifts and small movements. The key term here would be *focus*.

The night out, by contrast, corresponds to the aesthetic experience offered by free jazz and certain excessive styles of rock or electronic pop music: what matters is density proffered with a grand gesture, backed not necessarily by musical substance but, more often, by its social content. Physical exertion to the point of exhaustion tends to trigger euphoria or aggression: elevated registers of emotion, in every possible direction on the scale. Writers and critics who have followed the phenomenon, but also the musicians themselves, have always spoken of intensity in this context, down to a very technical use of the term in describing music: "And then he played an intense solo on the tenor sax"—that is to say, he used certain overblowing techniques, the solo had a certain minimum duration, and so forth.

The second reason for my suggestion of using the opposing notions of focus and intensity to designate these two ways of spending an evening is the role intensity played in the self-conception of hedonistic countercultures during the 1970s and 1980s—years I would describe as formative in the development of a phenomenon we see emerging today: the revaluation of

this wasteful way of life as a form of work that is not merely productive, but a model of productivity. An important landmark in this process is an essay by Jean-François Lyotard that, although he presented it as a lecture as early as 1972, was first published in the German-speaking world by Merve publishers in a 1978 collection of Lyotard's essays that bore the indicative title "Intensitäten"—intensities.[2]

2. Intensity vs. Intention

Lyotard's essay represents, as it were, the intermediary between what I would like to call on the one hand the Nietzsche economy and, on the other, the culture of intensity built by the hippies and, to a certain degree, by the punks, as well as by techno culture later on, and ultimately by the new type of metropolitan hedonist no longer distinguished by any subcultural identity. The concept of intensity allowed the so-called generation of '68 to preserve a part of its life, of its first decade after 1968, up through its political defeat. Intensity described a devotion to unreserved investment into the potential of grand moments—moments that were also a medium of collectivity—that might be salvaged and maintained even if the better world the movement foresaw could never be realized in this life. And it is clear that intensity was inscribed in people's biographies and aspirations as a concept that ran decidedly counter to the dreary everyday organizational chores of those who had chosen to become invested in politics.

[figure dd528895489056dab1d41924d41f0766.jpg
Jacques André Boiffard, *Bouche*, 1929, Réunion des Musées Nationaux de France.
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In the abovementioned essay, Lyotard explicitly links his idea of intensity to concepts in Nietzsche as well as to the tradition of the artistic avant-gardes of the twentieth century. Lyotard, like other French writers of his generation, wants to inscribe the Nietzschean *Übermensch* in a radical identity politics that would continue to fight the battle of '68. Lyotard explains:

> These are the "people of intensification," the "masters" of today: outsiders, experimental painters, pop artists, hippies and yippies, parasites, the insane, inmates. An hour of their lives contains more intensity (and less intention) than a thousand words from a professional philosopher.[3]

And thus he introduces a second term that can stand as the opposite of intensity: *intention*. Indeed, the idea of the evening among friends can be described as one in which the intentions of planning subjects are in every respect highly important. Set entirely in the world of intentions, for instance, is the full agenda, the date set after a great deal of coordination, the date we keep meaning to set but fail to; compare, on the other hand, the euphoria with which a date is set in the rush of networking. Another element related to intentionality is a subtext that is always on our minds when we meet old friends: our effort to produce a well-rounded biography. How much control does a subject have over his or her life? Is control even desirable? Is it nice when someone accomplishes a goal he or she spoke of as a teenager, as we who have known him or her for a long time can clearly recall? The entire hermeneutics of friendship—"that is so *him*!"—is built on the question of how we relate the self-descriptions we have heard for decades to people's actual practice. Have we perhaps misread one another? Should we reproach the friend for being unfaithful to him- or herself? And do we even think that the concept of being faithful to oneself is a good idea?

But what did Lyotard mean when he spoke of Nietzschean intensity? Or what did we understand him to mean? Well, on the one hand, *intensity* was a hackneyed term, a hippie word; when *Intensitäten* came out in German in 1978, I was an adolescent who had sympathized with punk, but had begun to grow disenchanted with it. I thought that the idea of intensity was a form of self-betrayal. On the other hand, perhaps it was not the concept that was wrong, but what the hippies had made of it. *Intention* was certainly a game we didn't want to play, with all its miserable numbers: responsibility, calculation, categorical imperative. We wanted to be further to the left, true, but not moral leftists.

But the distinctive feature of Lyotard's true masters and people of intensification seemed to be: if there was any sign that they might represent nothing but a return of the *authorities* whom our anti-authoritarian older brothers had overthrown (and hence not potential allies, so long as we wanted to remain leftists), they countered it by being clearly recognizable as outsiders—experimental painters, pop artists, yippies, inmates. Even Gilles Deleuze, a great admirer of Nietzsche and the schizos, cautioned that by affirming (with Nietzsche) the unreliability of the lumpenproletariat and the asocial, the revolutionaries might turn out to have fallen for a political unreliability as well (one that would give them a nasty surprise, entirely beyond their intellectual horizon); meanwhile, we were still thankful for having escaped family, Protestantism, the authorities—anyone who was asocial was to us a liberated personality.[4]

A few years ago, a very popular "oral history" of this period appeared in print, *Verschwende Deine Jugend* (Waste Your Youth) by Jürgen Teipel. The title refers to an early song by the band DAF.[5] From today's perspective, the zeal for wastefulness, ignited also by the writings of Georges Bataille, is the most salient feature of the era for good reason: wastefulness is not a cause anyone would champion anymore. But the book also suggests that those

youthful wasters who didn't die in the process were able to invest their wasted youth in a very productive midlife. At the time, by contrast, it seemed unfathomable for this wastefulness to be unable to flout any calculation or economy in the conduct of life (in the interest of grand moments of potential and infinity), but neither could we imagine, in our wildest dreams, that this very wastefulness might perhaps be none other than the loss of the ability to defend our own interests, that wasting might perhaps simply mean relinquishing such things as rights, or a strategic position developed over time. But then it isn't all that simple, either.

What is certain is that wastefulness stands on the same side as intensity, and both of them stand in opposition to intention and focus. We could construct a matrix composed of four elements that would give rise to all sorts of philosophical speculations—focus would play one role as intensity's counterpart, and another as that of wastefulness; intensity might act one way in opposition to intention, and another when set against focus.

If we hold on to this distribution of pairs of opposites, however, something else emerges: on the one side, we find the description of work, at least in the conventional sense; on the other, that of leisure. Intensity and wastefulness, at least at first glance, obey extra-economic, if not counter-economic, principles. Someone who is wasteful neither saves nor invests; he or she does not speculate, does not even submit to the ritual calculation of the potlatch and its indirect benefits. Wastefulness is the opposite of husbandry. Intensity enjoys potential and irresponsibility: whatever happens, we do not put it in the biographical piggybank of subjectivity, heaping up experiences; nor does it even need to happen at all—it may well remain a dream. And the responsible utilitarian subject permits this for a single reason only: for the purposes of reproduction. The complex of recreation and the domain called, in Marxist terms, the "reproduction of the commodity that is labor," which is, of course, indirectly subject to utilitarian calculation, permits intensity during hours of leisure, in extreme sports or in the experience of nature or, if absolutely necessary, during a night out.

Work, by contrast, especially the traditionally more highly-valued, white-collar work, classically resembles the evening among friends: its principle is that of focused mutual observation, the negotiation of social hierarchies, and the finely tuned micro-observations of the structures in which our own working selves must prove their worth. Only in the working environments of white-collar work's substratum—and I would argue that the boundary divides industrial labor down the middle—of day laborers and unskilled workers and in jobs under harsh conditions, on the high seas and in construction, does something similar to the intensity I described above reappear: physicality, inconstant conditions, the pleasure of potentiality in wild dreams and petty crime, the absence of husbandry, and an economy of the worker's own biography: *freedom's just another word for nothing left to lose*, etc.

But the phenomenon we are interested in here is this: a society in which intention and focus are on top and intensity and wastefulness are at the bottom—also existing, perhaps, on the romantic margins of leisure, of bohemianism and puberty—is being reshuffled into a society where all these relations are reversed. And if we accept that this is a social fact, we can describe this development in terms of a larger diagnosis of the transition from Fordism to post-Fordism, from a society of discipline to one of control, as the victory of artistic critique as described by Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, or in terms of the much-touted ideas of the artist as entrepreneur and of the creative cities in which the creative class allegedly leads a life that is as creatively intense as it is economically productive and successful.

Yet these diagnoses rarely account for how such transformations are framed in the experiences of those they concern, which are also the diagnoses these people use to make sense of these experiences. And in fact, these diagnoses often reveal how the structural transformations they describe have not truly entailed a migration of the old subversive lifestyles from the margins and the bottom of society to its center and to the top; rather, they often describe cases in which intensity and experience are at stake in name only, in which the values have actually been shifted only from one place to another—in order not to preserve them but to betray them, to use them as pure decoration. In other words, the familiar and slightly paranoid tropes of *cooptation* and *assimilation* are very often mobilized to prove that capitalism has not yet choked on the values of its opponents or antagonists. Measured against their original meaning, as this view has it, these resistant values themselves fall by the wayside.

[figure 9089674858f239f36f55db20c68855f3.jpg
Vivienne Westwood in her boutique, London, 1980s.

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My point, however, is not that these diagnoses are entirely wrong: it is probably impossible to draw a straight line between the structural transformation or migration of an ethical or anti-ethical, a political or biopolitical principle on the one hand, and the betrayal of such a principle on the other. Nor am I trying to prevent others from reading my own observations as further evidence of one of the overarching diagnoses I have mentioned. Rather, my intention is to reconstruct a line that leads from the attitude toward life and the self-conception of the punk and Nietzschean left to a situation in which their will to power, which has always already existed, and was always already felt as such, blossoms in a practice that is far removed from their original intentions.[6]

3. The Schöneberg Customs Office

First, the diagnosis: the focused labor of intent workers was appreciated and rewarded as long as capitalism was primarily shaped by instruments such as the analysis of existing markets, the design of production processes, and the study of complex needs—including a cultural understanding of how these needs could be aroused. The corresponding attitude was one of discipline, of hard, precise, and focused work—work that was constantly confronted with, and involved in the production of, a society ever richer in ever more divergent cultural offerings, and whose contents usually swung back and forth between romanticism and escapism. The television series *Mad Men* and movies such as *Revolutionary Road* have recalled this era to great acclaim: an era when executives lived with the intrinsic conflict between two roles, producing leisure offerings while their own practice—hard work and the occasional excessive party, to let off some steam—remained unrepresented. The focused, intent worker of this era was described, especially in the existentialism-tinged movies of the 1960s and 1970s, as bigoted and deeply dishonest; in a Buñuel film, the reward for hard work was typically a masochistic relationship with a dominatrix.

It was in the early 1970s that—for the first time ever, to my knowledge—executives (in the advertising industry, of course) hired artists for the specific task of interfering with business as usual. In the 1970s, Henning Brandis, a young man with a background in the Fluxus network, was hired at the advertising firm GGK Düsseldorf, where his job was to think up little assaults on the safety and continuity of everyday company operations. One morning, for instance, three creative directors found their desks nailed, legs up, to the ceiling. Everything that had been on the desks had been glued to them and covered, Daniel Spoerri–style, with a layer of white paint. Or there would be surprising noises, abused furniture, adolescent pranks, pointless assignments, and other critiques of conformist work, ranging in intellectual quality from class clown to Joseph Beuys. Around the same time, the owner of März publishers, Jörg Schröder, had founded the advertising agency Bismarc Media, whose employees were told to produce nothing, and, when they couldn't bear producing nothing, observe each other laboring under the pointless compulsion to be productive. A general manager was appointed whose task was to undermine any possible output. In 1984, I myself enjoyed an opportunity to spend half a year working at an agency founded by Michael Schirner that, following Bismarc Media's business model, undertook to do nothing, and had rented a former gallery for Conceptual art for this purpose. After a while, this agency ended up producing something after all, namely concepts—the *genius loci* may have been at fault—and ultimately it became a perfectly normal advertising agency.[7]

[figure 2e30fa26f31ae436331672ff27f56ec3.jpg
George Maciunas' photo for the label of Shigeko Kubota's *Flux Medicine*, 1966.
]

All these early models of a wasteful working environment, however, still have a good-natured entrepreneur holding the whole thing together. Someone who is, deep-down, a Fordist planner, incorporating the irrationalism of disruption and wastefulness at selected moments, much like a forest official who shoots some game to manage the wildlife stock or a firefighter who sets a fire to fight a larger fire. This situation changes the moment the traditional style of entrepreneurial subjectivity—planning—meets two new competitors: on the one hand, the casino-style capitalism that has served as its own form of income, but has also come under increasing public scrutiny; on the other hand, the invention of the "passion to perform"—prominently manifested in Deutsche Bank's motto: "Leistung aus Leidenschaft"—which is to say, the introduction of entrepreneurial principles into the everyday operations of business.

Several writers, including Boltanski and Chiapello, have characterized this process on the level of values officially articulated in management seminars, in corporate communications, and in the self-conception of the actors. The question is: how does it feel from the inside when the magic of potential and the intoxication of highly promising noncommittal interactions assume the form of a permanent networking imperative incumbent upon middle management and executives as well as academics? The point is, after all, that principles of intoxication and wastefulness function only when they are precisely not subject to deflective interpretation, watered down by entrepreneurs, instrumentalized, devalued: when we can believe in them without allowing ourselves to get screwed.

In today's working world, that belief can be sustained by agreeing to an exchange (outsourcing, freelancing, and sham freelancing provide the corresponding economic and social form) that functions this way: I forsake any possibility of projecting myself as a private self, independent from my work, ultimately also renouncing any chance at negotiation, co-determination, or living the conflict of interest between capital and labor, and instead project myself as a holistic total self that is identical to my work. In return, I regain the intensification, the force, the power of my early years. All the miserable humiliations I suffer, as well as the successes that fill me with euphoria, are pushed as far as possible into the sub-subjective realm, the realm of psychology—of emotional experience. I agree to talk about them in the language and imagery of a widespread narcissism and its models and stereotypes, as events taking place between me and myself, between I and the self, where they constantly engender provisional objectivations of these experiences as they are displaced into my inner life. The result are rituals of introduction and bar-chatter openings of "I'm the kind of person who...."[8]

Within this model, the subjectivation of the self seizes,

time and again, precisely on those vestiges of the structure that shaped them as objective social relations just before they were fed into the illusion of omnipotence harbored by the outsourced subject of the post-Fordist economy. But this model also reveals a subject within the subject, a highly self-possessed and possessing subject that can triumph in the victories of the person who has to survive all of this in addition to his or her defeats. This subject is strong, harboring no illusions, and is a master that constantly dissociates from its own loser-ish qualities, either kicking them when they're down or flirting with them, tender and bored. The sentences that start with "I'm the kind of person who…" allow for both.

And yet even the outsourced entrepreneur whose business is his or her own self, enjoying the self-possession that serves as compensation for economic defeat, has someone to look down upon: today's version of the intent and focused worker—living in a small, low-risk world where coworkers' birthdays, other coworkers' absenteeism, the irregularities of third parties, and other incalculabilities still matter. It is a world in which the affably precise—or paranoically exaggerated—incessant hermeneutics of small hierarchically organized groups, a lifestyle designed to privilege long-term projects and intentionality, is alive and well. And it looks pretty paltry in comparison with the contingencies our heroes deal with all day, every day, in the cultural, gastronomic, information-dealing, symbol-processing culture of self-employment.

Berlin is one of the sensational places where especially drastic and beautiful manifestations of the confrontation between these two worlds are staged daily. There is a customs office in a no-go area near a highway interchange in the south of Schöneberg. You are ordered to show up there when you have received a shipment from abroad whose value the customs officers were unable to determine, either because they were unfamiliar with the contents of the parcel (having already opened it) or because the shipment was not accompanied by an invoice. The people ordered to come here are not only those who, like myself, have scored records on eBay; most are self-employed *Übermenschen* dealing, in the owner-operated dumps they call stores, with things like bodybuilding medications, American vitamin formulas, strange luxury watches, designer hi-fi components, Asian food products, plant porn, and other junk—junk that, through one customs loophole or another, makes for good business once they've identified their internet-based sub-sub-clientele. This processing facility for unidentifiable goods is where one finds people up to their ears in micro-cultural awareness, scrutiny of the economy, self-marketing, and adventurism.

An approximately knee-high counter separates such people from an open area where the customs officers officiate. These are, to the last man, lovingly preserved museum pieces from Social-Democratic times, looking like television kiddie-show hosts from the early years of public broadcasting: coarse fabrics, no sense for color combinations, fairly out of shape, their movements slow and without haste. A sophisticated division of labor governs these movements, an elaborate scheme in which the clients they serve, who usually have to stand in line, must be seen by three different authorities before they can take their merchandise home. They are pedantic and very polite, working in accordance with highly complicated rules, which also seem to determine the interactions between them and their desks, laden with documents and objects and covered with funny stickers. Before them stand the self-fulfilling selves, gussied up and unshaven, repeatedly stepping out to take a call, impatient, their fierce eyes roaming over the drama of a bureaucracy in demise—a scene from the museum of the public welfare state as though it were directed by Christoph Marthaler and set-designed by Anna Viebrock. Outside, the winds of hazard are roaring, a hazard they accept with forced euphoria, feeding it, doped up and amped up, into a constantly efficient and ceaselessly active economic person, while on the inside the officers shuffle back and forth, the last people to distinguish between private life and work.

Yet there is an upper echelon, too, one that the members of the Nietzsche economy, the masters of intensification, look up to—and it is not populated only by successful people. Rather, it consists of those who, without lying to themselves, without having to will the / triumphant and the humiliated / into a single soul in order to experience their triumph and power, have been able to wholly transform their old waste-your-youth leftist Nietzscheanism into a pragmatic Nietzscheanism of efficiency. That is to say, those who had no difficulty combining the Nietzschean enmity against the state Deleuze had praised—it was probably in reality never a leftist enmity, but perhaps people had been able to do something leftist with it—and the vitalist enmity against bureaucrats, to translate the result into an entrepreneurial attitude; those who, rather than dreaming their will to power into their freelancer identities, have indeed acquired actual power.

Since novels such as *American Psycho* (1991) appeared, this type has circulated, at first as a fictional pathological monster, now as a reality, and most recently also in popular culture as a stock object at which to direct the general hatred of casino capitalism. If we look at the actions of this type in the way we ought to in a Nietzschean economy, that is to say, "in an extramoral sense," his life, propelled by checks that might bounce at any moment, is not uninteresting. It is indeed this stuff that produces the truly great subjects, the ones that the contemporary arts repeatedly dream of, between Hannibal Lecter and Matthew Barney, between Jason Rhoades and Jonathan Meese—a theater of unfounded assertions, insane through and through, that has made it into the efficient heart of a well-organized economic routine. The

dominant figure in this same routine, however, represents the other type described above, the omnipresent freelancer who doesn't worry about tomorrow because he can't afford to anyway, the overman driven not by the grandeur of excess but by naked want.

Several ideological constructs have been brought to the market promising to bridge the gap between these two models. The magazine *brand eins* is full of first-person biographical narratives from active economic agents who package the move from intention and focus towards intensity and ecstatic involvement outside of themselves. The so-called digital bohème, as invented by Holm Friebe and Sascha Lobo, uses the term bohemian to dress up precisely the type I just called a Nietzschean. This brings a couple more people on board who prefer to describe the intensification of life through self-realizing work in slightly less brutal terms; it also leaves open the possibility of an implementation based on more than just will and vitality by using a technological paradigm shift as a solid foundation for calculation. The true economic Nietzschean, however, needs none of that—unlike thirty years ago, he doesn't want to be part of any movement: he just wants to move money into his own pockets.

Even back then, Jacob Taubes, back then a brillant and dazzling lead character of those who would later find their way via leftist Nietzscheanism into the all-nighter of capitalist adventure doped up on euphoria, expressed a skeptical view of this development. Taubes, a scholar of religion and philosopher who was the founding editor of Suhrkamp's "Theorie" series, was always open to an intellectual adventure. Yet in an interview in an early issue of the magazine *Tumult*, he cautioned against the "Nietzsche boys" who suddenly popped up all over places where a very rigid left had prevailed: the other side of the critique of power, as it were, was a new will to power—and it would ultimately find its way to power as well.[9]

X

Translated from the German by Gerrit Jackson.

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Diedrich Diederichsen was editor of two music magazines in the 1980s (*Sounds*, Hamburg; *Spex*, Cologne) and taught at several academies in the 1990s in Germany, Austria, and the U.S. in the fields of art history, musicology, theater studies, and cultural studies. He was Professor for Cultural Theory at Merz Academy, Stuttgart from 1998 to 2006, and is currently Professor of Theory, Practice, and Communication of Contemporary Art at the Academy of Fine Art in Vienna. Recent Publications include *Utopia of Sound*, Vienna 2010 (co-edited with Constanze Ruhm); *Rock, Paper, Scissor—Pop-Music/Fine Arts*, Graz 2009 (co-edited with Peter Pakesch); *On Surplus Value (of Art*, Rotterdam/New York 2008; *Eigenblutdoping*, Cologne 2008; *Kritik des Auges*,> Hamburg 2008; *Argument Son*, Dijon 2007; *Personas en loop*, Buenos Aires 2006; *Musikzimmer*, Cologne 2005.

1
This essay is not about Nietzschean philology. In the following, the name "Nietzsche" is used to refer to a specific reception of Nietzsche's work in France during the 1970s, and then in Germany during the 1980s, and to the ways this reading helped shape an atmosphere and attitude toward life that paved the way for the aspirations and life-defining decisions of people who are now middle-aged—and have jobs.

2
Jean-Francois Lyotard, *Intensitäten* (West Berlin: Merve, 1978).

3
Jean-François Lyotard, "Bemerkungen über die Wiederkehr des Kapitals," in *Intensitäten* , 32. As quoted in Jea n-FrançoisLyotard, "Notes on the Return and Capital," in "Nietzsche's Return," ed. Sylvère Lotringer, special issue, *Semiotext(e)* 3, no. 1 (1977): 44.

4
See Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, "Many Politics," in *Dialogues II* , trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), 124–47.

5
Jürgen Teipel, *Verschwende Deine Jugend* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2000).

6
For more on these types, see Jan Rehmann, *Postmoderner Linksnie tzscheanismus: Deleuze & Foucault; Eine Dekonstruktion* (Hamburg: Argument, 2004). Especially instructive for the issues discussed here are 132–136, where Rehmann describes Foucault's strategy of mobilizing Nietzsche to outdo the Paris radical left in terms of its willingness to fight and its radicalism—but, as it were, on its own territory: the radical rejection of the status quo.

7
See Michael Schirner, *Werbung ist Kunst* (Munich: Klinkhardt & Biermann, 1988).

8
See Diedrich Diederichsen, "Schönheitschirurgie am gewachsenen Schnabel: Der Genuß an der Selbstrezeption in der Floskel: Ich bin ein Mensch, der...," *Zeitschrift für Ästhetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft* 52, no. 2 (2007).

9
Jacob Taubes in conversation with Wolfert von Rahden and Norbert Kapferer, "Elite oder Avantgarde," *Tumult* 3 (1982): 64–76.

Boris Groys

Marx After Duchamp, or The Artist's Two Bodies

At the turn of the twentieth century, art entered a new era of artistic mass production. Whereas the previous age was an era of artistic mass consumption, in our present timethe situation has changed, and there are two primary developments that have led to this change. The first is the emergence of new technical means for producingand distributing images, and the second is a shift in our understanding of art, a change in the rules we use for identifying what is and what is not art.

Let us begin with the second development. Today, we do not identify an artwork primarily as an object produced by the manual work of an individual artist in such a way that the traces of this work remain visible or, at least, identifiable in the body of the artwork itself. During the nineteenth century, painting and sculpture were seen as extensions of the artist's body, as evoking the presence of this body even following the artist's death. In this sense, artist's work was not regarded as "alienated" work—in contrast to the alienated, industrial labor that does not presuppose any traceable connection between the producer's body and the industrial product. Since at least Duchamp and his use of the readymade, this situation has changed drastically. And the main change lies not so much in the presentation of industrially produced objects as artworks, as in a new possibility that opened for the artist, to not only produce artworks in an alienated, quasi-industrial manner, but also to allow these artworks to maintain an appearance of being industrially produced. And it is here that artists as different as Andy Warhol and Donald Judd can serve as examples of post-Duchampian art. The direct connection between the body of the artist and the body of the artworks was severed. The artworks were no longer considered to maintain the warmth of the artist's body, even when the artist's own corpse became cold. On the contrary, the author (artist) was already proclaimed dead during his or her lifetime, and the "organic" character of the artwork was interpreted as an ideological illusion. As a consequence, while we assume the violent dismemberment of a living, organic body to be a crime, the fragmentation of an artwork that is already a corpse—or, even better, an industrially produced object or machine—does not constitute a crime; rather, it is welcome.

[figure 52afc9468aaa208b2b9015e2c7da6a0c.jpg
Guided tour at Tibor de Nagy Gallery, New York, 1966.

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And that is precisely what hundreds of millions of people around the world do every day in the context of contemporary media. As masses of people have become well informed about advanced art production through biennials, triennials, Documentas, and related coverage, they have come to use media in the same way as artists. Contemporary means of communication and social networks such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter offer global populations the ability to present their photos,

videos, and texts in ways that cannot be distinguished from any post-Conceptualist artwork. And contemporary design offers the same populations a means of shaping and experiencing their apartments or workplaces as artistic installations. At the same time, the digital "content" or "products" that these millions of people present each day has no direct relation to their bodies; it is as "alienated" from them as any other contemporary artwork, and this means that it can be easily fragmented and reused in different contexts. And indeed, sampling by way of "copy and paste" is the most standard, most widespread practice on the internet. And it is here that one finds a direct connection between the quasi-industrial practices of post-Duchampian art and contemporary practices used on the internet—a place where even those who do not know or appreciate contemporary artistic installations, performances, or environments will employ the same forms of sampling on which those art practices are based. (And here we find an analogy to Benjamin's interpretation of the public's readiness to accept montage in cinema as having been expressed by a rejection of the same approach in painting).

Now, many have considered this erasure of work in and through contemporary artistic practice to have been a liberation from work in general. The artist becomes a bearer and protagonist of "ideas," "concepts," or "projects," rather than a subject of hard work, whether alienated or non-alienated work. Accordingly, the digitalized, virtual space of the internet has produced phantom concepts of "immaterial work" and "immaterial workers" that have allegedly opened the way to a "post-Fordist" society of universal creativity free from hard work and exploitation. In addition to this, the Duchampian readymade strategy seems to undermine the rights of intellectual private property—abolishing the privilege of authorship and delivering art and culture to unrestricted public use. Duchamp's use of readymades can be understood as a revolution in art that is analogous to a communist revolution in politics. Both revolutions aim at the confiscation and collectivization of private property, whether "real" or symbolic. And in this sense one can say that certain contemporary art and internet practices now play the role of (symbolic) communist collectivizations in the midst of a capitalist economy. One finds a situation reminiscent of Romantic art at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Europe, when ideological reactions and political restorations dominated political life. Following the French Revolution and the Napoleonic Wars, Europe arrived at a period of relative stability and peace in which the age of political transformation and ideological conflict seemed to have finally been overcome. The homogeneous political and economic order based on economic growth, technological progress, and political stagnation seemed to announce the end of history, and the Romantic artistic movement that emerged throughout the European continent became one in which utopias were dreamed, revolutionary traumas were remembered, and alternative ways of living were proposed. Today, the art scene has become a place of emancipatory projects, participatory practices, and radical political attitudes, but also a place in which the social catastrophes and disappointments of the revolutionary twentieth century are remembered. And the specific neo-Romantic and neo-communist makeup of contemporary culture is, as is often the case, especially well diagnosed by its enemies. Thus Jaron Lanier's influential book *You Are Not a Gadget* speaks about the "digital Maoism" and "hive mind" that dominate contemporary virtual space, ruining the principle of intellectual private property and ultimately lowering the standards and leading to the potential demise of culture as such.[1]

Thus what we have here does not concern the liberation of labor, but rather the liberation from labor—at least from its manual, "oppressive" aspects. But to what degree is such a project realistic? Is liberation from labor even possible? Indeed, contemporary art confronts the traditional Marxist theory of value production with a difficult question: if the "original" value of a product reflects the accumulation of work in this product, then how can a readymade acquire additional value as an artwork—notwithstanding the fact that the artist does not seem to have invested any additional work in it? It is in this sense that the post-Duchampian conception of art beyond labor seems to constitute the most effective counter-example to the Marxist theory of value—as an example of "pure," "immaterial" creativity that transcends all traditional conceptions of value production as resulting from manual labor. It seems that, in this case, the artist's decision to offer a certain object as an artwork, and an art institution's decision to accept this object as an artwork, suffice to produce a valuable art commodity—without involving any manual labor. And the expansion of this seemingly immaterial art practice into the whole economy by means of the internet has produced the illusion that a post-Duchampian liberation from labor through "immaterial" creativity—and not the Marxist liberation of labor—opens the way to a new utopia of creative multitudes. The only necessary precondition for this opening, however, seems to be a critique of institutions that contain and frustrate the creativity of floating multitudes through their politics of selective inclusion and exclusion.

However, here we must deal with a certain confusion with respect to the notion of "the institution." Especially within the framework of "institutional critique," art institutions are mostly considered to be power structures defining what is included or excluded from public view. Thus art institutions are analyzed mostly in "idealist," non-materialist terms, whereas, in materialist terms, art institutions present themselves rather as buildings, spaces, storage facilities, and so forth, requiring an amount of manual work in order to be built, maintained, and used. So one can say that the rejection of "non-alienated" work has placed the post-Duchampian artist back in the position of using alienated, manual work

to transfer certain material objects from the outside of art spaces to the inside, or vice versa. The pure immaterial creativity reveals itself here as pure fiction, as the old-fashioned, non-alienated artistic work is merely substituted by the alienated, manual work of transporting objects. And post-Duchampian art-beyond-labor reveals itself, in fact, as the triumph of alienated "abstract" labor over non-alienated "creative" work. It is this alienated labor of transporting objects combined with the labor invested in the construction and maintenance of art spaces that ultimately produces artistic value under the conditions of post-Duchampian art. The Duchampian revolution leads not to the liberation of the artist from work, but to his or her proletarization via alienated construction and transportation work. In fact, contemporary art institutions no longer need an artist as a traditional producer. Rather, today the artist is more often hired for a certain period of time as a worker to realize this or that institutional project. On the other hand, commercially successful artists such as Jeff Koons and Damien Hirst long ago converted themselves into entrepreneurs.

[figure f3708f325f7bd8ea6ed129652c28439f.jpg
Jeff Koons' design for collector Dakis Joannou's personal yacht.

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The economy of the internet demonstrates this economy of post-Duchampian art even for an external spectator. The internet is in fact no more than a modified telephone network, a means of transporting electric signals. As such, it is not "immaterial," but thoroughly material. If certain communication lines are not laid, if certain gadgets are not produced, or if telephone access is not installed and paid, then there is simply no internet and no virtual space. To use traditional Marxist terms, one can say that the big communication and information technology corporations control the material basis of the internet and the means of producing of virtual reality: its hardware. In this way, the internet provides us with an interesting combination of capitalist hardware and communist software. Hundreds of millions of so-called "content producers" place their content on the internet without receiving any compensation, with the content produced not so much by the intellectual work of generating ideas as by the manual labor of operating the keyboard. And the profits are appropriated by the corporations controlling the material means of virtual production.

The decisive step in the proletarization and exploitation of intellectual and artistic work came, of course, in the emergence of Google. Google's search engine operates by fragmenting individual texts into a non-differentiated mass of verbal garbage: each individual text traditionally held together by its author's intention is dissolved, with individual sentences then fished out and recombined with other floating sentences allegedly having the same "topic." Of course, the unifying power of authorial intention had already been undermined in recent philosophy, most notably by Derridean deconstruction. And indeed, this deconstruction already effectuated a symbolic confiscation and collectivization of individual texts, removing them from authorial control and delivering them into the bottomless garbage pit of anonymous, subjectless "writing." It was a gesture that initially appeared emancipatory for being somehow synchronized with certain communist, collectivist dreams. Yet while Google now realizes the deconstructionist program of collectivizing writing, it seems to do little else. There is, however, a difference between deconstruction and googling: deconstruction was understood by Derrida in purely "idealistic" terms as an infinite, and thus uncontrollable practice, whereas Google's search algorithms are not infinite, but finite and material—subjected to corporate appropriation, control, and manipulation. The removal of authorial, intentional, ideological control over writing has not led to its liberation. Rather, in the context of the internet, writing has become subject to a different kind of control through hardware and corporate software, through the material conditions of the production and distribution of writing. In other words, by completely eliminating the possibility of artistic, cultural work as authorial, non-alienated work, the internet completes the process of proletarizing work that began in the nineteenth century. The artist here becomes an alienated worker no different than any other in contemporary production processes.

[figure 7ce2edad2fae4bb9e066fa24af74a6ee.jpg Gillian Wearing, *Everything in life...*, 1992-1993, from the series *Signs that say what you want them to say and not signs that say what someone else wants you to say*, color coupler prints.
]

But then a question arises. What happened to the artist's body when the labor of art production became alienated labor? The answer is simple: the artist's body itself became a readymade. Foucault has already drawn our attention to the fact that alienated work produces the worker's body alongside the industrial products; the worker's body is disciplined and simultaneously exposed to external surveillance, a phenomenon famously characterized by Foucault as "panopticism."[2] As a result, this alienated industrial work cannot be understood solely in terms of its external productivity—it must necessarily take into account the fact that this work also produces the worker's own body as a reliable gadget, as an "objectified" instrument of alienated, industrialized work. And this can even be seen as the main achievement of modernity, as these modernized bodies now populate contemporary bureaucratic, administrative, and cultural spaces in which seemingly nothing material is produced beyond these bodies themselves. One can now argue that it is precisely this modernized, updated working body that contemporary art uses as a readymade. However, the contemporary artist does not need to enter a factory or administrative

office to find such a body. Under the current conditions of alienated artistic work, the artist will find such a body to already be his or her own.

Indeed, in performance art, video, photography, and so forth, the artist's body increasingly became the focus of contemporary art in recent decades. And one can say that the artist today has become increasingly concerned with the exposure of his or her body as a working body—through the gaze of a spectator or a camera that recreates the panoptic exposure to which working bodies in a factory or office are submitted. An example of the exposure of such a working body can be found in Marina Abramović's exhibition "The Artist Is Present" at MoMA in New York in 2010. Each day of the exhibition, Abramović sat throughout the working hours of the museum in MoMA's atrium, maintaining the same pose. In this way, Abramović recreated the situation of an office worker whose primary occupation is to sit at the same place each day to be observed by his or her superiors, regardless of what is done beyond that. And we can say that Abramović's performance was a perfect illustration of Foucault's notion that the production of the working body is the main effect of modernized, alienated work. Precisely by not actively performing any tasks throughout the time she was present, Abramović thematized the incredible discipline, endurance, and physical effort required to simply remain present at a workplace from the beginning of the working day to its end. At the same time, Abramović's body was subjected to the same regime of exposure as all of MoMA's artworks—hanging on the walls or staying in their places throughout the working hours of the museum. And just as we generally assume that these paintings and sculptures do not change places or disappear when they are not exposed to the visitor's gaze or when the museum is closed, we tend to imagine that Abramović's immobilized body will remain forever in the museum, immortalized alongside the museum's other works. In this sense, "The Artist Is Present" creates an image of a living corpse as the only perspective on immortality that our civilization is capable of offering its citizens.

The effect of immortality is only strengthened by the fact that this performance is a recreation/repetition of a performance Abramović did with Ulay in her younger years, in which they sat opposite each other throughout the working hours of an exhibition space. In "The Artist Is Present," Ulay's place opposite Abramović could be taken by any visitor. This substitution demonstrated how the working body of the artist disconnects—through the alienated, "abstract" character of modern work—from his or her own natural, mortal body. The working body of the artist can be substituted with any other body that is ready and able to perform the same work of self-exposure. Thus, in the main, retrospective part of the exhibition, the earlier performances by Marina and Ulay were repeated/reproduced in two different forms: through video documentation and through the naked bodies of hired actors. Here again the nakedness of these bodies was more important than their particular shape, or even their gender (in one instance, due to practical considerations, Ulay was represented by a woman). There are many who speak about the spectacular nature of contemporary art. But in a certain sense, contemporary art effectuates the reversal of the spectacle found in theater or cinema, among other examples. In the theater, the actor's body also presents itself as immortal as it passes through various metamorphic processes, transforming itself into the bodies of others as it plays different roles. In contemporary art, the working body of the artist, on the contrary, accumulates different roles (as in the case of Cindy Sherman), or, as with Abramović, different living bodies. The artist's working body is simultaneously self-identical and interchangeable because it is a body of alienated, abstract labor. In his famous book *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology*, Ernst Kantorowicz illustrates the historical problem posed by the figure of the king assuming two bodies simultaneously: one natural, mortal body, and another official, institutional, exchangeable, immortal body. Analogously, one can say that when the artist exposes his or her body, it is the second, working body that becomes exposed. And at the moment of this exposure, this working body also reveals the value of labor accumulated in the art institution (according to Kantorowicz, medieval historians have spoken of "corporations").[3] In general, when visiting a museum, we do not realize the amount of work necessary to keep paintings hanging on walls or statues in their places. But this effort becomes immediately visible when a visitor is confronted with Abramović's body; the invisible physical effort of keeping the human body in the same position for a long time produces a "thing"—a readymade—that arrests the attention of visitors and allows them to contemplate Abramović's body for hours.

[figure partialpage
6c48e63ba59e640cdff0e5b65dfa0318.jpg Marina Abramović and Ulay, *Imponderabilia*, 1977, performance, 90 min., Galleria Communale d'Arte Moderna Bologna, © Marina Abramović. Courtesy of Sean Kelly Gallery, New York.
]

One may think that only the working bodies of contemporary celebrities are exposed to the public gaze. However, even the most average, "normal" everyday people now permanently document their own working bodies by means of photography, video, websites, and so forth. And on top of that, contemporary everyday life is exposed not only to institutional surveillance, but also to a constantly expanding sphere of media coverage. Innumerable sitcoms inundating television screens around the world expose us to the working bodies of doctors, peasants, fishermen, presidents, movie stars, factory workers, mafia killers, gravediggers, and even to zombies and vampires. It is precisely this ubiquity and universality of the working body and its representation that

makes it especially interesting for art. Even if the primary, natural bodies of our contemporaries are different, and their secondary working bodies are interchangeable. And it is precisely this interchangeability that unites the artist with his or her audience. The artist today shares art with the public just as he or she once shared it with religion or politics. To be an artist has ceased to be an exclusive fate; instead, it has become characteristic of society as a whole on its most intimate, everyday, bodily level. And here the artist finds another opportunity to advance a universalist claim—as an insight into the duplicity and ambiguity of the artist's own two bodies.

X

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1
See Jaron Lanier, *You Are Not a Gadget: A Manifesto* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2010).

2
See Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (New York: Vintage, 1995).

3
Ernst H Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 3.

Park Chan-Kyong

On Sindoan: Some Scattered Views on Tradition and "The Sublime"

1.

I once had an accidental encounter with Mount Gyeryong and an indescribable shock came over me. The light of the full moon allowed the mountain, covered in snow, to reveal itself in its full glory even in the middle of the night. Unlike other large mountains in South Korea, which one can rarely see fully because they are usually hidden by neighboring peaks, Mount Gyeryong is a so-called protrusion-in-the-field type of mountain whose overall shape is quite visible even from a distance.

I suspect that the experience I had was akin to what is called "the sublime" in Western aesthetics. The theory of the sublime, only introduced to South Korea with theories of postmodernism, seems to have been revived here in the wake of September 11, 2001. Prior to that, in Western society, looking at the culture of the relatively recent past, we can also identify recurrent revivals of the aesthetics of the sublime in diverse genres, as for example Werner Herzog's film *Nosferatu*, which borrows from Caspar David Friedrich's landscapes; all the disaster films that simulate Turner's stormy seas and other Romantic painters' images of ruins; and the montage of primitive sacrificial rites in Francis Ford Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*. By now the aesthetics of the sublime, more than its theory, has become a familiar part of South Korean visual culture. And this is, in a sense, only natural, for if the concept of the sublime is premised on given conditions such as death, nature, and the infinite nature of the universe, then the concept is not specific to the West but universal for all humanity. If the sublime can be explained as a Kantian universal human experience (even though the German philosopher distinguished between peoples who are close to the sublime and those who are far from it), then we can also attempt to explain how it functions in Korea and Northeast Asia. So my question—to which I have no clear answer—is: How has the sublime manifested itself in Korean and Northeast Asian cultures? If certain traditions can correspond to the sublime, in what ways might we now make works of art, and what meanings and values would such representations have?

2.

In Apichatpong Weerasethakul's well-known film *Tropical Malady* (2004), the protagonist passes through bizarre locations on his way into a deep jungle, where he suddenly enters the time-space of a fable in which he can converse with animals. Ultimately, lost in the jungle in the middle of night, he comes face to face with a tiger, or the ghost of a tiger. On the one hand, I suspect that *Tropical Malady* might be yet another example of contemporary Orientalism. On the other hand, I have a strong sense of solidarity with such a sensibility. And this sensibility, perhaps, parallels my childhood memory of accompanying my parents to the mass of the forty-ninth day for a dead distant relative by marriage, where I saw golden Buddha

statues and paintings of Buddhist deities and mountain spirits through candlelight and incense smoke in a temple deep in the mountains.[1] I am also thinking about the old Asian paintings of bizarre-looking rocks I have seen in museums. Such experiences inspire in me—as they do in probably all of us—one of the most important human emotions, that of fear/awe.

Fear/awe is without a doubt informed by local nature and culture, because it has long been inherent in the experience of them. In this sense, Mount Gyeryong is not a Korean version of the Alps but rather relates to its own "site-specific" aesthetics. One may question, of course, whether my generation's urban culture has already been severed from such aesthetics, and furthermore, whether I may be forcing a theory. The opposite point, however, could just as easily be made. The hermitages and old temples one happens upon deep in the mountains, precisely because of their remoteness, can appear even more unexpected, difficult to interpret, and jolting. From the publication of Yoo Hong-jun's book *My Survey of Cultural Heritages*, which inspired a traditional-culture tourism boom during the 1990s in South Korea, to the current situation in which the world has become an enormous photographic archive thanks to technologies like Google Earth, the old, the deep, and the fearful have increasingly fewer places to hide.[2] When poet Kim Ji-ha speaks endlessly and almost with a certain naıveté about the importance of Haewol Philosophy, and when Choi In-hoon feels a profound remorse when faced with the ruins of Goryeo Dynasty–era Buddhist temples, are such emotions really so remote?[3] Furthermore, when the dreams of Buddhistic salvation found in the work of writer Kim Seong-dong and the Korean Romanticism of film director Im Kwon-taek's fixation on traditional culture are taken to have a certain remoteness from their subject, do they not appeal to us even more poignantly?[4] Or, to use examples from art, what about Park Saeng-gwang's talisman-like pictures of shamans, Oh Yoon's humorous images of demons, and Min Jeong-gi's bizarre paintings of Mount Geumgang?[5]

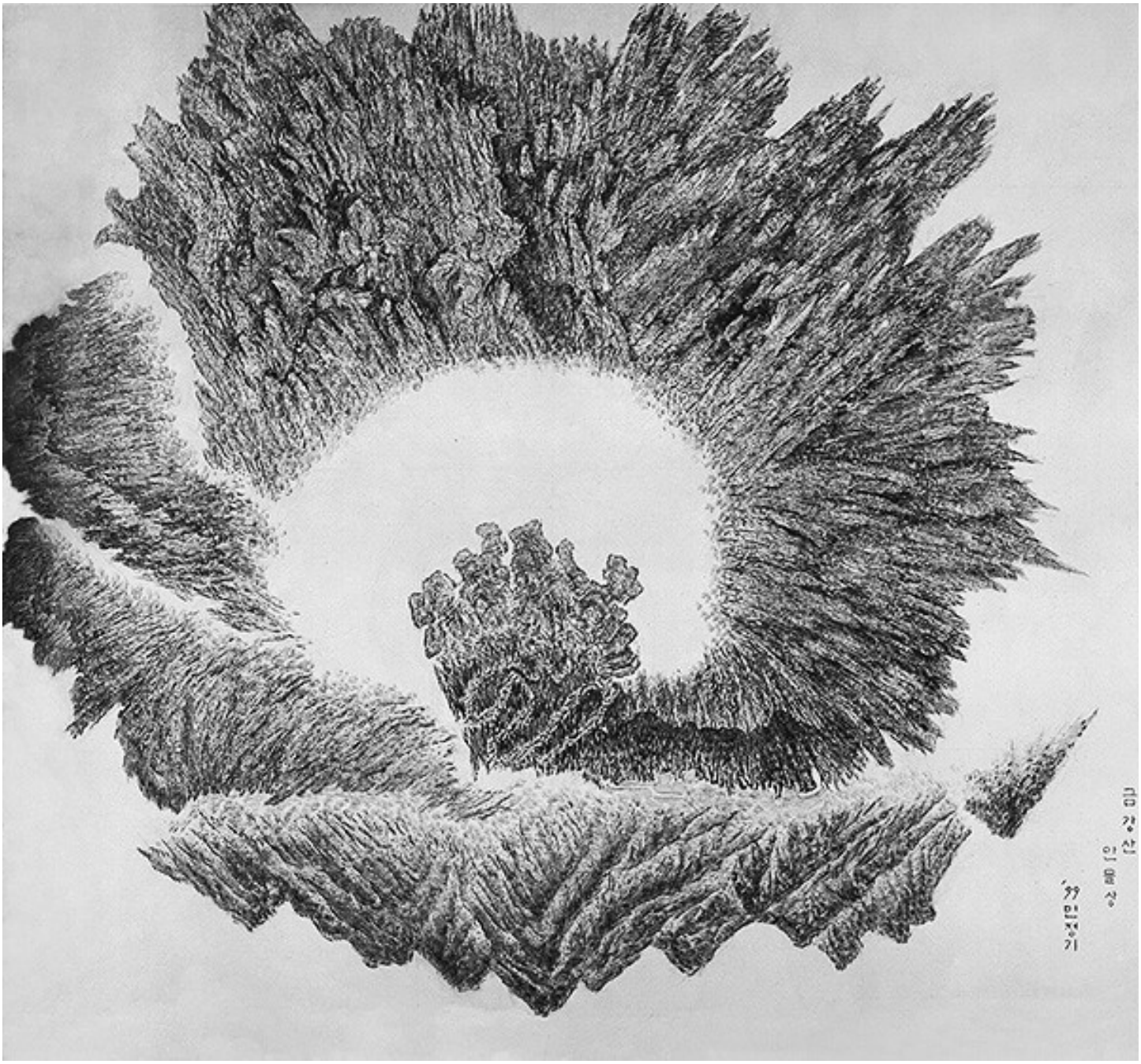
For members of the generation to which such cultural figures belong, connecting traditional culture and Korean nature seems to have been a critical problem or a grand exercise, and these figures could gamble their whole lives on rescuing (modernizing?) their respective virtues. Even if many among this generation either retreated into mysticism or ended up devoting themselves to a "cultural nationalism," their efforts continue to be valuable as a series of relentless demands for the correction of the excessive, violent imbalance between Western culture and Korean culture. (Of course, we still need to guard against absurdly conservative tastes, exemplified by the Department of Oriental Painting in Seoul National University's College of Fine Arts or the right-wing nationalism of Lee Moon-yeol.)[6] If the experience of this generation was defined primarily by a separation between city and countryside and by the various speeds of development, for my generation—especially someone like me who was born in Seoul and raised as a Catholic in a high-rise apartment complex—Korean traditional culture, especially traditional religious culture, is unfamiliar from the very start and may even be said to belong more to the realm of the imagination than to reality.

This is why I always postpone doing anything about tradition, like a patient not wanting to go to the hospital or a student not wanting to do homework. However, the more you postpone something, the more burdensome it becomes. Ultimately, like a rock that you repeatedly trip over because you have neglected to move it out of the way, it becomes something you end up regretting somewhere down the line. Might this recurrent postponement and return of tradition become an obsession, or could it be a type of wisdom that has yet to be defined clearly? At least one thing is clear. Whether it is an obsession or an anticipation of a certain wisdom, tradition is something that touches on "the unconscious," a force that grabs the back of your head, a fascination that disturbs "my" modernization, and, to use recent parlance, a typical Other. The anxiety I feel from being estranged from tradition seems always to take up half of my capacity for thinking and cultural reception. Therefore, what is more interesting to me than the reconstitution or modernization of tradition is the notion that tradition—as a kind of Other, and in the sense that it appears like an unknowable specter—is a sort of "local wound," which has only symptoms but no identifiable scientific diagnosis. If modernity was a traumatic experience in the recent past, then tradition is this resulting wound.

3.

Elements of traditional Korean culture have survived into everyday contemporary life in many ways, such as the persistence of *ondol* (subfloor heating systems). Of these, religious cultures have the longest and most tenacious life. On the one hand, it goes without saying that traditional society maintained a firmer and far more quotidian relationship with religion and mythology. On the other hand, the religious culture and mythological structure of traditional society were what contrasted most sharply with, and were thus most deeply hidden during, the process of modernization. More than anything else, traditional religious culture represents a significant trauma. For instance, it was Donghak (Eastern Learning) that fought most fiercely against Japanese imperialism and was most tragically defeated by it.[7] Donghak exemplifies the greatest historical wound inflicted throughout the course of the modernization of Korea.

At this point, it is necessary to recall a historical fact. Korea's traditional religious cultures, such as shamanism and Taoism, as well as new national religions from the turn of the twentieth century, were suppressed throughout the Japanese colonial and modern periods, not to mention during the era of the Joseon Dynasty, which adopted



Min Joung Ki, Manmulsang at Guemgang Mountain, 1999, oil on canvas, 333 x 224 cm

Confucianism as its national religion. In the wake of Westernization and globalization, folk beliefs and traditional religions are now viewed simply as tourist attractions or products of mysticism. As a result, we are used to critiquing Korean folk beliefs, new religions, mountain worship, and so forth, using the standard of more sophisticated dogmas. I do not particularly believe that the standard per se is distorted, yet there is a deep-rooted popular impression that prayer is purer than incantation, that religious symbols are more logical than shamanistic talismans, and that Christian hymns are more sophisticated than sutras. *Sangje* ("ruler above") is a literal translation of "God," but the latter has assumed a position superior to the former, just as wine has become the so-called well-being beverage, preferred over *makkulli* (unrefined Korean rice wine). In actuality, however, the majority of the institutional religions that have undergone rapid growth in South Korea in the last hundred years have unabashedly utilized prayer for good fortune and mystical experience, for grudge-soothing and ecstasy. In the fields of religious studies and folk cultural studies in South Korea, it is well known that shamanistic beliefs have been absorbed by Christianity and other religions, and have given birth to a peculiarly Korean religious culture strongly

One of Sindoan's religious organizations in the 1960s.

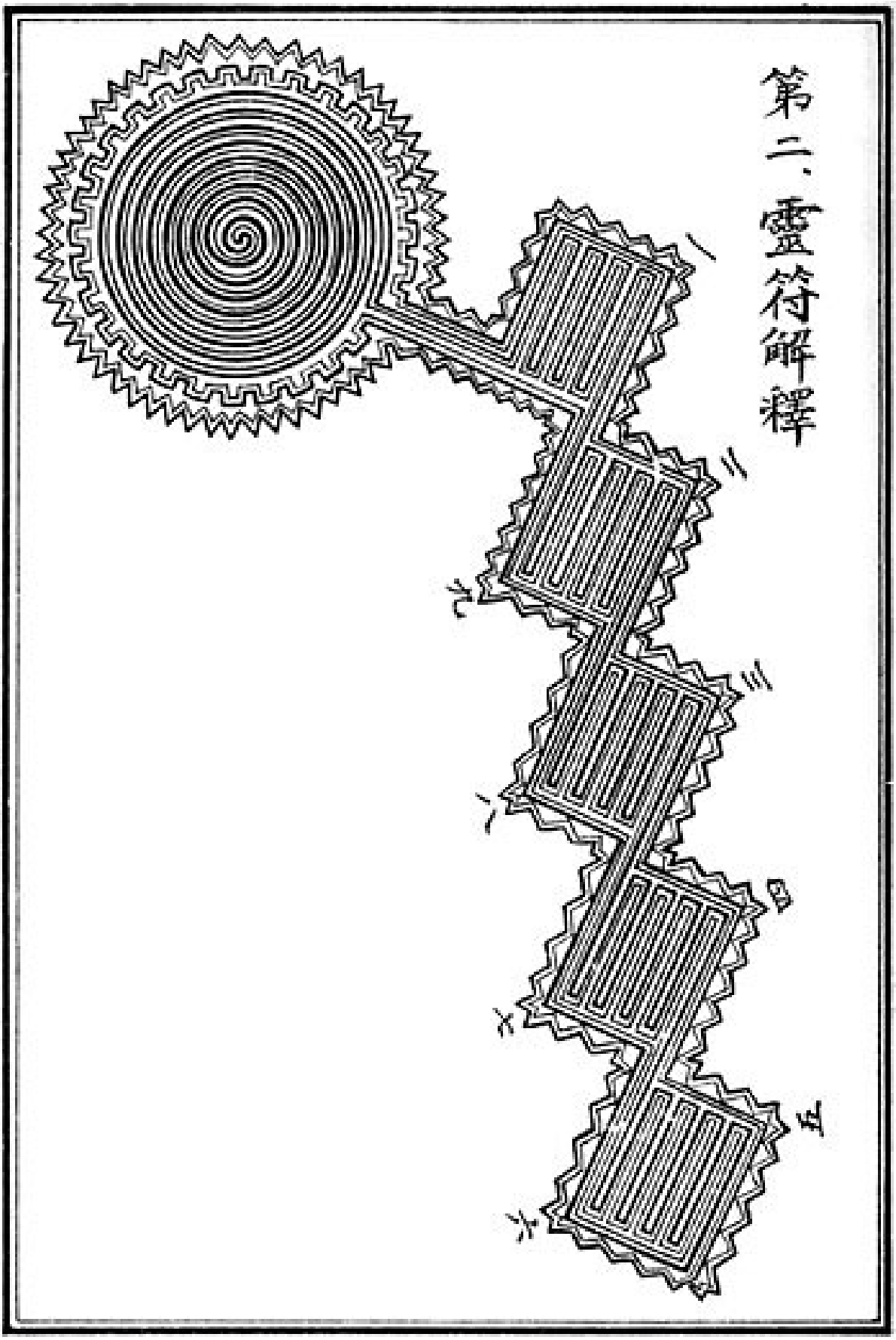
tinged with mysticism.

The more that religions originating from abroad utilize local traditions, the more it becomes necessary for them to distinguish themselves from "superstitions." And when these religions endlessly attempt to define themselves as distinct from superstitions, the local beliefs—Heaven on Earth, tiger, mountain spirit, Sangje, Great King Yeomra, Medicine Buddha, and numerous other sacred beings—remain alive and well in the midst of their "counter-superstition."[8] Here we find the possibility of inverting the situation. Rather than see traditional folk beliefs as having been transformed and reduced by the Westernization of spirit, wouldn't it be more accurate to see the whole process of transformation as an innovative way of dealing with things on the part of those whose traditional beliefs are under threat?

4.

If there is religion on the other side of modern science and technology, there is superstition on the other side of religion. I do not like modern science and technology, nor do I like organized religion. That doesn't mean I can follow "superstitions." The materialist's cool brain is not really my thing either. Nevertheless, I like religion when it warns against the dangers of modern science and technology. I like superstitions that touch upon the unconscious of religions. I also like rational thinking when it rejects superstitions. For me, Mount Gyeryong stands proudly, or vaguely, in the midst of this kind of thinking.

I do not believe that this attitude is exclusively mine. Baridegi, Donghak and its Sangje, Cheongsan Geosa, and the ghosts in our grandmothers' stories are not mere leftovers that modern cultures have made a point of "tolerating," but could very well be sources of anxiety that shake the very foundations of those cultures. The contradictory figure of Northeast Asian Gothic culture is, in a sense, unavoidable. It is difficult to compare the structure of mythological narratives in which humans converse with wild animals with the ethics of mass genocide. Of course, because of its inherent mysticism, the culture of mythological narratives falls, over and over again, into the most corrupt forms of capitalism. But in the worst cases, even the politics of the most devious heresies are entangled in far more complex motivations and values than can be judged by a simple rationalist yardstick. There are no grounds for excusing the behavior of such sinister cults. Nevertheless, the phenomenon of cults is distinct from the universal human desire to seek utopia. Cult



Talisman of Donghak, Donghak Cheonjin--gyo.

groups take advantage of the fact that this society is not equipped with the means to satisfy that very desire. Although a collective search for utopia can easily become corrupt and dangerous, the dream nevertheless belongs to everyone. There have always been, and will always be, great figures who could do nothing but claim the right to have this dream or be driven out trying. Is there really so much distance between Henri de Saint-Simon and Suwun Choi Je-wu? To me, Ilbu Kim Hang and Charles Fourier seem to resemble each other.[9] Of the many people who were deprived of opportunities for institutional education or universal happiness, those who were particularly intelligent or fell into metaphysical agony went to Mount Gyeryong, Mount Jiri, or Mount Myohyang.[10] Many of them were genuine, while many others were fake. What we need to examine first, however, is the contemporary urban dweller's dull desire to distinguish easily between truths and lies, facts and fantasies. The sublime is something that can be discussed with regard to not only Barnett Newman's paintings but also the quasi-Romantic images used for ideological purposes by North Korea, the war aesthetics of CNN, Hollywood's disaster images, and terrorism's political sublime. If the sublime is an aesthetic at risk, it can also be the aesthetic of a misfortune turned into a blessing. A variety of folk beliefs, traditional religions, and new religions prospered in Sindoan, in the foothills of Mount Gyeryong.[11] They were all eclipsed in the 1970s and 1980s by the New Community Movement and the relocation there of the Gyeryongdae Joint Forces headquarters. There are no longer gods flying in the sky; instead, almost every hour, the sonic booms of fighter jets reverberate. There is no room left for mysticism, romanticism, and idealism. Yet I am attracted to the fact that this undeniable absence still gives us a shock. This is an encounter with something. It is not an encounter with a reality that is assumed to be there, and that can be revealed merely by overcoming "false consciousness." Rather, it is an encounter with the violence accompanying the strange absence of a reality that is presumed to be there.

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Translated from the Korean by Doryun Chong.

Park Chan-Kyong (b.1965) is an artist and filmmaker who works and lives in Seoul, South Korea. His works include *Sets* (slide projection, 2000), *Koreans Who Went to Germany* (photography and text, 2003), *Power Passage* (installation, 2004), *Flying* (video, 2005), *Sindoan* (film, 2008), *Black Out* (video, 2009), *Radiance* (installation, 2010) and *We Wish to Reincarnate in Paradise* (film, 2010).

1
(Unless otherwise noted, this and all subsequent notes are the translator's.) The mass of the forty-ninth day is so named because it is conducted on the forty-ninth day after someone dies. Originally a Buddhist rite, the mass is based on the belief that the soul of a dead person wanders without a body for forty-nine days until it reincarnates. In present-day Korea, the mass is widely practiced not only by Buddhists but also by people of various religious affiliations as well as by secularists.

2
Yoo Hong-jun is a well-known art historian, who also served as the head of the Cultural Heritage Administration of Korea from 2004 until 2008. In 1993 he published the first volume of *My S urvey of Cultural Heritages* (Naeu munhwa dabsagi), a travelogue / personal reflection for general readership, which contends that there are numerous unrecognized cultural artifacts all over Korea. The book became an instant best seller and led to the publication of two additional volumes, selling approximately 2.2 million copies total.

3
Kim Ji-ha is perhaps best known for his poem "Five Enemies" (Ojeok). Published in the May 1970 issue of the journal *Sasanggye* (Realm of Philosophy), the poem is a trenchant critique and parody of the corrupt government of the time, and Kim was ultimately convicted of violating the National Security Law and imprisoned for 100 days. Haewol is the sobriquet of Choi Shi-hyung, the second head of the Donghak (Eastern Learning) movement (see note 7 below). Haewol Philosophy refers to Choi's interpretation of Donghak, which was organized for easy practice by the commoners and peasants who made up the majority of its followers. Choi In-hoon is considered one of the representative figures in modern Korean literature and is known for his existentialist works. For instance, his 1960 novel *The Square* (Gwangjang) portrays a young intellectual who struggles and then fails to find a third, alternative ideology to the binaries of North and South Korea, communism and capitalism, and eventually chooses to commit suicide.

4
Novelist Kim Seong-dong debuted in 1978 with his story "Mandala" (Mandara), which was published in the journal *Korean Literature* (*Hanguk munhak*). He also won that year's New Writer Award. Published in a revised and expanded form in 1980, the story tells of the struggles and confusions of a young practicing Buddhist monk who comes to enlightenment by realizing that the true path lies not in solitary meditation but in encounters and relationships between people. It was later adapted for a film by Im Kwon-taek. One of South Korea's most renowned directors, Im Kwon-taek has since 1962 made more than one hundred films, often set in Korea's past and addressing the issue of Korean cultural identity in modernity. His films have been widely screened at international film festivals, and both he and his films have been honored with a number of awards, including Best Director for *Chihwaseon* (2002) at the Cannes Film Festival and Honorary Golden Berlin Bear at the Berlin Film Festival (2005).

5
Painter Park Saeng-Gwang, trained in Japan in Nihonga or modern Japanese-style painting during the colonial period, was often criticized in his early career for the "Japanese colors" in his work. In the late 1970s, he started traveling around the country to study traditional architectural and artistic traditions and subsequently devoted the rest of his life to developing a native Korean aesthetics. Oh Yoon is an artist best known for his woodblock prints, which often feature thickly contoured, rough figural representations of farmers, workers, and dancers in dynamic compositions. He is considered to be one of the most representative artists associated with the 1980s Minjung (people's) Art movement. Painter Min Jeong-gi was first active as a member of the artists' collective Reality and Utterance in the early 1980s and was also affiliated with the Minjung Art movement. His earlier paintings often employed kitschy figurative images as a way of expressing everyday social contradictions. Since the 1990s, he has focused on landscapes, in which he combines his intense observation of the Korean conceptual landscape painting tradition with Western oil painting techniques.

6
Writer Lee Moon-yeol is perhaps best known for his 1987 novel *Our Twisted Hero* (*Urideul ui ilgeureojin yeongwung*), which deals with the issues of politics and authority through an allegorical tale of young grade-school students. The novel won Lee the prestigious Yi Sang Literary Award in 1987 and was also adapted for a 1992 film of the same title. Since the mid-1990s, Lee has emerged as a prominent conservative voice through his lectures, newspaper editorials, and literary works.

7
Donghak (Eastern Learning) is a Korean religion established by Choi Je-wu in the 1860s, as the increasingly corrupt and feeble Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910) was in its last phase and foreign intrusions and influences in Korea and Northeast Asia escalated. Responding to both internal and external urgencies, Choi preached a belief in a monotheistic god of heaven, an idea that had long been part of the native Korean belief system. Although it can be seen as an example of early modern Korean nativism and nationalism, Donghak incorporated elements of other religions that originated abroad but were long established in Korea, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism. It was as much a political philosophy as a religion, and advocated democracy, equality, and paradise on Earth, quickly gaining followers among the peasant class. Donghak soon became the ideological basis for peasant uprisings, and Choi was accused of inciting the guerrilla warfare that began in 1862; he was arrested and executed in 1894. The leadership was then assumed by Choi Shi-hyeong (see note 4). In the same year, a large-scale revolution broke out against the government and the ruling *yangban* (literati-bureaucrat) class, as well as against encroaching foreign presences in Korea, such as Christianity and Japan. Calling for social reform and expulsion of foreign influences, the revolt posed a serious threat to the Joseon Dynasty but was eventually defeated by the Japanese army and pro-Japanese forces. Despite its failure, the Donghak Peasant Revolution led to modern reform efforts and the establishment of the Korean Empire (1897–1910). At the same time, it became the direct cause of the First Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) over control of the Korean Peninsula and of increasing Japanese influence, which resulted in the annexation of Korea by Japan in 1910.

8
Great King Yeomra is the ruler of the underworld and the judge of the dead in Buddhist mythology. "Yeomra " is the Sino-Korean transliteration of the Sanskrit name Yama Raja (King Yama), and this wrathful and fearsome deity is often depicted in Buddhist paintings and on the entrance gates to temples. Medicine Buddha, or the Master of Healing, is the Northeast Asian manifestation of the Indian Bhaisajyaguru. In Mahayana Buddhism, Medicine Buddha is understood to represent the healing aspect of Sakyamuni, the historical Buddha.

9
On Choi Je-wu, see note 7. Kim Hang and Choi Je-wu were fellow students. His interpretation of Zhouyi (Korean: Jooyeok), also known as Yijing or the *I Ching*, or Book of Changes, became the foundation of modern Korean studies of the ancient Chinese classic.

10
Mount Jiri and Mount Myohyang are located, respectively, in southwestern South Korea and northwestern North Korea. Like Mount Gyeryong, the two mountains are considered to be imbued with sacred spirits.

11
(Author's note) Sindoan: the name of a basin located in the foothills of Mount Gyeryong, facing in the direction of the city of Daejeon. Currently situated in the territory of Gyeryong City, Chungcheong South Province, Sindoan was selected by Lee Seong-gye, the founder and first king of the Joseon Dynasty (1392–1910), to be the location of his new capital; its name literally means "the new capital." Adherents of the traditional Pungsu-Docham (geomancy and Confucian divination) Theory, folk religions, and new religions believed the site was the center of a utopian society. Since the Japanese colonial period, hundreds of religious and cult organizations have flourished in Sindoan. In 1984, with the relocation of the South Korean Joint Forces headquarters to Gyeryong Base, the majority of residences and religious structures were demolished.

Jalal Toufic

What is the Sum of Recurrently?

What Is the Sum of a Night of Jouissance and a Night of Desire?

In *A Thousand and One Nights*, missing his younger brother, King Shâh Zamân, King Shahrayâr invites him to visit him. While on the point of heading to his brother from his camp on the outskirts of his capital, King Shâh Zamân remembers something he had forgotten in his palace. He heads back and discovers that his wife is betraying him with a slave. He slaughters her and her partner. Then he heads to his brother. The latter notes his brother's depression; he ascribes it erroneously to nostalgia on account of leaving his kingdom. When King Shahrayâr invites his brother to a hunting trip, the latter, still depressed, declines the invitation. "King Shâh Zamân passed his night in the palace and, next morning, when his brother had fared forth, he removed from his room and sat him down at one of the lattice-windows overlooking the pleasure grounds; and there he abode thinking with saddest thought over his wife's betrayal .... And as he continued in this case lo! a postern of the palace, which was carefully kept private, swung open and out of it came twenty slave girls surrounding his brother's wife, who was wondrous fair, a model of beauty and comeliness and symmetry and perfect loveliness and who paced with the grace of a gazelle ... Thereupon Shâh Zamân drew back from the window, but he kept the bevy in sight, espying them from a place whence he could not be espied. They walked under the very lattice and advanced a little way into the garden till they came to a jetting fountain amiddlemost a great basin of water; then they stripped off their clothes and behold, ten of them were women, concubines of the King, and the other ten were white slaves. Then they all paired off, each with each: but the Queen, who was left alone, presently cried out in a loud voice, 'Here to me, O my lord Saeed!' and then sprang with a drop-leap from one of the trees a big slobbering blackamoor with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight. He walked boldly up to her and threw his arms round her neck while she embraced him as warmly; then he bussed her and winding his legs round hers, as a button-loop clasps a button, he threw her and enjoyed her. On like wise did the other slaves with the girls till all had satisfied their passions, and they ceased not from kissing and clipping, coupling and carousing till day began to wane; when the Mamelukes rose from the damsels' bosoms and the blackamoor slave dismounted from the Queen's breast; the men resumed their disguises and all, except the Negro who swarmed up the tree, entered the palace and closed the postern-door as before."[1] Feeling then that what he underwent, betrayal, his betrayal by his wife, is not so rare—all the more since he had just committed it, belatedly, by voyeuristically persisting in espying his brother's wife's betrayal with a blackmoor, instead of leaving promptly as soon as he made the discovery—King Shâh Zamân regains some of his liveliness. When his brother returns from his trip and

notices the change, he asks him about it. King Shâh Zamân confesses to his brother the cause of his previous depression. "By Allâh, had the case been mine, I would not have been satisfied without slaying a thousand women, and that way madness lies!" How little did King Shahrayâr know yet about madness when he heard the account by his brother of the latter wife's betrayal! Slaying a thousand women for one, in an enraged, revengeful slaughter spree, all at the same time or else first tens then hundreds until the total was a thousand, is an excessive measure but not necessarily a mad sort of behavior. King Shâh Zamân ends up informing his brother of what he saw in the latter's palace, and then King Shahrayâr gets a confirmation through a repeat of these events a few nights later: "At dawn they seated themselves at the lattice overlooking the pleasure grounds, when ..." a loop of the events occurs—with, the way I (imagine that I) see it, the following two variants: the events occur at night; and the blackmoor does not go up the tree and disappear from view and the queen, the concubines and the male slaves do not resume their disguises and then enter the palace and close the postern door as before, but rather the queen, the blackmoor, the concubines and the male slaves persist in their "activity," and it is King Shahrayâr who leaves[2] (along with his brother?)—the king's harem has become *muharram* (forbidden) to him! How come the king did not spring to action and slay then and there his wife, her sexual partner, and her companions? What rendered him unable to do so and to act that night as a serial killer, slaughtering a thousand women for a duration that's equivalent in abstract terms to the time the scene of *jouissance* in the palace's garden lasted before he left? Was it that the gestures and more generally the behavior that he witnessed on the part of his wife and his concubines were of the sort that is seen in nightmares and therefore imply that the king was then in the typical paralysis of the sleeping body? Did the inexorable manner in which the gestures were being repeated, their automatism induce the ineluctable notion that they will go on, this unconsciously dissuading the king from trying to interrupt them and kill the intimate transgressors? Yet again, how to kill his concubines when two of them were bent on stabbing themselves in the back, repeatedly, but failing to accomplish that, the knives again and again not reaching their respective backs, so that, paradoxically, they already seemed undead, to the other side of physical death, where such a compulsive suicidal gesture itself becomes some sort of immortal automatism? Shâh Zamân goes along with Shahrayâr in his decision to "overwander Allâh's earth ... till we find some one to whom the like calamity hath happened; and if we find none then will death be more welcome to us than life."[3] Did what the two royal brothers see in the palace's garden at all prepare them for what they then encounter? As they found themselves outside the palace, did they not feel that their surroundings were *out of the world* and that they were now moving in an extension of the fantasmatic space they apprehended "in" the palace's garden? While they rested after wayfaring by day and by night, "the sea brake with waves before them, and from it towered a black pillar, which grew and grew till it rose skywards .... Seeing it, they waxed fearful exceedingly and climbed to the top of the tree, which was a lofty; whence they gazed to see what might be the matter. And behold, it was a Jinni, huge of height ... bearing on his head a coffer of crystal. He strode to land, wading through the deep, and, coming to the tree whereupon were the two kings, seated himself beneath it. He then set down the coffer on its bottom and out of it drew a casket, with seven padlocks of steel, which he unlocked with seven keys of steel he took from beside his thigh, and out of it a young lady to come was seen ... The Jinni seated her under the tree by his side and looking at her said, 'O choicest love of this heart of mine! O dame of noblest line, whom I snatched away on thy bride night that none might prevent me taking thy maidenhead or tumble thee before I did, and whom none save myself hath loved or hath enjoyed: O my sweetheart! I would lief sleep a little while.' He then laid his head upon the lady's thighs; and, stretching out his legs which extended down to the sea, slept .... Presently she raised her head towards the tree-top and saw the two Kings perched near the summit ... she ... said, 'Stroke me a strong stroke ... otherwise will I arouse and set upon you this Ifrit who shall slay you straightway.' ... At this, by reason of their sore dread of the Jinni, both did by her what she bade them do; and, when they had dismounted from her, she ... then took from her pocket a purse and drew out a knotted string, whereon were strung five hundred and seventy seal rings, and asked, 'Know ye what be these?' They answered her saying, 'We know not!' Then quoth she; 'These be the signets of five hundred and seventy men who have all futtered me upon the horns of this foul, this foolish, this filthy Ifrit; so give me also your two seal rings, ye pair of brothers.'"[4] What would the scene of sexual betrayal in the garden have had to be for it to act as a transition from the frame story's previously realistic narration to a marvelous one? A scene of *jouissance*. Back at his throne, the king had to assign someone who did not witness the scene of *jouissance*, for example his vizier, to kill any one of the participants in the orgy, preferably his wife, since for anyone who had witnessed the scene of lascivious automatism, the orgy of *jouissance* was virtually ongoing even when the participants had ostensibly resumed their conventional behavior. The vizier managed to apprehend the blackmoor and took him in chains to the queen's closet, where he reprimanded Shahrayâr's unfaithful wife in this manner: "See what a grace was seated on this brow ... / This was your husband.... / Have you eyes?"[5] At this point, she heard a voice in her head interject, " *but fail to see*,"[6] and then another, unfamiliar voice ask, "What use then are your eyes?" moments before the vizier blinded her with his dagger. Then the latter resumed his questioning: "Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed, / And batten on this moor? Ha! have you eyes?"[7] By the time he repeated the last words, she no longer had eyes. "You cannot call it love"[8]— *it is jouissance*. Once the vizier interrupted the (virtual) loop by killing Shahrayâr's wife, Shahrayâr could act. "Then King Shahryâr took brand

in hand and repairing to the Serraglio slew all the concubines and their Mamelukes."[9] Is one night of *jouissance*, for example the one Shahrayâr espied in the garden of his palace and which included so much compulsive repetition, tantamount to a thousand nights of desire? It appears to be so: "He [Shahrayâr] also sware himself by a binding oath that whatever wife he married he would abate her maidenhead at night and slay her next morning to make sure of his honour; 'For,' said he, 'there never was nor is there one chaste woman upon the face of earth.' ... On this wise he continued for the space of three years; marrying a maiden every night and killing her the next morning ..."[10] Why not kill in one fell swoop all the women under his rule if "there never was nor is there one chaste woman upon the face of earth"? It is because the response of the king to the virtually endless repetition he apprehended ("they ceased not from kissing and clipping, coupling and carousing, till day began to wane ..."—when the king [and his brother?] left) was bound to take the form of repetition, of compulsive repetition.[11] After a thousand nights, it seemed that the king would no longer be able to repeat again, since "there remained not in the city a young person fit for carnal copulation. Presently the King ordered his Chief Wazır ... to bring him a virgin ... and the Minister went forth and searched and found none ..."[12] Within the economy of the book, that form of repetition had at this point to be relayed by another form, albeit one still stamped with compulsion. "So he [the Chief Wazır] returned home in sorrow and anxiety fearing for his life from the King. Now he had two daughters, Shahrazâd and Dunyâzâd ..."[13] Shahrazâd volunteers to be the next wife of the king. "When the King took her to his bed and fell to toying with her and wished to go in to her she wept; which made him ask, 'What aileth thee?' She replied, 'O King of the age, I have a younger sister and lief would I take leave of her this night before I see the dawn.' So he sent at once for Dunyâzâd and she came and kissed the ground between his hands, when he permitted her to take her seat near the foot of the couch. Then the King arose and did away with his bride's maidenhead and the three fell asleep."[14] The king saw in his dream what he had already seen in the garden of the palace a thousand nights before: some figures that appeared from one perspective to be each composed of a couple engaging in sexual activity while covered, except for their faces, within the dress of one of the two participants, but appeared from another perspective, anamorphically, to be each a two-headed autoerotic monster—in the case of the garden obscenity this physical anamorphosis was conjoined to a temporal one between the *childless* king witnessing these *jouissance*-inducing composites and the yet to come sexually-polymorphous child who one day would, like Dunyâzâd, take his seat near the foot of the couch, seeing and hearing with his "own [hallucinating?] eyes" and ears the primal scene, his parents, Shahrayâr and Shahrazâd, engaged in sexual intercourse. Shahrayâr awoke with a start from his brief sleep. At "midnight Shahrazâd awoke and signaled to her sister Dunyâzâd, who sat up and said, 'Allâh upon thee, O my sister, recite to us some new story, delightsome and delectable, wherewith to while away the waking hours of our latter night.' 'With joy and goodly gree,' answered Shahrazâd, 'if this pious and auspicious King permit me.' 'Tell on,' quoth the King, who chanced to be sleepless and restless ... [T]hus ... began her recitations."[15] The "following night," indeed the "following myriad nights," Dunyâzâd, yet again present in the room with them, said "to her sister Shahrazâd, 'O my sister, finish for us that story ...;' and she answered 'With joy and goodly gree, if the King permit me.' Then quoth the King, 'Tell thy tale.'" Shahrazâd's storytelling had to be such as to counter the king's vow and his compulsion to repeat marrying a virgin every night and killing her the next morning, but also to integrate the repetition, now of a milder form, that of the nightly storytelling (and of the occasion for it, Dunyâzâd's "Allâh upon thee, O my sister, recite to us ..."). What is the sum of a night of *jouissance*, which is tantamount to a thousand nights of desire, and a night of desire? It is: *a thousand and one nights*. Yes, one way of reading *A Thousand and One Nights*'s title is to reckon that it refers to both the night of *jouissance* that the king espied in the garden of his palace, a night tantamount to a thousand nights of desire, and the messianic Night of storytelling by Shahrazâd, a night in which she told myriad stories—until the appearance of a child to the erstwhile childless king notwithstanding that his ostensible mother was at no point pregnant![16] Who wrote or narrated the frame story of *A Thousand and One Nights*, more specifically the scene of the orgy in the garden? Who is describing it? Is that description an adequate one? Is that how King Shahrayâr perceived it, if not hallucinated it? Is that how he reviewed it in his nightmares? For instance, did King Shahrayâr actually see what appeared to be twenty slave girls strip, discovering thus that ten of them were actually men? No; in one of his recurring nightmares, a postern of the palace, which was carefully kept private, swung open, and out of it came twenty slave girls surrounding his wife, and then what would nowadays be best described as a cinematic dissolve took place and ended with ten naked concubines and ten naked white male slaves. When Shahrayâr initially heard from his brother that the latter had espied Shahrayâr's wife betraying her husband, he said, "O my brother, I would not give thee the lie in this matter, but I cannot credit it till I see it with mine own eyes."[17] He should have soon realized that in relation to some scenes, seeing with one's own eyes is not enough, and that one has to be told what one saw by a visionary teller. I imagine the king, having ascertained her knack for, indeed greatness in storytelling, saying to Shahrazâd, whether sometime during the series of storytelling episodes or else after she finishes her narration and brings him one child or three children: "While I want you to tell me myriad stories, I also want you to describe to me, narrate to me my discovery of the betrayal of my wife. I can try to describe to you what I saw with my own eyes, but treat my description as only a patchy approximation of what I saw, for that is what I myself feel it is; provide me with a description of what I apprehended (in part by extrapolating from the

effects of what I saw on me)—one that is deserving of what I saw and of the effects what I saw induced in me, and one concerning which I would feel: '[Today] while knowing perfectly well that it corresponds to the facts, I no longer know if it is real.'"[18] If he still had eyes even after seeing with his "own eyes" such obscenity, it must be that, like some of the figures in Inci Eviner's *Harem*, he repeatedly failed to accomplish what he intended to do, to reach his eyes with his hands in order to gouge them out and throw them away (whether from an attitude affined to the Christian one ["If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell" (Matthew 5:29)], that is, to get rid of *jouissance*, or else because that gesture itself is [as in the case of Oedipus?] henceforth part of *jouissance*), because his hands were then guided neither by the physical eyes nor the "mind's eye," since both were then overwhelmed with *jouissance* to the detriment of their usual function. Was Shahrazâd able to reconstruct the events of that day from the reactions of the king to what he saw in the secluded garden of his palace as well as to the myriad stories that she told him during their messianically inordinate Night? Whatever the answer, a "night" is missing from *A Thousand and One Nights*,[19] the one Shahrazâd should have spent narrating to Shahrayâr the events of the frame story, in particular what he witnessed in the garden of his palace on the night he discovered the betrayal of his wife—in the process narrating to him the occasion for her subsequent narration. Since the book we presently have does not include such a narration by Shahrazâd, one of the outstanding tasks in relation to *A Thousand and One Nights* has been not so much to do an audiovisual adaptation of various episodes of the work (as, for example, Pasolini did in his *Arabian Nights*, 1974), but to provide a fitting rendition if not of the entirety of the frame story then of the episode in the secluded garden that Shahrayâr apprehended. I consider that Eviner's *Harem* is an artistic adaptation of the *missing narration* by Shahrazâd in *A Thousand and One Nights*.[20] Yes, in her *Harem* Inci Eviner provides us with an audiovisual rendition neither of what the various Ottoman sultans would have seen (or might have fantasized) regarding their harems nor of what their Orientalist guests might have fantasized (or would have seen if, like Lady Mary Wortley Montagu [1689–1762], they were privileged enough to be granted access to the harem),[21] but, unbeknownst to her, of what King Shahrayâr of *A Thousand and One Nights* apprehended one day in the secluded garden of his palace. Fittingly, both Eviner's *Harem* and the palace garden's scene of the frame story in *A Thousand and One Nights* unfold in two acts: regarding the harem of *A Thousand and One Nights*'s frame story, "a postern of the palace, which was carefully kept private, swung open and out of it came twenty slave girls surrounding his brother's wife, who was … a model of beauty and comeliness and symmetry and perfect loveliness and who paced with the grace of a gazelle …. then they [the twenty] stripped off their clothes and behold, ten of them were women, concubines of the King, and the other ten were white slaves. Then … the Queen … cried out in a loud voice, 'Here to me, O my lord Saeed!' and then sprang with a drop-leap from one of the trees a big slobbering blackamoor with rolling eyes which showed the whites, a truly hideous sight. He … bussed her and winding his legs round hers, as a button-loop clasps a button, he threw her and enjoyed her. On like wise did the other slaves with the girls … and they ceased not from kissing and clipping, coupling and carousing …"; and Eviner's *Harem* begins with a video shot of Antoine-Ignace Melling's *Intérieur d'une partie du harem du Grand Seigneur* (*Inside the Harem of the Sultan*; watercolor and ink heightened with white gouach; from *Voyage pittoresque de Constantinople et des rives du Bosphore*, an album Melling [1763–1831] made when visiting Istanbul upon the invitation of Sultan Selim the Third)[22] to then dissolve to her rendition of the figures engaged in various lascivious, compulsive gestures—when, following the *jouissance* in Eviner's singular contribution, we see the original Melling work again as a result of the loop, the latter seems to be a (Freudian) screen memory.[23] At one level, what the king watched in the secluded garden of his palace was somewhat akin to what a twentieth or twenty-first century spectator might watch in a gallery or museum: a loop—in the case of the king, the loop of *jouissance*.[24] Very few works require intrinsically (rather than expediently, thus extrinsically) to be looped;[25] Eviner's *Harem* is one of these few, since its figures' gestures are subject to the repetition compulsion. It itself may very well induce in its viewers a compulsion to repeat … viewing it (as happened to Chris Marker regarding that great film revolving around repetition, more precisely the compulsion to repeat, Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, which he reported years ago having watched nineteen times)—as well as other things? Is Inci Eviner's *Harem*, this work exhibiting *jouissance*, itself something that should not be witnessed—at least not by those uninitiated in Evil (one will not enter, one cannot enter hell with desires, however flagrant they may be; one can, indeed one is bound to "find" oneself in hell through *jouissance*)[26]? *If so*, then it would be a work whose title does not refer primarily to a historical harem but is self-referential: what is forbidden to vision is Eviner's *Harem*. From Melling's *Intérieur d'une partie du harem du Grand Seigneur* to Eviner's *Harem*, the (primary) meaning of "harem" changes, from *seraglio* (*The Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*) to one that is closer to its Arabic etymology (" *harem*: Turkish, from Arabic … harama, *to prohibit*; seehrm in Semitic roots" [*American Heritage Dictionary*, 4th edition]), more specifically to the Arabic *muharram* (*forbidden, prohibited,* or *made unlawful*).[27] In Eviner's *Harem*, while the following inscription can be read on one placard, "Lady Montagu was here," another inscription can be read on a second placard: "There's a smear on the wall." Whereas the inclusion of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, who accompanied her husband to Adrianople and Constantinople (Istanbul) in 1717 following his appointment in 1716 as Ambassador to the Ottoman

Court, and some of whose letters are collected under the title *The Turkish Embassy Letters*, in Melling's *Intérieur d'une partie du harem du Grand Seigneur* would have been seemly, her inclusion in Eviner's harem can be considered a smear campaign, since the one who wrote the sort of letters that Lady Mary Wortley Montagu penned cannot have been in the latter surroundings. If there is a smear on the wall, if there is a stain (can there be *jouissance* without a stain? Is *jouissance* itself the stain?), a blot on the wall, then it is Eviner's *Harem* itself, for example while being screened at Nev gallery in Istanbul.

Inci Eviner, *Harem*, 2009, single channel video loop, 3 min., color.

What Is the Sum of Velásquez's Pope and Francis Bacon's Pope(s)?

Deleuze: "In a way, Bacon has hystericized all the elements of Velásquez's painting [*Pope Innocent X*].... In Velásquez, the armchair already delineates the prison of the parallelepiped; the heavy curtain in back is already tending to move up front, and the mantelet has aspects of a side of beef; an unreadable yet clear parchment is in the hand, and the attentive, fixed eye of the Pope already sees something invisible looming up. But all of this is strangely restrained; it is something that is going to happen, but has not yet acquired the ineluctable, irrepressible presence of Bacon's newspapers, the almost animal-like armchairs, the curtain up front, the brute meat, and the screaming mouth. Should these presences have been let loose? asks Bacon. Were not things better, infinitely better, in Velásquez? In refusing both the figurative path and the abstract path, was it necessary to display this relationship between hysteria and painting in full view? While our eye is enchanted with the two Innocent Xs, Bacon questions himself."[28] Did Inci Eviner question herself as she "hystericized all the elements of" Antoine-Ignace Melling's *Intérieur d'une partie du harem du Grand Seigneur* in *Harem*? Will she, who has in her *Harem* already overridden the "human, all too human," question herself in time, while she has not yet surrendered to *jouissance*, but is still exploring ("explore: ORIGIN mid 16th cent. [in the sense (investigate [why])]: from French **explorer**, from Latin **explorare 'search out,'** from **ex- 'out'** + **plorare 'utter a cry'**")[29] it? Are there many artists and filmmakers since Bacon's 1962 interview with David Sylvester, referred to in the aforementioned Deleuze quote, who have been questioning themselves about this matter? It does not appear to be the case. Did David Lynch question himself when the angel disappeared from the painting in *Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me* (1992), a disappearance that's in relation not only to what the protagonist, Laura Palmer, was undergoing, but also to the film itself (was not the reappearance of the angel in the coda at one level a way for Lynch to assuage—artificially?—any misgivings or second thoughts he might have had about his film?)? Was the angel's leaving not a sign for the film spectators, albeit a subtle one since seemingly applying within the diegesis, to beware of, if not stop watching the remainder of that film as well as Lynch's subsequent films (*Inland Empire*, 2006 ...)—until the possible reappearance of the angel? Those spectators who do not leave with the angel are ignoring or forgetting what Freud informed us about: that "it is a prominent feature of unconscious processes that they are indestructible. In the unconscious nothing can be brought to an end, nothing is past or forgotten,"[30] so that images of *jouissance* subsist in the unconscious even when it seems to us that we have long forgotten them; and that in the unconscious, as in magic, there is an equation of image and thing. Were the images of *jouissance* we saw in a horror film to enter our dreams, which are compromise formations, can we be sure that the psychic apparatus will subsequently be able to discern from where they were borrowed? Is it not possible that it will refer these horrifying images, which, while coming from consensual reality, have many of the characteristics of the primary process, to the unconscious? What then? Then they would affect us no differently than actual crimes, slaughters, beheadings we might have witnessed (when?) in our lives. How many bourgeois students who have never been to a war have an unconscious filled with more horrifying images than that of a soldier in the trenches of the battles of World War I! Most people are less and less "willing" to take risks in this world; meanwhile they are, most often unbeknownst to them, more and more tolerant of taking risks in the *barzakh*/bardo! It is certainly wiser to have the opposite attitude. When someone reduced to the material world, the dense world, entreats God, " *Ultuf !*", he or she means by it: be kind to us; alleviate our condition—in the sense: make it less severe. But *ultuf*, as well as "alleviate our condition," should also and primarily mean: make us subtle, make us concerned with the subtle, Imaginal World (*'âlam al-khayâl*), and, moreover, spare us the worst in the subtle, Imaginal World, for it is there that one encounters the worst, recurrently. The "human, all too human" is not enough; does this mean that we should go all the way in the direction of *jouissance*? Or can we go in another direction, a more difficult one in the present circumstances: joy? Yes, against *jouissance*, let us not inadequately set the "human, all too human," but rather let us invoke and/or create joy. One of the main issues and tasks of our time that has unleashed on us what strikes directly the libidinal system, *jouissance*, is to attain joy, what touches directly the soul. Let us invoke and/or create the excessive against the excessive, the inhuman against the inhuman, the angelic against the demonic, in other words, the overwhelming (Rilke: "Who, if I cried out, would hear me among the angels' / Hierarchies? and even if one of them pressed me / suddenly against his heart: I would be consumed / in that overwhelming existence....")[31] against the overwhelming, Good against Evil (for as long as we are mortal, that is, dead even while alive, we cannot,

notwithstanding Nietzsche's behest to do that, fully replace Good and Evil by good and bad—we can at most ignore if not repress Good and Evil by being oblivious about our mortality and that we have not yet reached the will, which is a manner of doing away with mortality),[32] rather than attempt to set the moralizing good against Evil when that sort of good can be set only against the bad (the angels of Wenders' *Wings of Desire*, 1987, who, but for the absence of the interior monologue, are "human, all too human," can assist humans against the bad, but they cannot do so against Evil).

Obsessed and haunted by Velásquez's painting *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1650), Bacon must have tried to render it in such a manner as to make paint come "across directly onto the nervous system,"[33] in other words, "bring the figurative thing up onto the nervous system more violently and more poignantly."[34] For someone wishing to achieve this but probably not yet fully prepared (is one ever fully prepared?) for the successful outcome, did he have the impulse to hide the figure? [35] Where? Behind the red drapery in back of the pope? He may have tried to do so—without success, for a figure that "comes across directly onto the nervous system" and/or that is overcome with *jouissance* cannot be hidden by a curtain, especially when the paint in which the latter is rendered itself "comes across directly onto the nervous system."[36] Can one alternatively cover such a figure with paint, overpaint it (to use an Arnulf Rainer term)? Yes, but this is not enough—as, incidentally, modern radiography, including x-ray, would have somewhat revealed (by the way, have any x-rays been done of Arnulf Rainer's Overpaintings? If not, this would confirm how little thought goes into the selection of which works to submit to such a process). Perhaps these figures that cannot be hidden behind the curtain can— *along with the curtain ("quantum") tunneling across them*—only be hidden on a canvas whose rear is to us. Francis Bacon: "This is the obsession: How like can I make this thing in the most irrational way? So that you're not only remaking the look of the image, you're remaking all the areas of feeling which you yourself have apprehensions of. You want to open up so many levels of feeling if possible, which can't be done in …. It's wrong to say it can't be done in pure illustration, in purely figurative terms, because of course it has been done. It has been done in Velázquez…. one wants to do this thing of just walking along the edge of the precipice, and in Velázquez it's a very, very extraordinary thing that he has been able to keep it so near to what we call illustration and at the same time so deeply unlock the greatest and deepest things that man can feel."[37] But we can view Velázquez's painting *Las Meninas* (1656) as comprising all three of the possibilities mentioned by Bacon: while the paintings on the wall in the background, which were based on copies by Juan del Mazo after some Rubens works, are rendered in an illustrative way by Velásquez, he "has been able to keep" the rest of the *visible* painting "so near to what we call illustration and at the same time so deeply unlock the greatest and deepest things that man can feel," *and* he has been able to paint what "comes across directly onto the nervous system" or the structure in which the latter can irrupt and to keep it invisible to us by reserving it to the canvas, represented illustratively, whose rear is to us. I would title the invisible painting on the canvas whose rear is to us in Velásquez's *Las Meninas*: *Harem* or *Muharram*. If it is a portrait of the king and queen, then, unlike the figures of the king and queen as they appear in the mirror in the background, which are painted in an illustrative way, their own portraits would have become *muharram* (forbidden) to them. If it is not a portrait of the king and queen, then I would like to think that Velásquez was so sensitive that having made *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* he had to make a painting that includes a canvas whose rear is to us, to accommodate what was virtually in his *Portrait of Pope Innocent X*; in this case, his two paintings *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* and *Las Meninas* can be viewed as a diptych. Is the painter represented in *Las Meninas* observing once more the king and the queen, to finish painting them, or is he looking away from something on the canvas that's in front of him but whose rear is to us? What might that be? Something anxiety-inducing? Something silly? It is both: it is something anxiety-inducing placed in a context where it is so out of place that it becomes silly, indeed very silly. "Francis Bacon: 'I don't think that any of these things that I've done from other paintings actually have ever worked.' David Sylvester: 'Not even any of the versions of the Velásquez *Pope*?' Francis Bacon: 'I've always thought that this was one of the greatest paintings in the world, and I've used it through obsession. And I've tried very, very unsuccessfully to do certain records of it—distorted records. I regret them, because I think they're very silly.'"[38] Notwithstanding Bacon's sweeping judgment, the resultant paintings are not silly in themselves—otherwise Bacon would have destroyed them the same way he destroyed many others when he considered that they were not successful. Bacon's *Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953) and *Head VI* (1949) are great paintings; if they can nonetheless be viewed as very silly, this would be not in comparison to *Portrait of Pope Innocent X* but in the context of *Las Meninas*. It is peculiar that no film, whether a biography of Velásquez or not, has been made in which the painting *Las Meninas* is remade as a tableau vivant and the camera does a traveling and reveals to us what is to the other side of the canvas. Francis Bacon: "I think I even might make a film …";[39] it is regrettable that he didn't make a film, one where he would have been able to accomplish the aforementioned traveling shot since *he* could have provided the painting on the canvas whose rear is originally to us.[40]

Inci Eviner, *Harem*, 2009, single channel video loop, 3 min., color.

What Is the Sum of a Son and a Son—in a Dream?

According to Genesis (22:1–2): "God tested Abraham. He said to him, 'Abraham!' 'Here I am,' he replied. Then God said, 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about.'" According to the Qur'ân (37:99–106): "We gave him [Abraham] tidings of a gentle son. And when (his son) was old enough to walk with him, (Abraham) said: O my dear son, I have seen in a dream that I must sacrifice thee. So look, what thinkest thou? He said: O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allâh willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast. Then, when they had both surrendered (to Allâh), and he had flung him down upon his face, We called unto him: O Abraham, you believed what you saw. Lo! thus do We reward the good. Lo! that verily was a clear test. Then We ransomed him with a tremendous victim." I reckon that in Chapter VII of his *The Interpretation of Dreams*, titled "The Forgetting of Dreams," Freud ignores or forgets one form of the forgetting of dreams: not forgetting a smaller or larger part of the content of the dream, but forgetting that a certain image, command, warning or request came to one in a dream. One of the most remarkable examples of such a forgetting of the dream is encountered in the Biblical version of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son. Either there was one testing episode of Abraham concerning God's command to him to sacrifice his son, and it got distorted in the Bible accessible to us, and the correct matter was later revealed to Muhammad through *wahy*, direct divine inspiration, as it was also revealed to him in this manner in the case of some other Biblical episodes ("We do relate unto thee [Muhammad] the most beautiful of stories, in that We reveal to thee this [portion of the] Qur'ân: before this, thou too was among those who knew it not" [Qur'ân 12:3, trans. Yusufali]); or else there were two episodes of testing of Abraham concerning God's command to him to sacrifice his son, one reported in the Bible and one reported in the Qur'ân, each applying to one of Abraham's two sons—in which case, Abraham would be common to Judaism and Islam not so much through similarity but through complementarity. In case there was only one such test, it is the following. Shortly before Sarah became pregnant, Abraham was asked by God *in a dream* to sacrifice his son (Qur'ân), his *only son* (Genesis 22:12 and 22:16) at that point, Ishmael ("Abram was eighty-six years old when Hagar bore him Ishmael" [Genesis 16:16] and "Abraham was a hundred years old when his son Isaac was born to him" [Genesis 21:5]).[41] It is a mistake that can be quite dangerous not to interpret a dream but to try to execute literally what is demanded in it. Ibn al-'Arabı: "Abraham the Intimate said to his son, *I saw in sleep that I was killing you for sacrifice*. The state of sleep is the plane of the Imagination and Abraham did not interpret [what he saw], for it was a ram that appeared in the form of Abraham's son in the dream, while Abraham believed what he saw [at face value]. So his Lord rescued his son from Abraham's misapprehension by the Great Sacrifice [of the ram], which was the true expression of his vision with God.... In reality it was not a ransom in God's sight [but the sacrifice itself].... Then God says, *This is indeed a clear test* ..."[42] Why did Abraham not interpret the dream? Was it because he was unaware that dreams have to be interpreted? According to Ibn al-'Arabı, "Abraham knew that the perspective of the Imagination required interpretation, but was heedless [on this occasion] and did not deal with the perspective in the proper way. Thus, he believed the vision as he saw it."[43] Why if Abraham knew that dreams are to be interpreted did he not do so? Could it be that he had not yet awakened, and thus treated the dream at face value? Did Abraham head to kill his son Ishmael while sleepwalking? Why did Abraham extend his dream—at the risk of killing his son? Was Abraham yielding unconsciously to his wife Sarah's wish by not awakening, by continuing to dream? What was Sarah's conscious wish? It was to get rid of Ishmael; she had said to Abraham, "Get rid of that slave woman and her son, for that slave woman's son will never share in the inheritance with my son Isaac" [Genesis 21:10]). What was her more or less unconscious wish? It was that Ishmael be killed or be made to die as soon as possible. Abraham had already yielded once to Sarah's wish, when he gave food and a skin of water to Hagar and sent her off with the boy. Had God not miraculously provided a well for Hagar and her son, they would have perished of thirst ("When the water in the skin was gone, she put the boy under one of the bushes. Then she went off and sat down nearby, about a bowshot away, for she thought, 'I cannot watch the boy die.' And as she sat there nearby, she began to sob. God heard the boy crying ... Then God opened her eyes and she saw a well of water" [Genesis 21:15–19]). Again, was Abraham yielding unconsciously to Sarah's more or less unconscious wish by not awakening, by continuing to sleep, in order not to interpret the dream but actualize it literally, that is, kill Ishmael? Given the untoward behavior of his father and the three-day-long trip, did Ishmael soon after their reaching their destination fall asleep? And did he then dream that his father told him, "Son, can't you see that I am still sleeping and dreaming?"? Feeling guilty, Abraham confessed to his son in the dream; through this confession a part of Abraham was indirectly entreating his son to rectify the anomaly. Was Ishmael awakened, indeed jolted into wakefulness by this dream? And did he then try to awaken his ostensibly awake father? Was he successful? Yes. How? *Allâh a'lam* (God knows best). Once more God intervened so that Ishmael would not die; God did so again in part by opening the eyes of one of the parents of Ishmael, in this case Abraham's ostensibly already open eyes. Now that Abraham was awake, he was aware again of what he already knew, that a dream should be interpreted. And at that point, given that this dream was not a purely personal one, but a divinely inspired one, God provided the interpretation, including materially: the ram to be sacrificed. In case there was one test of Abraham concerning God's command to him to sacrifice his son, then there appears to be a *tahrîf*, an alteration in the Bible that's available to us, since according to the latter God's

command to Abraham does not reach the latter in a dream and the concerned son is Isaac instead of Ishmael. And yet, not only does this alteration in the Bible to which we have access leave a trace in the same episode, where the dream that was deleted is nonetheless implied through the dreamlike condensation of two elements: Isaac and the (one who for a while was the) only son, Ishmael; there's also a return of the repressed, the dream, and therefore of the relevance, indeed necessity of interpretation hidden in the Biblical story of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son in an episode of Isaac's old age in the same book. "When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see"—that is, when his eyes were like those of a sleeping man—"he called for Esau his older son and said to him, ... 'I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death.... hunt some wild game for me. Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die'" (Genesis 27:1–4). Isaac's wife "Rebekah said to her son Jacob, 'My son ... : Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it.' Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins" (Genesis 27:6–17). Does this not remind the reader of the substitution of a son by a ram in an earlier episode of the Bible, thus associating the two episodes? "Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, 'The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau'" (Genesis 27:22). Encountering this condensation, a mechanism of the dream work, didn't Isaac feel that he is dreaming? Do *we* not feel that we are encountering a dreamlike episode? Yes; the dream that was kept secret by being omitted in the Biblical episode of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son returns surreptitiously in a scene of Isaac's old age in the same book and then becomes manifest and gets confirmed in the Qur'ânic version (how confusing: while the Qur'ân corrects the version of the Bible that's accessible to us, adding that the command was given in a dream, Abraham in the Qur'ân nonetheless does not treat the command as one that was given in a dream, therefore requiring interpretation!). Could old Isaac's impression that he was dreaming have awakened him? Should he then not have tried to interpret what he was undergoing? For whatever reason, he didn't. "He [Isaac] did not recognize him [as Jacob], for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him" (Genesis 27:23). Were Isaac the one whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice and who was ransomed with a ram, would he not have recalled that past episode of a substitution of a man by an animal when on touching the ostensibly hairy arm of his elder son, Esau, he heard the voice of Jacob? Symptomatically, the substitution of the elder son by the younger son,[44] of Ishmael by Isaac, in the Biblical version of God's command to Abraham to sacrifice his son is repeated *and condoned* later in the Bible in the aforementioned episode of the old age of Isaac—as if the ones who had altered the text and done the substitution of the elder son by the younger son in Abraham's story were thus condoning what they did. If there were two episodes of testing of Abraham concerning God's command to him to sacrifice his son, then the second episode is the following. Abraham, who had ended up awakening in order to become aware of the necessity of interpreting the dream in which God commanded him to sacrifice his son Ishmael, was asked again to sacrifice a son. This time he was ostensibly not sleeping—and yet there was something dreamlike about what he was told by God: "Take your son, your only son, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the region of Moriah. Sacrifice him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains I will tell you about" (Genesis 22:1–2). How could *al-Haqq* (The Truth, The Real [Qur'ân 6:62, 22:6, 23:116, 24:25 ...]), *al-'Alîm* (The Omniscient [Qur'ân 2:115, 2:282–283, 3:34, 5:97, 6:101, 29:62, 42:12 ...]), *al-Muhsî* (The Accounter, The Encompasser [Qur'ân 72:28, 78:29 ...]), *al-Hâsib* (The Reckoner [Qur'ân 4:86 ...]) tell him, 'Take your son, your only son, Isaac ... ," when he had *two* sons? The first dream's content concerning sacrificing his son must have "made [such] an impression on" Abraham that he "proceeded to 're-dream' it, that is, to repeat some of its elements"[45] in a subsequent dream. And yet Abraham told himself that he was already awake, and that therefore God must be testing his faith—notwithstanding that the test of his faith was passed successfully by him already through his unwavering belief that God would grant him a child as promised however old he and Sarah would get. At their destination, Isaac asked his father, "The fire and wood are here, but where is the lamb for the burnt offering?" Abraham, remembering the earlier test he underwent with Ishmael, did not lie to his son when he answered hopefully, "God himself will provide the lamb for the burnt offering, my son" (Genesis 22:7–8). Yet shortly after, God not telling him otherwise, Abraham bound his son and set the wood and started the fire. Hearing the voice of his son Isaac, the one who was not informed and consulted about his imminent sacrifice and therefore did not have the opportunity to possibly answer, "O my father! Do that which thou art commanded. Allâh willing, thou shalt find me of the steadfast" (Qur'ân 37:102), crying out, "Father, don't you see that I am burning?"[46] ostensibly awake Abraham awakened—from the dream that life is! How? How is the one who already woke up from sleep to awaken yet again? The prophet Muhammad gave an indication concerning this: "People are asleep, and when they die, they awake." Since dying before dying physically is not some metaphorical death but death "itself," and thus would involve a radical separation from his son, I understand that Abraham delayed it as much as possible, till the penultimate moment. Abraham would have preferred to kill himself physically, to commit suicide rather than sacrifice his son, that is, he would have preferred it had God asked him to sacrifice himself rather than his son; but given that God's command was to sacrifice his son, the great believer that Abraham was did

not kill himself physically rather than kill his son, but the loving father, the one who loved Isaac *and Ishmael*, and the conscientious man that he was died before dying physically at his destination rather than sacrifice his son Isaac without coming to terms with the dreamlike "Take your son, your only son, Isaac" and the requirement of interpretation it implies. Only if someone did not receive the command that requires what Kierkegaard terms the "teleological suspension of the ethical" (*Fear and Trembling*) in a dream or undergo while ostensibly awake one or more dreamlike episodes in the same period in which he received such a command is he or she to accomplish it without resorting to prerequisite interpretation. How many of those who were commanded to behead or otherwise slaughter someone ostensibly on behalf of their religion if not directly of their God, for example many of the members of al-Qâ'ida in Iraq and elsewhere, did not undergo in the same period one or more dreamlike episodes while ostensibly awake? Did the others try to interpret what they underwent before choosing the "teleological suspension of the ethical"? The sleepwalkers of al-Qâ'ida in Iraq and elsewhere certainly did not try to interpret the commands they received (after decoding those of them that reached them in encoded guises). Were Ibn al-'Arabı, who reprimanded no less than a *rasûl*, a messenger-prophet, Abraham, for rushing to behead his son without interpreting the command, *physically* alive presently, I would not be surprised were the sleepwalkers of al-Qâ'ida in Iraq and elsewhere, who are largely if not completely ignorant of his writings but who have blown up a number of Sufis in Iraq,[47] to have tried to behead him. Once Abraham's dream is interpreted, it is clear that the God of Islam does not demand, even as a test, that a prophet behead his son, whereas the God of the Bible (that's accessible to us) does so as a test of Abraham's faith in Kierkegaard's Christian reading [48] as well as in Derrida's (Jewish—at least in the sense of Biblical—) reading of the latter: "Is this heretical and paradoxical knight of faith Jewish, Christian, or Judeo-Christian-Islamic? ... This rigor [where is the rigor in not interpreting a dream? Derrida had earlier written: "Kierkegaard quotes Luke 14:26 ... He refines its rigor ..."], and the exaggerated demands it entails, compel the knight of faith to say and do things that will appear (and must even be) atrocious. They will necessarily revolt those who profess allegiance to morality in general, to Judeo-Christian-Islamic morality ..."[49] To the one who awakens by dying before dying, God provides the interpretation of one or more episodes of the dream that life is. Again, Abraham was provided with the interpretation of the dream: the ram to be sacrificed. While by awakening by dying (before dying), Abraham extended the life of his son, at least for the span during which he would be provided by God with the interpretation of the dreamlike episode, he was not by doing so necessarily yielding to temptation, that of avoiding the "teleological suspension of the ethical," since awakening did not mean automatically saving his son, but rather becoming aware of the exigency of interpreting what occurs to him in life as a dream, and waiting for the interpretation of that dream, which might have been even then: "Sacrifice him ... as a burnt offering ..." (Genesis 22:2). Again the interpretation revealed that a ram had appeared in the dream—that life is—in the guise of Abraham's son Isaac. Should we take a hint from the image by Inci Eviner of two headless humans holding the severed head of a ram on a plate that either there were one episode of sacrifice of the ram or else, if there were two episodes, that it was the "same" great sacrifice, the same ram that was miraculously sacrificed? In the latter case, this sacrificial victim is great not only because of the greatness of what it replaced, a prophet, in a visionary dream if not in reality, but also because it did so twice, in the case of both Ishmael and Isaac.

X

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1
The Arabian Nights: Tales from a Thousand and One Nights , translated, with a preface and notes, by Richard Francis Burton, introduction by A. S. Byatt (New York: Modern Library, 2001), 7–8.

2
While it may seem that I am altering *A Thousand and One Nights* , actually I am emending the text, not through historical, textual and/or archival research but through creative writing and thus untimely collaboration with one or more of its creators, restoring it partly to how it was before undergoing corruptions in the form of *some* of the interpolations and alterations and erasures it underwent during its long history.

3
The Arabian Nights: Tales from a Thousand and One Nights , 12.

4
Ibid., 12–14. Taking into account the parallelism between the two scenes (in both the two kings espy the events from a distance, at least initially, and in both they are privy to a woman's unfaithfulness), it is reasonable to suspect that King Shahrayâr's first wife was also captured by his army or abducted by his agents on the very night she was to be wed to another.

5
Prince Hamlet's words to his mother in Shakespeare's *Hamlet* (3.4.55–65).

6
Mark 8:18.

7
Shakespeare's *Hamlet* 3.4.66–67.

8
Ibid. 3.4.68. Had the vizier exclaimed, "You cannot call it *jouissance* ," he would also have been right—not because it is not *jouissance* , but because *jouissance* is not open to the call. Romeo says to Juliet: "Call me but love ..." (Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet* 2.1.92–94); no one can accurately write or say, "Call me but *jouissance* ..." On the relation of love to the name and the call, read my book *Graziella: The Corrected Edition* (Forthcoming Books, 2009; available for download as a PDF file at http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm).

9
The Arabian Nights: Tales from a Thousand and One Nights , 15–16.

10
Ibid., 16.

11
The scene is itself repeated in *A Thousand and One Nights* , since it is first seen by Shâh Zamân, who ends up informing his brother King Shahrayâr about it, the two then witnessing it again. It would be intriguing to exhibit Inci Eviner's *Harem* in the lobby of a film theater screening Lynch's *Lost Highway* , the audience members witnessing the two dreadful extremes: repetition compulsion and exhaustive variation.

12
The Arabian Nights: Tales from a Thousand and One Nights , 16.

13
Ibid.

14
Ibid., 26.

15
Ibid.

16
I provide in my book *Two or Three Things I'm Dying to Tell You* (Sausalito, CA: The Post-Apollo Press, 2005) a variant but complementary manner of considering the title: *The Thousand and One Nights* "refers to ... the one thousand nights of the one thousand unjustly murdered previous one-night wives of King Shahrayâr plus his night with Shahrazâd, a night that is itself like a thousand nights ... We could not write were we as mortals not already dead even as we live; or else did we not draw, like Shahrazâd, in an untimely collaboration, on what the dead is undergoing. If Shahrazâd needed the previous deaths of the king's former thousand one-night wives, it was because notwithstanding being a mortal, thus undead even as she lived, she did not draw on her death. That is why she cannot exclaim to Shahrayâr: 'There's something I am dying to tell you.' And that is why past the Night spanning a thousand nights, Shahrazâd cannot extend her narration even for one additional normal night" (102). Both of my manners of considering the title are at variance with the widespread way it is read and according to which it refers to the number of nights Shahrazâd tells stories to Shahrayâr.

17
The Arabian Nights: Tales from a Thousand and One Nights , 11.

18
Charlotte Delbo, *Days and Memory* , translated and with a preface by Rosette Lamont (Marlboro, Vt.: Marlboro Press, 1990), 4.

19
On the missing night in *A Thousand and One Nights* , read " Something I'm Dying to Tell You, Lyn" in my book *Two or Three Things I'm Dying to Tell You* , 101–103: "Were I to become the editor of a future edition of *The Thousand and One Nights* , I would ... make sure that one of the so-called nights is missing, i.e., that the edition is incomplete.... Since the 'thousand nights' of storytelling are the extension by Shahrazâd of one night, there is something messianic about *The Thousand and One Nights* . I gave my beloved Graziella a copy of *The Thousand and One Nights* in the Arabic edition of Dâr al-Mashriq, rather than in the Bûlâq edition republished by Madbûlı Bookstore, Cairo, certainly not because it is an expurgated edition, but because it does not contain at least one of the nights—night 365 is missing. 'According to a superstition current in the Middle East in the late nineteenth century when Sir Richard Burton was writing, no one can read the whole text of the *Arabian Nights* without dying' (Robert Irwin, *The Arabian Nights: A Companion*). Borges: 'At home I have the seventeen volumes of Burton's version (of *The Thousand and One Nights*). I know I'll never read all of them ...' Until the worldly reappearance of *al-Qâ'im* (the Resurrector), there should not be a complete edition of *The Thousand and One Nights*. The only one who should write the missing night that brings the actual total of nights to a thousand and one is the messiah/ *al-Qâ'im* , since only with his worldly reappearance can one read the whole book without dying."

20
I therefore suggest that a DVD of Eviner's *Harem* be attached to copies of *A Thousand and One Nights* .

21
Were it the case, there would be something amiss in Eviner's rendition of the harem, since she would have omitted altogether the conservative religious members of the harem, their prayers and orthodox behavior and rituals.

22
See http://www.sothebys.com/app/live/lot/LotDetail.jsp?lot_id=159487673 , accessed, July 18, 2010.

23
To be more precise, the scene of undressing and sexual intercourse in the palace's garden in *A Thousand and One Nights* enfolds two variants: one of desire, witnessed by both kings, and one of *jouissance*, fantasmatic, apprehended by Shahrayâr alone—this may in part account for why Shâh Zamân does not have a similar compulsive reaction as Shahrayâr.

24
Were it not for the last, angelic section of Patrick Bokanowski's *The Angel* (1982), I can imagine screening this film in a museum as a loop—among other things, the angel guards against the compulsion to repeat, the loop.

25
When Predrag Pajdic wished to include my video *The Lamentations Series: The Ninth Night and Day* (60 minutes, 2005) as a looped work in one of the exhibitions and screenings he curated in various venues in London in the summer of 2007 (Tate Modern, etc.), I declined his request, insisting that the video should not be looped but rather screened in a movie theater at scheduled times since the repetition in this video is not of the compulsive sort and since this video is a durational work. In his "Ritualizing Life: Videos of Jalal Toufic," *Art Journal* 66, no. 2 (Summer 2007): 83–84, Boris Groys ends his text with, "Already Nietzsche asserted that after the death of God, immortality can be imagined only as the eternal repetition of the same—as ritualized life. Contemporary video technique can be seen as a technical realization of this Nietzschean metaphysical dream. The videos of Toufic show time and again scenes of sleep, disappearance, and death. But their ritual character suggests the possibility of repetition that negates the definitive character of any loss, of any absence. Today, the only image of immortality that we are ready to believe is a video running in a loop," notwithstanding that my video *Lebanese Performance Art;*

Circle: Ecstatic; Class: Marginalized; Excerpt 3 (5 minutes, 2007) has the intertitle, "An Original Video Should Be Watched at Least Twice (Rather than Looped)," and that indeed the video proper, which is two minutes and ten seconds long, is then repeated; and notwithstanding that I had published in 2000 " *You Said 'Stay,' So I Stayed* " in my book *Forthcoming* (Berkeley, CA: Atelos, 2000), a text that provides a radically different reading of Nietzsche's eternal recurrence in its relation to the will and thus to the abolishing of death and to one of the forms of the new.

26
For a different conception of hell, read my book *Undying Love, or Love Dies* (Sausalito, CA: The Post-Apollo Press, 2002; available for download as a PDF file at http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm).

27
Here are some of *muharram*'s other meaning: " *made,* or *pronounced, sacred,* or *inviolable,* or *entitled to reverence* or*repect* or *honour*" (The entry *hâ' râ' mîm* in Edward William Lane, *An Arabi c-English Lexicon* , 8 volumes (Beirut, Lebanon: Librairie du Liban, 1980)).

28
Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* , trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), 53–54.

29
Apple's *Dictionary.*

30
The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud , volume V (1900–1901), *The Interpretation of Dreams (Second Part) and On Dreams* , translated from the German under the general editorship of James Strachey, in collaboration with Anna Freud, assisted by Alix Strachey and Alan Tyson (London: Vintage, the Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1953–1974), 577. Cf: "The unconscious is quite timeless. The most important as well as the strangest characteristic of psychical fixation is that all impressions are preserved, not only in the same form in which they were first received, but also in all the forms which they have adopted in their further developments." Ibid., volume VI (1901), *The Psychopath ology of Everyday Life* , 275.

31
The Selected Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke , ed. and trans. Stephen Mitchell; with an introduction by Robert Hass (New York: Vintage Books, 1982), 151.

32
Read " *You Said 'Stay,' So I Stayed* " in my book *Forthcoming*.

33
David Sylvester, *The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon* , third, enlarged edition (New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1987), 18.

34
Ibid., 12.

35
Is one ever prepared for certain things one may have done the utmost to make possible, for example what "comes across directly onto the nervous system" or a successful resurrection? "Her eyelids 'opened to reveal something terrible which I will not talk about, the most terrible look which a living being can receive, and I think that if I had shuddered at that instant, and if I had been afraid, everything would have been lost, but my tenderness was so great that I didn't even think about the strangeness of what was happening, which certainly seemed to me altogether natural because of that infinite movement which drew me towards her' (Blanchot's *Death Sentence*). The far more frequent and regrettable phenomenon in these resurrections is that just as the eyes of the resurrector and those of the resurrected come into contact, and the resurrector sees in the latter a reflection of the dreadful realm where the resurrected was, he or she in horror instinctively closes the resurrected's eyes. This, rather than shutting the eyes of the corpse, is the paradigmatic gesture of closing the dead's eyes. Indeed, the gesture of closing the eyes of the corpse probably originated, at least in the Christian era, in witnessing someone hurriedly shutting the eyes of a dead person whom he had resurrected. Were humans one day to no longer believe in resurrection and to have forgotten it consequent of a withdrawal of the epoch when some people were resurrected, it is likely that they will no longer close the eyes of the corpse. I find it disappointing that none of the vampire films I have seen, and I presume no vampire film at all shows what is likely to take place during the initial encounter of the vampire with his living guest: what the guest apprehends in the undead's eyes is so horrifying, he instinctively raises his hand toward the vampire's eyes to close them, only to hear the vampire, who had already had to tackle this reaction numerous times, say: 'Your arms feel very tired. You long to rest them against your hips.' Hypnotized, the guest let his now very heavy hands fall down." Jalal Toufic, *(Vampires): An Uneasy Essay on the Undead in Film,* revised and expanded edition (Sausalito, CA: The Post-Apollo Press, 2003, available for download as a PDF file at http://www.jalaltoufic.com/downloads.htm), 219–220.

36
Were it not the case, then I can very well imagine that there is something hidden behind the drapery in Velásquez's painting and that that something is Bacon's pope in *Study after Vélázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X* (1953). Could the pope of Velasquez have performed an exorcism of the pope of Bacon?

37
The Brutality of Fact: Interviews with Francis Bacon , 28.

38
Ibid., 37.

39
Ibid., 141.

40
It is fitting that Godard did not include *Las Meninas* among the paintings Jerzy tries to do a tableau vivant of, for he, Godard, is incapable of presenting by creating what is to the other side of its represented canvas.

41
It is disappointing that the four brief scenarios that Kierkegaard gives of this test in the "Exordium" of his book *Fear and Trembling* all assume that *awake* Abraham was commanded by God to sacrifice his son *Isaac*, i.e., that Kierkegaard's variations remained relative to one of the two mainstream versions, missing the other altogether. "There were countless generations who knew the story of Abraham by heart, word for word, but how many did it render sleepless?" (Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling* and *Repetition*, edited and translated with introduction and notes by Howard V. Hong and Edna H. Hong (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983), 28). It appears that Kierkegaard was one of those whom the story of Abraham rendered sleepless—this possibly deprived him of an additional opportunity to intuit that Abraham received the command to sacrifice his son in a dream; and it is manifest that he did not actually know the story word for word, since certain words were missing from the version he knew, for example: "in a dream"; and it seems that he was oblivious of (what the sufis term) the *sirr* (innermost, secret heart; secret). How little *kashf* (supersensory unveiling) Kierkegaard had; one can say the same of Derrida when he writes in a *seemingly* inclusive gesture, "The sacrifice of Isaac belongs to what one might just dare to call the common treasure, the terrifying secret of the *mysterium tremendum* that is a property of all three so-called religions of the Book, the religions of the races of Abraham" (Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* , trans. David Wills (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 64), either ignorant or repressing his knowledge that the son Abraham was commanded to sacrifice has no specific name in one of these Books, that of Moslems, the Qur'ân; that according to Tabarı, "the earliest sages of our Prophet's nation disagree about which of Abraham's two sons it was that he was commanded to sacrifice. Some say it was Isaac, while others say it was Ishmael" (*The History of al-abarî (Ta'rîkh al-rusul wa'l-mulûk)* , volume II, *Prophets and Patriarchs* , translated and annotated by William M. Brinner (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1987), 82; see pages 82–95 for the various traditions regarding which of the two sons Abraham was commanded to sacrifice); that Ibn Kathır opts for Ishmael as the son Abraham was commanded to sacrifice (Al-imâm al-Hâfiz 'Imâd al-Dın Abı al-Fidâ' Ismâ'ıl ibn Kathır al-Qirashı al-Dimashqı, *Qisas al-Anbiyâ'*, ed. al-Sayyid al-Jumaylı (Beirut, Lebanon: Dâr al-Jıl, 2001), 155–160); and that in most later Islamic tradition Ishmael (Ismâ'ıl) is considered the son whom Abraham was commanded to sacrifice—in a dream.

42
Ibn al'Arabi, "The Wisdom of Reality in the Word of Isaac," in *The Bezels of Wisdom* , translation and introduction by R. W. J. Austin, preface by Titus Burckhardt (New York: Paulist Press, 1980), 99–100.

43
Ibid., 100.

44
Full disclosure: I am the elder son in my family.

45
The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud , volume V (1900–1901), *The Interpretation of Dreams (Second Part) and On Dreams* , 509.

46
Sigmund Freud: "Among the dreams which have been reported to me by other people, there is one which ... was told to me by a woman patient who had herself heard it in a lecture on dreams ... Its content made an impression on the lady ... and she proceeded to 're-dream' it, that is, to repeat some of its elements in a dream of her own ... The preliminaries to this model dream were as follows. A father had been watching beside his child's sick-bed for days and nights on end. After the child had died, he went into the next room to lie down, but left the door open so that he could see from his bedroom into the room in which his child's body was laid out, with tall candles standing round it. An old man had been engaged to keep watch over it, and sat beside the body murmuring prayers. After a few hours' sleep, the father had a dream that *his child was standing beside his bed, caught him by the arm and whispered to him reproachfully:* '*Father, don't you see I'm burning?* ' He woke up, noticed a bright glare of light from the next room, hurried into it and found that the old watchman had dropped off to sleep and that the wrappings and one of the arms of his beloved child's dead body had been burned by a lighted candle that had fallen on them.... The explanation of this moving dream is simple enough and, so my patient told me, was correctly given by the lecturer. The glare of light shone through the open door into the sleeping man's eyes and led him to the conclusion which he would have arrived at if he had been awake, namely that a candle had fallen over and set something alight in the neighbourhood of the body.... the content of the dream must have been overdetermined and ... the words spoken by the child must have been made up of words which he had actually spoken in his lifetime and which were connected with important events in the father's mind.... We may ... wonder why it was that a dream occurred at all in such circumstances, when the most rapid possible awakening was called for. And here we shall observe that this dream, too, contained the fulfillment of a wish. The dead child behaved in the dream like a living one: he himself warned his father, came to his bed, and caught him by the arm ... For the sake of the fulfillment of this wish the father prolonged his sleep by one moment. The dream was preferred to a waking reflection because it was able to show the child as once more alive. If the father had woken up first and then made the inference that led him to go into the next room, he would, as it were, have shortened his child's life by that moment of time." Ibid., 509–510.

47
"Ten followers of the mystic Islamic Sufi movement were killed last night ... According to a US military briefing, the crowd of Sufi worshippers was attacked by a suicide car bomber in the village of Saud, near the town of Balad, about 425 miles north of Baghdad, late last night.... Sufi mystics are a target of Islamic extremists, who dispute their interpretation of the Koran. Twelve people were also injured in the explosion. Ahmed Hamid, a Sufi witness, told the Associated Press: 'I was among 50 people inside the tekiya (Sufi gathering place) practicing our rites when the building was hit by a big explosion. Then, there was chaos everywhere and human flesh scattered all over the place.'" Sam Knight, *Times* Online, June 3, 2005, http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/article529586.ece .

48
Jacques Derrida: "As for the sacrifice of the son by his father, the son sacrificed by men and finally saved by a God that seemed to have abandoned him or put him to the test, how can we not recognize there the foreshadowing or the analogy of another passion? As a Christian thinker, Kierkegaard ends by reinscribing the secret of Abraham within a space that seems, in its literality at least, to be evangelical" (*The Gift of Death*, 80–81). Of a philosopher who wrote in the same book that the sacrifice of the son of Abraham "belongs to what one might just dare to call the common treasure, the terrifying secret of the *mysterium tremendum* that is a property of all three so-called religions of the Book, the religions of the races of Abraham," I would have expected, were his inclusion of Islam thought through, that he reread Jesus Christ's night at the garden of Gethsemane through the detour of the Qur'ânic episode in which a sleeping father dreams that he has to sacrifice his son. "Jesus went with his disciples to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to them, 'Sit here while I go over there and pray.' He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee along with him ... Then he said to them, 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me'" (Matthew 26:36–38). When he said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," which death was Jesus talking about? Was it his state of overwhelming sorrow then? Was it his destined imminent death on the cross? No; what Jesus said in the garden by means of 'My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death,' the Son (Christ) understood but the messenger(s) (Peter and the two sons of Zebedee) did not. His foreboding was confirmed when he went a little farther relative to his three disciples and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will" (Matthew 26:39). There was no response from the Father! Christ's soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to discover that God the Father was then sleeping and dreaming, dead—if in the case of humans, (dreaming) sleep is a sort of "little death," in the case of God, (dreaming) sleep is death! When Jesus Christ said, "My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death," the death he, "the life" (John 11:25), was speaking about was not, indeed could not be his death, but rather the death of God the Father. While sleeping and dreaming, God the Father could not understand him since in that condition He understands only the dead (in this, He is similar to Daniel Paul Schreber's God: " *Within the Order of the World, God did not really understand the living human being* and had no need to understand him, because, according to the Order of the World, He dealt only with corpses" (*Memoirs of My Nervous Illness* , trans. and ed. Ida Macalpine and Richard A. Hunter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1988), 75)). This is one variant of the death of God in Christianity: not the death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, God as the Son (exemplified pictorially by Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Body of the Dead Christ in the Tomb (* 1521)), but the death of God the Father, the beloved who paradoxically died notwithstanding His eternity (by sleeping and dreaming), forsook His beloved and lover (Matthew 27:46)! Why did the Father go on dreaming during His Son's first two exoteric prayers to Him on that night notwithstanding that had He awakened He could possibly have spared His son the crucifixion? Jesus went back and forth twice between two kinds of companions whom he had expected to keep watch with him, his disciples ("Keep watch with me" (Matthew 26:38) and God the Father ("He who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep" (Psalm 121:3–4); cf. Qur'ân 2:255: "Allâh! There is no deity save Him, the Alive, the Eternal. Neither slumber nor sleep overtaketh Him" (trans. Pickthal)), but that he found sleeping (and dreaming) ("Then he returned to his disciples and found them sleeping. 'Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour?' he asked Peter. 'Watch and pray ...' He went away a second time and prayed, 'My Father, if it is not possible for this cup to be taken away unless I drink it, may your will be done.' When he came back, he again found them sleeping ..." (Matthew 26:40–43)). The sleep and dream of God is (not a night *in* the world but) the night of the world; I am therefore not surprised that the disciples felt such an irresistible urge to sleep and dream. Christ does not need to be resurrected since he, *the life* , cannot die (cf. Qur'ân 4:156: "They said (in boast), 'We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allâh';—but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them"); he is the resurrection (Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25)) only in relation to others, including and primarily God the Father. Between leaving his disciples for the third time and praying again ("So he left them and went away once more and prayed the third time, saying the same thing" (Matthew 26:44)), God the Son awakened God the Father by resurrecting Him from the sort of death His sleeping and dreaming is! Jesus Christ's greatest miracle, his resurrection of God the

Father, was not witnessed by his disciples and was not reported in the Gospels. Now, to his third prayer, he received an answer from God the Father; God the Father indicated to him that His will was that he, the Son, be crucified. Then the Son of God "returned to the disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Look, the hour is near, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us go! Here comes my betrayer!' While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived. With him was a large crowd armed with swords and clubs.... Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus' companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 'Put your sword back in its place,' Jesus said to him, '... Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?'" (Matthew 26:45–54). It seems that God fell asleep and dreamt again, with the consequence that "about the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, 'Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?'—which means, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'" (Matthew 27:46). And it seems that crucified Jesus Christ had again to resurrect God—while he was being mocked and challenged: "The chief priests, the teachers of the law and the elders mocked him. 'He saved others,' they said, 'but he can't save himself! ... Let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him.' ... In the same way the robbers who were crucified with him also heaped insults on him" (Matthew 27:41–44).

49
Jacques Derrida, *The Gift of Death* , 64.